



***Amblyceps cerinum*, a new catfish (Teleostei: Amblycipitidae) from northeastern India**

HEOK HEE NG¹ & JEREMY J. WRIGHT²

¹Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore, 6 Science Drive 2 #03-01, Singapore 117546. E-mail: heokhee@nus.edu.sg

²Fish Division, Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, 1109 Geddes Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109, USA. E-mail: jjwright@umich.edu

Abstract

Amblyceps cerinum, a new South Asian amblycipitid catfish species, is described from the Brahmaputra River drainage in northern West Bengal, India. The new species can be distinguished from congeners in having a combination of upper jaw longer than lower, incomplete lateral line terminating beneath posterior insertion of dorsal fin, length of adipose-fin base 32.4–38.3% SL, caudal peduncle length 21.9–24.5% SL, caudal peduncle depth 9.2–11.2% SL, 41–44 post-Weberian vertebrae, posterior end of adipose fin separated from dorsal procurrent caudal-fin rays by distinct notch, and truncate caudal fin. The taxonomic status of *A. tenuispinis* is also discussed and a neotype designated for this species.

Key words: Siluriformes, Sisoroidea, Brahmaputra River, South Asia

Introduction

The genus *Amblyceps* currently contains 15 described species of small-bodied, elongate catfishes, which are found in fast moving streams and rivers of Southeast Asia, Pakistan, and India. *Amblyceps* species can be distinguished from confamilials (the genera *Liobagrus*, *Nahangbagrus*, and *Xiurenbagrus*) by the presence of double folds of skin on the upper and lower lips, pinnate rays on the abaxial margin of the procurrent and median caudal-fin rays [although these are lacking in some Indian species according to Linthoingambi & Vishwanath (2008)], and a number of osteological characters described by Chen & Lundberg (1995) and also detailed by Ng & Kottelat (2000). However, both of these studies predate the description of *Nahangbagrus* and to date, no osteological studies have been performed for this genus, nor is the absence or presence of the double skin folds on the lips or pinnate rays on the caudal fin elements mentioned in its description (Hao & Binh in Hao 2005).

The distributional ranges of the other amblycipitid genera are mostly disjunct from that of *Amblyceps*, with *Liobagrus* being found in China, Taiwan, Japan, and the Korean peninsula, and *Xiurenbagrus* being restricted to the Pearl River basin of southeastern China. *Nahangbagrus*, described from the Red River basin of northern Vietnam, comes closest to sympatry with *Amblyceps*, which contains several species that are found in the Mekong Basin (*A. caecutiens*, *A. carinatum*, *A. serratum*; Ng & Kottelat 2000; Ng 2005; Ng & Wright 2009). This genus was distinguished from *Amblyceps* by its truncate caudal-fin margin (vs. deeply forked). However, several species of *Amblyceps*, including *A. apangi*, *A. murraystuarti*, and *A. torrentis* possess a truncate caudal-fin margin, leaving little in the way of characters to reliably distinguish *Amblyceps* from *Nahangbagrus*. The description of *Nahangbagrus* is such that additional potentially diagnostic characters are difficult to determine, and the type material from this genus was unavailable to us for study. Should additional specimens become available, further studies are necessary to confirm the validity of this genus and to provide a more complete diagnosis from its confamilials.