



Article

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***Lepidiolamprologus kamambae*, a new species of cichlid fish (Teleostei: Cichlidae) from Lake Tanganyika**

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Abstract

Lepidiolamprologus kamambae is described from the Kamamba Island off the southeastern coast of Lake Tanganyika. It is similar to *L. elongatus*, *L. kendalli*, and *L. mimicus* in the presence of three horizontal rows of dark blotches along the sides. It differs from those species in the presence of a distinct suborbital stripe across the cheek. It is further distinguished from *L. elongatus* and *L. mimicus* by the presence of a marbled pattern on the top of the head, and narrower interorbital width (4.9–5.9% of SL vs. 6.0–7.0%). It is distinguished from *L. kendalli* by a shorter last dorsal-fin spine (11.2–13.3% of SL vs. 13.3–15.1 %) and presence of distinct dark blotches on the side instead of contiguous blotches forming stripes separated by light interspaces. *Lepidiolamprologus profundicola* is unique in the genus having the cheeks covered with small scales. Scales are absent from the cheek in *L. kamambae*, and in the other species scales are either absent or very few and deeply embedded. *Lepidiolamprologus nkambae* was diagnosed from *L. kendalli* by the absence of scales on the cheek. The presence of scales in *L. kendalli* is variable, however, and *L. nkambae* is tentatively synonymized with *L. kendalli* for want of other diagnostic characters.

Key words: color pattern, endemism, meristics, morphometry, taxonomy

Introduction

The endemic Lake Tanganyika cichlid genus *Lepidiolamprologus* Pellegrin (1904) presently includes eleven species characterized by the presence of a sesamoid ossification in the labial ligament of the lower jaw, and paired coronalis foramina (Stiassny 1997; Schelly 2007). Species of the genus present considerable diversity in color pattern and body shape, and the composition of the genus has been challenged in several studies (Schelly 2007; Schelly *et al.* 2006; Sturmbauer *et al.* 2010; Day *et al.* 2007). Schelly (2007) proposed a more restricted *Lepidiolamprologus* characterized by a gracile anterior portion of the hyoid, a strongly emarginate caudal fin, scales reduced in size and presence of a dermosphenotic, in addition to the labial ossification and paired coronalis foramina. Five species conforming to *Lepidiolamprologus* sensu Schelly share a distinctive color pattern characterized by horizontal rows of contiguous or discrete dark blotches, viz., *L. elongatus* (Boulenger, 1898), *L. kendalli* (Poll & Stewart, 1977), *L. nkambae* (Staeck, 1978), and the most recently described species *L. mimicus* (Schelly, Takahashi, Bills & Hori, 2007). *Lepidiolamprologus profundicola* (Poll, 1949), placed in the restricted *Lepidiolamprologus* by Schelly (2007) is overall dark in color and the dark blotches on the side are much less conspicuous than in the other species of *Lepidiolamprologus*. The remaining species in *Lepidiolamprologus* as restricted by Schelly (2007) is *L. attenuatus* (Steindachner, 1909). It differs from the others in having only two rows of dark blotches along the side, one along the dorsal-fin base, and the other along the middle of the side. The median blotch in the lower row is elongate and much more prominent than the remaining blotches which may fade away completely.

Surveys by the two junior authors along the Tanzanian coast provided material identified as *L. elongatus*, *L. kendalli*, and *L. mimicus*, establishing considerably extended vouchered geographical distributions for the latter two species, but also a sample very similar to those species, differing from known species in details of the color pattern and a combination of other character states. The objective of this paper is to provide a formal description of the new species.