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***Aperioptus pictorius* Richardson 1848 is a senior synonym of *Acanthopsoides molobrion* Siebert 1991, and *Aperioptus* is a senior synonym of *Acanthopsoides* Fowler 1934 (Cypriniformes: Cobitidae)**

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Abstract

Aperioptus pictorius was described by Richardson in 1848 with limited textual information but with an illustration sufficient to confirm the species as one currently recognized as *Acanthopsoides molobrion* making *Aperioptus* a senior synonym of *Acanthopsoides* Fowler 1934 and *A. pictorius* a senior synonym of *Acanthopsoides molobrion* Siebert 1991. Species to be recognized in *Aperioptus* in addition to *A. molobrion* are *A. gracilis* (Fowler 1934), *A. gracilentus* (Smith 1945), *A. delphax* (Siebert 1991), *A. hapalias* (Siebert 1991), and *A. robertsi* (Siebert 1991). *Aperioptus* also is a senior synonym of *Neacanthopsis* Smith 1945, type species *Neacanthopsis gracilentus*.

Key words: *Acanthopsoides*, *Neacanthopsis*, Teleostei, loaches

Aperioptus pictorius was described by Richardson (1848) with a line drawing and the following text:

“Of this fish I can give no details. There were two specimens which I unfortunately placed in the hands of the artist before I had examined them, except very cursorily. While he was employed in sketching, he put them into a plateful of water for the purpose of expanding their fins more perfectly, and forgetting that he had not returned them into the spirits, they were thrown out and lost. The general aspect of the fish is that of a slender *Galaxias*, but there are no teeth on the jaws. The orifice of the mouth is a narrow vertical oval, which is restricted on the sides by membranous processes. The figure is of the natural size. Hab. Borneo.”

Although the lack of type specimens and the limited text in the original description has caused confusion over the identity of *A. pictorius*, the name has appeared several times in print. It was listed by Gunther (1868), and Popta (1906) listed *A. pictorius* as a species found in Sarawak. Vaillant (1902) revised the diagnosis of *Aperioptus*, but did so based on his description of *Aperioptus megalomycter*, now considered valid as *Ellopostoma megalomycter* (Vaillant 1902) and placed in the family Ellopostomatidae (Bohlen & Šlechtová, 2009; Chen, *et al.*, 2009). Weber and de Beaufort (1916:238–239) described *A. pictorius* as a species of “doubtful systematic position and habitat” and reproduced the figure from Richardson's (1848) original description. Roberts (1972) expressed the opinion that the original description of *A. pictorius* was insufficient to identify the species, and most recently Kottelat (2012) treated *Aperioptus* and *A. pictorius* as questionable synonyms of *Acanthopsis* and *Acanthopsis dialuzona*, respectively.

Although Richardson's text provides little diagnostic information, the accompanying figure, which Richardson noted was of the same approximate size as the two specimens he examined, is more informative. The figured specimen (Fig. 1) is long and slender with a somewhat elongated snout and many small dark spots on the upper side from the head to the caudal peduncle. All of these characteristics are consistent with those of species now assigned to the genus *Acanthopsoides* Fowler 1934 as described mostly recently by Siebert (1991a).