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Description of three new species of *Hylopanchax* Poll & Lambert, 1965 from the central Congo Basin (Cyprinodontiformes: Poeciliidae: Procatopodini) with a redefinition of the genus

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Abstract

Three new species of the lampeye genus *Hylopanchax* are described from the central Congo basin: *H. leki*, new species, *H. ndeko*, new species, and *H. moke*, new species. These differ considerably in body shape from the two previously described species, *H. stictopleuron* and *H. silvestris*, with two deep bodied and one small and slender species. A redefinition of the diagnostic characters of the genus *Hylopanchax* is presented, including pronounced sexual dimorphism.

Key words: *Hylopanchax leki*, new species, *H. ndeko*, new species, *H. moke*, new species, *H. silvestris*, *H. stictopleuron*, Lokoro drainage, Mai Ndombe, Salonga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo

Resumé

Trois nouvelles espèces du genre ‘lampeye’ *Hylopanchax* sont décrites du bassin central du Congo: *H. leki*, nouvelle espèce, *H. ndeko*, nouvelle espèce et *H. moke*, nouvelle espèce. Celles-ci diffèrent considérablement des deux espèces décrites auparavant, *H. stictopleuron* et *H. silvestris*, par la forme du corps, avec deux espèces à corps assez élevée et une plus élancée et petite. Une redéfinition des caractères diagnostiques du genre *Hylopanchax* est présentée, incluant un dimorphisme sexuel prononcé.

Introduction

The poeciliid “lampeye” genus *Hylopanchax* Poll & Lambert, 1965 has a huge distribution in the Congo and Ivindo drainage systems (Poll & Lambert 1965, Huber 1982, Wildekamp 2004, Van der Zee et al. 2007, Fig. 1). It was separated taxonomically from *Hypsopanchax* Myers, 1924 based on its postopercular squamation pattern with large black edged anterior scales getting smaller towards the caudal peduncle, the lower number of longitudinal scales, a more slender and compressed body, and the presence of branchiostegal appendages in males (Poll & Lambert 1965).

The first described species, *Hylopanchax stictopleuron* (Fowler, 1949) from Oka, Congo basin, Republic of Congo, was originally placed in the nothobranchiid genus *Epiplatys* Gill, 1862. The second described species in the genus is *Hylopanchax silvestris* (Poll & Lambert, 1958) from the Lusambila River near Yangambi in the Democratic Republic of Congo, originally placed in *Hypsopanchax*. No other *Hylopanchax* species have been described since 1958.

Hylopanchax silvestris was later synonymized with *H. stictopleuron* by Huber (1982). However, based on re-