

A new species of the catfish genus *Akysis* (Siluriformes: Akysidae) from southern Borneo

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Abstract

A new species of akysid catfish, *Akysis meridionalis*, is described from the Barito River drainage of southern Borneo. The new species is distinguished from all congeners by the following combination of characters: 1) upper jaw projects more strongly forward, premaxillary teeth exposed when the mouth is closed; 2) head width 18.2–19.4 % SL, body depth at anus 10.7–11.5 % SL, depth of caudal peduncle 6.5–6.7 % SL, interorbital distance 32–34 % HL, length of maxillary barbels 104–110 % HL; 3) presence of 5 teeth on posterior edge of the pectoral spine; and 4) colour pattern of dark background with light patches. *Akysis meridionalis* is the first record of the genus from the Barito River drainage.

Key words. Siluriformes, Akysidae, *Akysis*, new species, southern Borneo

Introduction

Akysid catfishes are known from across a large area of Southeast Asia. Roberts (1989) described them as small to minute fishes with cryptic colouration, tiny eyes, and completely covered with unculiferous plaques or tubercles. In some genera some of the tubercles on the body are enlarged and arranged in distinctive longitudinal rows, the number of which may be diagnostic. Among akysids, fishes of the genus *Akysis* are very small, cryptically coloured species generally found in fast-flowing streams with a sandy or rocky bottom and, until recently they have been poorly studied, mainly due to the paucity of material in museum collections.

Recent work (e.g. Ng, 1996; Ng & Kottelat, 1996, 1998, 2000; Ng & Tan, 1999; Ng & Freyhof, 2003; Ng & Kottelat, 2004) indicates that *Akysis* is more diverse than previously