



***Tonlesapia amnica*, a new species of dragonet (Teleostei: Callionymidae) from the Mekong delta**

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Abstract

Tonlesapia amnica, a new species of dragonet lacking a first dorsal fin, is described from the Mekong River delta in southern Vietnam. It can be distinguished from its sole congener, *T. tsukawakii*, in having the infraorbital canal extending beyond (vs. not reaching) ventral margin of orbit, a more slender body (7.2–13.5% SL vs. 14.3–15.0) and caudal peduncle (4.4–5.2% SL vs. 5.1–6.3), a smaller eye (6.5–8.3% SL vs. 8.7–9.2) and more dorsal-fin rays (9–10 vs. 8).

Key words: Vietnam, Perciformes, Callionymoidei, Southeast Asia

Introduction

Members of the family Callionymidae are benthic marine fishes with a largely circumtropical distribution, found in a variety of coastal habitats at depths of up to 900 m (Fricke, 2002). There are more than 180 species in the family (Fricke, 2002), with the bulk of its diversity in the Indo-Pacific region. The phylogeny of callionymids is not well understood: there has been only one such study (Nakabo, 1983). Furthermore, differences in the genus-level classifications of the Callionymidae exist (Fricke 1983, 2002; Nakabo, 1982).

Fishes collected during a recent ichthyofaunal survey in the Mekong River delta, southern Vietnam by the second author included a callionymid species lacking a first dorsal fin. Although initially believed to be *Tonlesapia tsukawakii* Motomura & Mukai, 2006, a species lacking the first dorsal fin recently described from the Mekong River drainage, close examination of the Vietnamese material revealed differences that showed it to be distinct. The description of this material as *Tonlesapia amnica*, new species, forms the basis of this study.

Material and methods

Measurements were made point to point with dial calipers and data recorded to tenths of a millimeter. Counts and measurements were made on the left side of specimens whenever possible, following Fricke (1983). Subunits of the head are presented as proportions of head length (HL). Head length and measurements of body parts are given as proportions of standard length (SL). Numbers in parentheses after a particular fin-ray count refer to the number of specimens with that particular count, while the condition in the holotype is marked with an asterisk. Terminology for the cephalic lateralis system follows that of Nakabo (1982).

Material examined in this study is deposited in the following institutions: California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco (CAS) and University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor (UMMZ). Data for *C. belcheri*, *C. fluviatilis*, *C. octostigmatus*, *C. variegatus* and *Synchiropus lateralis* are from Fricke (1983). Generic assignments of other callionymid species mentioned follow Fricke (1983, 2002).