



Description of a rheophilic *Tilapia* species Smith, 1840 (Teleostei: Cichlidae) from Guinea with comments on *Tilapia rheophila* Daget, 1962

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Abstract

Tilapia konkourensis, new species, is described on the basis of three specimens from the upper Konkouré River and its tributary Kakrima. The rheophilic species differs from all other *Tilapia* sensu lato except *T. fusiforme* Dunz & Schliewen, 2010 in a shallower body 30.0–31.5% vs. 32.9–52.5% SL and from *T. fusiforme* in having eight instead of nine to twelve lower lateral-line scales. It is most similar to *Tilapia rheophila* Daget, 1962, type species of the monotypic subgenus *Tilapia (Dagetia)* Thys van den Audenaerde, 1969. An evaluation of the putative autapomorphies diagnosing *Dagetia* revealed that all are shared with members of the subgenus *Coptodon* Gervais, 1853 sensu Thys van den Audenaerde, 1969; hence, *Tilapia (Dagetia)* is placed in the synonymy of *Tilapia (Coptodon)*.

Key words: ichthyofauna, freshwater, Fouta Djallon, West Africa

Introduction

In the course of an ongoing revision of the genus *Tilapia* Smith, 1840 we investigated all specimens identified as *Tilapia rheophila* Daget, 1962 and almost all *T. louka* in the MRAC and MNHN collections. Among the material collected in the 1980s in the Konkouré basin we discovered three very elongate and small specimens of an apparently new species, which is superficially similar to *T. rheophila*. For the description of these specimens as a new species, we examined and analysed the morphometry and taxonomic identity of all specimens previously identified as *Tilapia rheophila* Daget, 1962 and almost all *T. louka* in the MRAC and MNHN collections, as well as the only available and phenotypically similar *Tilapia* specimen from the Samou river, to which we refer here as *Tilapia* sp. aff. *louka* “Samou”.

Tilapia rheophila is an endemic rheophilic cichlid, described from the Konkouré drainage on the Fouta Djallon plateau, Republic of Guinea. Unfortunately, the taxonomic identity of the few known specimens of *Tilapia rheophila* has always been problematic. Five specimens were collected by Daget in 1958 in middle Konkouré River near the bridge on the road from Kindia to Telimélé (Thys van den Audenaerde 1969). Daget (1962) referred in the original description only to these five specimens as syntypes, but he based the description of the species on additional adults, subadults and juveniles collected in a small Konkouré tributary, the Samou, near Koliagbé and around the waterfalls near Kindia (“Grand Chutes”). Although he mentioned differences between specimens from the Konkouré and the Samou, i.e. only the Samou specimens having a black mark in the soft part of the dorsal fin (“tilapia spot”) and differing slightly in fin-formula and gill raker counts, he nevertheless regarded them as *T. rheophila*. It is not clear why Blanc (1962), listed in his MNHN cichlid type catalogue not only the five specimens of the Konkouré lot 59–106 as syntypes, but also three specimens of a “Grandes Chutes” lot 60–488 and one of the Koliagbé lot 60–489 as syntypes. Later, Thys van den Audenaerde (1969) based on a letter from Daget, tried to resolve this contradiction when accepting Daget’s explanations about correct publication dates and priority of Daget (1962) over Blanc (1962) by writing: “This makes that only the sample 59–106 can be considered as syntypes for *T. rheophila*, and that the largest specimen must be considered as holotype, because [it is] figured in the