Zootaxa 3586: 347–352 (2012)
www.mapress.com/zootaxa/

Article

ISSN 1175-5326 (print edition)
ZOOTAXA
ISSN 1175-5334 (online edition)

urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:D7826BC6-C76B-4C84-A927-91446CE86EEF

Redescription of *Schistura myrmekia* (Fowler 1935) (Teleostei: Nemacheilidae)

RANDAL A. SINGER[1] & LAWRENCE M. PAGE[1]

[1]*Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, Florida, 32611, USA. E-mails: rsinger@flmnh.ufl.edu, lpage1@ufl.edu*

Abstract

Schistura myrmekia (Fowler 1935) was originally described from a single specimen collected from Keng Sok, southwestern Thailand. It was differentiated from a similar species, *S. desmotes* (Fowler 1934), by having four—rather than three—dark bands behind the dorsal fin, and the presence of a wart-like suborbital flap. Although *S. myrmekia* has since been placed in the synonymy of *S. desmotes*, it is distinguishable by the size and orientation of the suborbital flap, a much shorter maxillary barbel, and a more slender appearance. The holotype, the only known specimen of *S. myrmekia*, is redescribed and contrasted with other species of *Schistura* in southern Thailand. *Schistura myrmekia* is known only from the holotype, collected in an area that recently has been highly modified by human activities. Recent efforts to find the species have failed, and it is probably extinct.

Key words: Pisces, Cypriniformes, South Thailand, loach

Introduction

Fowler (1935) described *Nemacheilus myrmekia* from a single specimen 58 mm in total length (ANSP 63546) collected from Keng Sok in southwestern Thailand (Fig. 1A). *Nemacheilus myrmekia* was differentiated from *Nemacheilus desmotes* Fowler 1934 (Fig. 2), a species in which Fowler noted that the "color pattern greatly resembles" that of *N. myrmekia*, by having four rather than three dark bands behind the dorsal fin, and the presence of a "wart-like flap or spine" under the eye (the latter now usually referred to as a suborbital flap). Kottelat (1989) placed *Nemacheilus desmotes* in *Schistura*, and Kottelat (1990) placed *S. myrmekia* in the synonymy of *S. desmotes*. Kottelat (1990) also noted (citing Meyer de Schauensee 1946:4) that the type locality for *N. myrmekia* is about 20 km NNW Hua Hin in peninsular Thailand. This area is drained by several small rivers, the largest of which is the Mae Nam Phetchaburi flowing into the Gulf of Thailand near the border between Phetchaburi and Prachuap Khiri Khan provinces.

In examining geographic variation in populations identified by Kottelat (1990) as *S. desmotes*, it became clear that *S. myrmekia* is a valid species diagnosable from *S. desmotes*. The objective of this paper is to confirm the validity of *S. myrmekia* and redescribe the only known specimen.

Methods

Measurements and meristic counts, including counts of pores in the lateralis system, followed Kottelat (1990). Measurements were made point-to-point with dial calipers to the nearest 0.1 mm. Lengths are standard lengths unless otherwise indicated. Photographs were taken of preserved specimens using a Visionary Digital (Palmyra, Virginia) with Canon 40D and 5D cameras at the Florida Museum of Natural History. Specimens examined were from the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University (ANSP), National Inland Fisheries Institute, Bangkok (NIFI), Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University (MCZ), National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. (USNM), and the Florida Museum of Natural History (UF).

Accepted by R. Pethiyagoda: 13 Nov. 2012; published: 14 Dec. 2012