



Description of a new species of the genus *Yunnanilus* Nichols, 1925 (Teleostei: Nemacheilidae) from Yunnan, China

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Abstract

A new species of the family Nemacheilidae, *Yunnanilus niulanensis*, is described from the upper reach of the Niulanjiang River, a branch of the Jinsha River, in Songming County, Yunnan Province, China. It can be distinguished from all other *Yunnanilus* species by the combination of the following characters: dorsal fin rays iii, 9; anal fin rays iii, 5; pectoral fin rays i, 11; pelvic fin rays i, 7–8; branched caudal fin rays 14; mouth subterminal; 9–11 gillrakers on the inner side of the first gill arch, no gillrakers on the outer side; upper two-thirds of body and head covered by large brown spots; fins hyaline; body covered with scales; no lateral line; no cephalic sensory pores; caudal-peduncle length less than caudal-peduncle depth; caudal-peduncle length 9.2–11.1 % SL; body depth 21.0–25.8 % SL; eye diameter 5.4–6.0 % SL; interorbital width 9.9–12.1 % SL.

Key words: *Yunnanilus niulanensis*, Nemacheilidae, new species, Yunnan, China

Introduction

Loaches of the genus *Yunnanilus* Nichols, 1925 are small-bodied fishes that mainly occur in the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau of China, showing a particular affinity for karstic areas. The genus can easily be distinguished from the other genera in Nemacheilidae by its widely separated nostrils, the anterior one being situated at the tip of a tube, and a relatively deep body (Kottelat & Chu, 1988; Yang, 1990; Zhu, 1989; Zhu, 1995). Kottelat & Chu (1988) revised the genus and described six new species occurring in Yunnan Province, while indicating that there were several more undescribed species occurring in the Yunnan Plateau. This genus was at the time known only from the Yunnan Plateau and Inlé Lake in Burma. Subsequently, a series of *Yunnanilus* species were described in succession from Sichuan Province, Guizhou Province, and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Up to now, there have been 30 species of *Yunnanilus* described from the Yunnan Plateau and its adjacent regions in the southeast of China (Cao, 1989; Ding, 1992; Ding, 1995; Li & Duan, 1999; Li *et al.*, 1994; Li *et al.*, 2000; Li, 1999; Li, 2004; Yang, 1990; Yang & Chen, 1995; Yang, 1991; Zhou & He, 1989; Yang *et al.*, 2004; Gan *et al.*, 2007; Zhu *et al.*, 2009; An *et al.*, 2009).

In November 2006, some specimens of the genus *Yunnanilus* were collected from the upper reaches of the Niulanjiang River (one of the larger tributaries of Jinsha River, which is the upper reach of Yangtze River) in Yanglin Town, Songming County, Yunnan Province, China. Comparison shows that these specimens represent a previously undescribed species of *Yunnanilus*, and we herein provide a description of the new species and compare it to its congeners.