

The identity of catfishes identified as *Mystus cavasius* (Hamilton, 1822) (Teleostei: Bagridae), with a description of a new species from Myanmar

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Abstract

The identity of South Asian riverine bagrid catfishes usually referred to as *Mystus cavasius* (Hamilton, 1822) is reviewed. Three species comprise what is currently understood as *M. cavasius*: *M. cavasius* s. str. from northern India, *M. seengtee* from southern India and a new species, *M. falcarius*, from the Salween and Irrawaddy river drainages in Myanmar and the shorter river drainages in southern Myanmar. *Mystus seengtee* is resurrected from synonymy with *M. cavasius* and both species are redescribed. The three species differ from other congeners with a long-based adipose fin in having a combination of a black spot in front of the dorsal-spine base, a dark humeral mark, a body without distinct midlateral stripes, very long maxillary barbels reaching to caudal-fin base, dorsal spine short and feebly serrate, tall dorsal fin, and 13–29 gill rakers. These species differ from each other in dorsal fin shape, shape of the predorsal profile, coloration, and number of rakers on the first gill arch.

Key words: *Mystus cavasius* *Mystus seengtee*, *Mystus falcarius*, South Asia

Introduction

Mystus Scopoli, 1777, is a diverse group of small- to medium-sized bagrid catfishes, from South Asia, with 23 of the 46 nominal species known from there (Talwar & Jhingran, 1991). Despite two previous studies (Jayaram, 1954; Jayaram & Anuradha Sanyal, 2003), the diversity and distribution of the group in South Asia is not well known. Phylogenetic relationships within the genus are also poorly understood, although Mo (1991) suggested there are two major lineages. Hardman (2005) recently confirmed the paraphyly of *Mystus*.

One group of species (considered *Mystus* s. str. by Roberts, 1994) can be easily distinguished from other congeners in having a very long adipose-fin base that spans