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## ***Horabagrus melanosoma*: a junior synonym of *Horabagrus brachysoma* (Teleostei: Horabagridae)**

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### **Abstract**

*Horabagrus melanosoma* was described from West Venpala in the lower reaches of the Manimala River, in the state of Kerala, India. It was distinguished from its nearest congener, *H. brachysoma* based on a combination of characters including darker body colour, shorter pelvic fin and greater number of anal fin rays. Examination of the type material revealed significant morphometric and meristic discrepancies with the original description. Based on multivariate morphometric, and genetic analysis of topotypical specimens, we propose that *H. melanosoma* should be treated as a junior synonym of *H. brachysoma*.

**Key words:** catfish, India, taxonomy, Western Ghats

### **Introduction**

Plamoottil & Abraham (2013) described *Horabagrus melanosoma* (Fig. 1) as a medium-sized bagrid catfish, from West Venpala in the lower reaches of the Manimala River, Kerala, India (Fig. 2). The authors distinguished *H. melanosoma* from its nearest congener, *H. brachysoma*, based on a combination of characters including darker body colour, shorter pelvic fin, greater number of anal-fin rays, and several other non-overlapping morphometric characters (Plamoottil & Abraham 2013). Examination of the type material of *H. melanosoma* deposited at the Southern Regional Center of the Zoological Survey of India (SRC-ZSI), Calicut, India, revealed several discrepancies with the original description. Further, morphometric and meristic analysis of the type material, and molecular analysis of topotypic specimens suggests that *H. melanosoma* is conspecific with *H. brachysoma* (Günther).

### **Material and methods**

**Study sites and sampling.** Topotypes of *H. melanosoma* were collected from Manimala River, Kerala, India (9°21'40"N, 76°35'10"E, 9 m a.s.l), and putative topotypes of *H. brachysoma* were collected from the Periyar, Chalakudy and Karuvannoor Rivers (part of the erstwhile Cochin State), and those of *H. nigricollaris* Pethiyagoda & Kottelat 1994 from Vettilapara, Chalakudy River, Kerala. The specimens were fixed in 10% formalin and

*Horabagrus nigricollaris*, 12 ex., CRG-SAC. 2013.05.1-12, Vettilapara, Chalakudy River, Kerala, India, collected by Anvar Ali, 01.05.2013

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