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Homatula wuliangensis (Teleostei: Nemacheilidae), a new loach from Yunnan, China

RUI MIN, JUN-XING YANG* & XIAO-YONG CHEN*

State key laboratory of Genetic Resources and Evolution, Kunming Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Kunming, China

**Corresponding authors. Current address: Kunming Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, 32 Jiao Chang Dong Road, Kunming, Yunnan, China*

E-mail: yangjx@mail.kiz.ac.cn, chenxy@mail.kiz.ac.cn.

Abstract

A new species of *Homatula*, *Homatula wuliangensis*, is described from the Lancang River of the Wuliang Mountain, Pu-Er City, Jingdong County, Yunnan Province, China. *Homatula wuliangensis* sp. nov. is readily distinguished from other species of *Homatula* by the combination of several morphological characters, including a long upper lobe of the caudal fin relative to the lower lobe, high and long dorsal adipose crest, series of 22–26 very closely aligned body markings, body scaled, and 41–42 vertebrae. In addition, *H. wuliangensis* differs from the similar species *H. anguillioides* in having shorter barbels, spots on the caudal fin, the origin of the pelvic fin under the last simple dorsal-fin ray, and a pointed axillary pelvic lobe divided from the body. The new species is further distinguished from the similar species *H. pysnolepis* in having shorter barbels, lacking a notch on the lower jaw, and lacking vermiform markings on top of the head.

Key words: Homatula, Paracobitis, Nemacheilidae, Yunnan, China

Introduction

The genus *Homatula* was described by Nichols (1925) as a subgenus of *Barbatula* with the type species being *Nemacheilus potanini* Günther 1896 from Minjiang (a tributary of Jinsha River, Sichuan, China). Because species of *Homatula* have adipose keels along the dorsal and ventral margins of the caudal peduncle highly resembling those of *Paracobitis* Bleeker 1863, many researchers have treated *Homatula* as a synonym of *Paracobitis* and traditionally ascribed all Chinese nemacheiline species with adipose keels of this nature to *Paracobitis* (Zhu & Wang 1985; Zhu & Cao 1988; Zhu 1989; Chu & Chen 1990; Ding & Deng 1990; Zhou & He 1993; Min *et al.* 2010). However, the type species of *Paracobitis*, as designated by Bleeker 1863, is *Cobitis malaptera* Cuvier & Valenciennes 1846 from Syria. All species of *Paracobitis* along the western slope of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau have 7 branched dorsal-fin rays in the majority of individuals and a truncate posterior margin of the caudal fin. In contrast, in all species from the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, on the eastern slope of Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, the majority of individuals have 8 branched dorsal-fin rays and a rounded posterior margin on the caudal fin. Considering these morphological differences and the great geological disjunction by the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, we follow the suggestion of Kottelat (1990) and Bănărescu and Nalbant (1995) to treat these species as two independent lineages: all species endemic to the western slope of the Plateau as *Paracobitis*, and all species endemic to the eastern slope of the Plateau as *Homatula*.

Thus far, a total of 11 valid species of *Homatula* have been reported from the eastern slope of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, China: *H. anguillioides* (Zhu & Wang 1985), *H. acuticephala* (Zhou & He 1993), *H. erhaiensis* (Zhu & Cao 1988), *H. variegata* (Sauvage & Dabry 1874), *H. longidorsalis* (Yang *et al*. 1994), *H. oligolepis* (Cao & Zhu in Zheng *et al.* 1989), *H. potanini* (Günther 1896), *H. wujiangensis* (Ding & Deng 1990), *H. nanpanjiangensis* (Min *et al.* 2010), *H. pycnolepis* (Hu & Zhang 2010), *H. laxiclathra* (Gu & Zhang 2012). Herein, we describe an additional species of *Homatula*.

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