



On the validity of *Placogobio varidiscus* (Thoni & Arrindell, 2025)

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Endrueweit (2025) reclassifies and describes many new cypriniform and siluriform taxa in the Red River Basin of Northern Vietnam and Southeastern China. In this study, Endrueweit (2025) described *Placogobio basipunctatus*, a new cyprinid species from the Lo River Basin of Yunnan, China. Additionally, this work includes the synonymization of the genus *Supradiscus* (Li, Zhou, Sun & Yun) with *Placogobio* Nguyen, 2002.

Placogobio varidiscus (Thoni and Arrindell) was described in September 2025. Some weeks after *P. varidiscus* was described, it was synonymized by Fricke *et al.* 2026, citing “M. Endrueweit, pers. comm., Oct. 2025” as the justification. Fricke *et al.* (2026) state that *S. varidiscus* was published September 23rd, 2025, while Endrueweit’s *P. basipunctatus* publication date is September 20th, 2025. As there is no published record of this communication, one can only speculate what was included to justify this. It could be, perhaps, that both species appear to be from the same genus (given similar oral disc structures) and occur in the same large watershed (Lo River), or perhaps, that there are minor similarities with respect to pigmentation and some meristic counts. The point of this paper is to distinguish *P. varidiscus* from *P. basipunctatus* in a timely manner, to reduce unnecessary confusion in the regional ichthyofaunal taxonomy. This work does not aim to clarify the validity of either genus at the moment, as more work is required.

Comparison between *Placogobio basipunctatus* and *P. varidiscus*

The description of *P. basipunctatus* is brief, and includes one small black and white image of the holotype, as well as one black and white photo of the mouth structure (elsewhere in the book, as part of a larger image comparing mouth morphologies). The diagnostic characters for this species are described as: lateral line scales 39–40, a mental disc with a median incision that does not reach the central callus pad, 1–2 fleshy buds on the disc, anus located directly anterior to anal-fin origin, pectoral fin reaching dorsal fin origin, and dorsal fin with a black mark found along its base with a conspicuous light spot at its origin.

Thoni and Arrindell (2025) diagnose *P. varidiscus* by the following set of characters: 36–39 lateral line scales (modally 37), 12 circumpeduncular scales rows, 11–13 predorsal scales, a series of black spots on the intermedial membranes of the dorsal fin, and (in nearly all specimens) the presence of a cleft splitting the posterior half of the central callus pad and oral disc. The spots on the dorsal fin occur on the membranes immediately anterior to the fin rays, roughly $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the way up the fin.

Scale counts alone show these two species are different. That, combined with very different dorsal-fin pigmentation and disc morphology, wherein the medial cleft continues onto the central callus pad (which is expressly stated as not the condition in *B. basipunctatus*) makes the case stronger. In addition to this, the pectoral fins of the pictured holotype of *P. varidiscus* do not reach the dorsal origin, a trait which is diagnostic for *B. basipunctatus*. There is also a weakly defined lateral band running the length of the body in *P. varidiscus* that is not present in the photographed holotype of *P. basipunctatus*. All of these differences combined refute the synonymization and stress that the unnecessary confusion brought by this synonymization was unwarranted.

A note on the date of publication

While it has been shown above that the *P. basipunctatus* and *P. varidiscus* are not the same species based on morphology, there are also questions arising as to which name *would* be given seniority in the event of synonymization. According to the ICZN section 21.3 on publication date: “If the day of publication is not specified in a work, the earliest day the work is demonstrated to be in existence as published work is to be adopted as the date of publication, but in the absence of such evidence that to be adopted is [21.3.1] the last day of the month when the month and year, but not the day are specified or demonstrated, or [21.3.2] the last day of the year when only the year is specified.” With online self-publication, the publication date becomes nebulous and rules surrounding this should be reassessed to accommodate the

new era of online self-publication. However, the printed publication date of Endruweit (2025) is written simply as 2025 on one part of the page, and further down on the same page written as the 21st of August, 2024. The latter could be an error by the author/publisher, who released an earlier volume of this work on different groups of fishes in 2024. If the information above is true, then the publication date is simply 2025, and thus, rule 21.3.2 would apply, and the date of December 31, 2025 would be given to all new species described in this book. While this seems like a minor error, the consequences are significant and are at least partially the result of self-publishing, side-stepping the peer-review and publication process of journal publication.

References

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- ICZN (1999) *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature. Fourth Edition*. The International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature, London, 306 pp.
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