



Article

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***Traccatichthys tuberculum*, a new species of nemacheiline loach from Guangdong Province, South China (Pisces: Balitoridae)**

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Abstract

Traccatichthys tuberculum, new species, is herein described from the Jian-Jiang, a coastal river in Guangdong Province, South China. Photo by Bosco P.L. Chan. This new species differs from all other Chinese congeners (i.e., *T. pulcher* and *T. zispi*) in interorbital width, caudal-peduncle length, and pectoral-fin length. It, together with *T. zispi*, lacks the color patterns of the dorsal and anal fins in *T. pulcher*, and differs from *T. zispi* in preanal length. *Traccatichthys tuberculum*, together with all other Chinese congeners, is distinct from the Vietnamese species, *T. taeniatus*, in the shape of the black bar on the caudal-fin base, and the color pattern of the anal fin.

Key words: Balitoridae, *Traccatichthys*, new species, Jian-Jiang, China

Introduction

Traccatichthys was initially erected by Freyhof and Serov (2001) to include two small, colorful species from Laos, central and northern Vietnam, and southern China: *T. taeniatus* (Pellegrin & Chevey 1936) and *T. pulcher* (Nichols & Pope 1927). Prior to the erection of *Traccatichthys*, both species were placed in *Micronoemacheilus* Rendahl 1944 (type species: *Noemacheilus cruciatus* Rendahl 1944) (Mai 1978; Zhu 1995; Kottelat 2001a, b). Freyhof and Serov (2001) concluded that the type species of *Micronoemacheilus* is actually a member of *Yunnanilus* based on their examination of the type material, and that the other two then-recognized species (*M. pulcher* and *M. taeniatus*) should be placed in their own genus, *Traccatichthys*. Prokofiev (2004) determined that two specimens from Hainan Island do not fit the original description of *M. pulcher* in body coloration, and thereby named them as *Micronoemacheilus zispi* (= *T. zispi*). Nguyen and Vo in Nguyen (2005) described *M. bacmeensis* (= *T. bacmeensis*) from northern Vietnam (Ha Giang and Bac Me provinces).

Our ongoing taxonomic research on Chinese nemacheiline loaches reveals that *Traccatichthys* has three species in South China. Two species were previously described: *T. pulcher*, currently known widely from the Pearl River basin in Guangdong, Guangxi and Guizhou provinces, the Yang-Jiang and the Tang-Jiang, two coastal rivers in Guangdong Province, and all coastal rivers in Guangxi Province, and *T. zispi*, so far known only from Hainan Island. The remaining species is unnamed, represented by material from the Jian-Jiang, a coastal river in Guangdong Province. The present study provides a description of this new species.

Materials and methods

All measurements were taken utilizing digital calipers to the nearest 0.1 mm. The last two rays in the dorsal and anal fins are separate to the base, but articulate on the same pterygiophore, and are counted as one. Head length is its lateral length taken from the anteriormost tip of the snout to the hindmost point of the operculum. All other