



Anatomy and phylogenetic relationships of a new catfish species from northeastern Argentina with comments on the phylogenetic relationships of the genus *Rhamdella* Eigenmann and Eigenmann 1888 (Siluriformes, Heptapteridae)

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Abstract

Rhamdella cainguae, a new species of the family Heptapteridae is described from the Arroyo Cuña-Pirú, a tributary of the Río Paraná, in the subtropical forest of Misiones, northeastern Argentina. The presence of a large differentiated ovoid area on the supraorbital laterosensory canal along the frontal-sphenotic boundary, delimited by the slender dorsal walls of the bones, and with no foramen for a laterosensory branch, is an autapomorphy for *R. cainguae*. A detailed description of the skeleton and laterosensory system of *R. cainguae* is provided. The genus *Rhamdella* is rediagnosed on the basis of three autapomorphies: a very large opening in the frontal for the exit of the s6 (epiphyseal) branch of the supraorbital laterosensory canal (reversed in *R. rusbyi*), a large optic foramen, and a dark stripe along the lateral surface of the body (reversed in *R. rusbyi*). *Rhamdella* is considered to be the sister group of a large heptapterid clade composed of the *Nemuroglanis* sub-clade plus the genera *Brachyglanis*, *Gladioglanis*, *Leptorhamdia*, and *Myoglanis*. *Rhamdella* is herein restricted to five valid species: *R. aymarae*, *R. cainguae*, *R. eriarcha*, *R. longiuscula*, and *R. rusbyi*. A sister group relationship between *R. aymarae* and *R. rusbyi* is supported by three synapomorphies. *Rhamdella cainguae* shares 12 apomorphic features with *R. eriarcha* and *R. longiuscula*.

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