



# Article

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## A new species of *Metzia* (Cypriniformes: Cyprinidae) from Northern Laos

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### Abstract

A new cyprinid fish, *Metzia bounthobi*, is described on the basis of 18 specimens (including 10 specimens in type series) from the Mekong River basin in Phongsaly and Luang Prabang Provinces, northern Laos. The species is distinguished from congeners by having the following diagnostic traits: 18–20 branched anal-fin rays (vs. 10–18 in the others); 49–55 lateral-line scale rows (vs. 35–48); 33–36 predorsal scale rows (vs. 15–20); 20–22 circumpeduncular scale rows (vs. 14–18); 8–10 gill rakers on outer surface of first gill arch (vs. 12–18). The new species also resembles species of *Hemiculterella*, *Ischikauia* and at least some species of *Anabarilius*, in sharing a sharp keel developed only between the base of the pelvic fin and anus, soft last unbranched dorsal-fin ray, and air bladder composed of two chambers; however, *M. bounthobi* differs in having a considerably rounded snout (vs. pointed in *Hemiculterella*, *Ischikauia* and *Anabarilius*), 18–20 branched anal-fin rays (vs. 8–17 in *Hemiculterella*, *Ischikauia* and *Anabarilius*), 49–55 lateral-line scale rows (vs. more than 58 in *Ischikauia* and *Anabarilius*, except for *A. transmontana* with 54–57), air bladder with rounded posterior end (vs. posterior end with a small lobe at least in *Hemiculterella*) and 39–40 vertebrae (vs. 40–43, 42–43 and 43–48 in *Hemiculterella*, *Ischikauia* and *Anabarilius*, respectively).

**Key words:** Cypriniformes, Cyprinidae, *Metzia bounthobi*, new species, Laos

### Introduction

Fishes of the cyprinid genus *Metzia* Jordan and Thompson are small to medium-sized (up to about 15 cm in standard length), dull colored or silvery species, known from freshwater streams of southern China, Taiwan and northern Vietnam; one species, *M. lineata* (Pellegrin), has been recently introduced into northern Laos from China (Kottelat 2001a; Welcomme & Vidthayanon 2003). Recently Gan *et al.* (2009) revised the genus, and recognized the following six species: *M. alba* (Nguyen); *M. formosae* (Oshima); *M. hautus* (Nguyen); *M. lineata*; *M. longinasus* Gan, Lan and Zhang; *M. mesembrinum* (Jordan and Evermann). Species of *Metzia* share a sharp keel restricted to the vent between the pelvic-fin base and anus, an air bladder composed of two chambers, and last unbranched dorsal-fin ray being soft (not spinous). These characters are also shared by some other cyprinid genera, i.e., *Hemiculterella* Warpachowski, *Ischikauia* Jordan and Snyder and some species of *Anabarilius* Cockerell. These latter genera are separated from *Metzia* by the scale counts and some other morphological details in their osteology and air bladder (Luo & Chen *in* Chen *et al.* 1998; Chen & Fang 2002; Gan *et al.* 2009; Takeuchi & Hosoya 2011). Although the monophyly and the limits of the genus are still open to debate (Gan *et al.* 2009; Tang *et al.* 2010), we tentatively follow Kottelat (2001b) and Gan *et al.* (2009), who consider *Rasborinus* Oshima as a junior synonym of *Metzia*.

On 2007–2010, the Nagao Natural Environment Foundation, Tokyo (NEF), and the National University of Laos, Vientiane (NUOL), conducted extensive field surveys of the fishes of Laos. During a course of the surveys, Bounthob Praxaysombath and his colleagues in the NUOL (including the third author) collected eight specimens of