



## Article

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### Resurrection of the genus *Homalopteroides* (Teleostei: Balitoridae) with a redescription of *H. modestus* (Vinciguerra 1890)

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#### Abstract

The genus *Homalopteroides* Fowler 1905 is resurrected and distinguished from the genus *Homaloptera* van Hasselt 1823 based on a combination of characters including a unique mouth morphology, dorsal-fin origin over pelvic fin,  $\leq 60$  lateral-line scales, and  $\leq 30$  predorsal scales. Species included in *Homalopteroides* are *H. wassinkii* (Bleeker 1853), *H. modestus* (Vinciguerra 1890), *H. rupicola* (Prashad & Mukerji 1929), *H. smithi* (Hora 1932), *H. stephensoni* (Hora 1932), *H. weberi* (Hora 1932), *H. tweediei* (Herre 1940), *H. indochinensis* (Silas 1953), *H. nebulosus* (Alfred 1969), *H. yuwonoi* (Kottelat 1998), and possibly *H. manipurensis* (Arunkumar 1999). *Homalopteroides modestus* (Vinciguerra 1890) is a poorly known species that was originally described from the Meekalan and Meetan rivers of southern Myanmar. It occurs in the Salween, Mae Khlong, and Tenasserim basins, and can be distinguished from all other species of *Homalopteroides* by the combination of caudal-fin pattern (black proximal and distal bars, median blotch), 15 pectoral-fin rays, pectoral-fin length greater than head length,  $5\frac{1}{2}$ – $6\frac{1}{2}$  scales above and 5–6 scales below the lateral line (to the pelvic fin), 39–44 total lateral-line pores, no axillary pelvic-fin lobe, pelvic fin not reaching anus, orbital length less than interorbital width in adult, and maxillary barbel reaching to or slightly past the anterior orbital rim.

**Key words:** *Homaloptera*, *Balitoropsis*, *Homalopterula*, *Chopraia*, loaches

#### Introduction

*Homaloptera* van Hasselt 1823 is the most species-rich genus of the subfamily Balitorinae, comprising 35 valid species (Eschmeyer & Fricke 2012). It has been distinguished from other genera of the subfamily Balitorinae in having smooth lips vs. lips with papillae (*Balitora* Gray 1830, *Hemimyzon* Regan 1911, *Annamia* Hora 1932, *Sinogastromyzon* Fang 1930, *Metahomaloptera* Chang 1944, *Jinshaia* Kottelat & Chu 1988), a single barbel at each corner of the mouth vs. more than one barbel (*Lepturichthys* Regan 1911, *Neohomaloptera* Herre 1944, *Cryptotora* Kottelat 1998), the gill opening extending to the ventral surface of the body vs. not reaching the ventral surface (*Bhavania* Hora 1920), and absence vs. presence of two papillae between the lateral portions of the lower lip (*Travancoria* Hora 1941). Species of *Homaloptera* occur in India, Myanmar, China, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and south to Sumatra, Java, and Borneo. The species have a diverse range in body size, with the smallest species, *Homaloptera tweediei* Herre 1940, reaching 26 mm SL (Herre 1940), and the largest, *Homaloptera parclitella* Tan and Ng 2005, reaching 102 mm SL (Tan & Ng 2005).

Comparisons of specimens from the Mae Khlong basin previously identified as *Homaloptera smithi* Hora 1932 with specimens of all other species of *Homaloptera* available (26 of 35 valid species) led to the redescription of the poorly known and often misidentified *Homaloptera modesta* (Vinciguerra 1890) and to the resurrection of the genus *Homalopteroides*. Fowler (1905) removed *Homaloptera wassinkii* Bleeker 1953 from *Homaloptera* and placed it in a new genus *Homalopteroides*, which was distinguished from *Homaloptera* by having the origin of the dorsal fin posterior, rather than anterior, to the origin of the pelvic fin (Fowler 1905). This new genus, based on a single character, was given subgeneric rank by later authors (Weber & de Beaufort 1916; Fowler 1940; Silas 1953; Alfred 1969; Menon 1987). More recently, *Homalopteroides* was recognized as being possibly a distinct genus