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Lamprologus markerti, a new lamprologine cichlid (Teleostei: Cichlidae) endemic to the lower Congo River in the Democratic Republic of Congo, west-central Africa

STEPHANIE TOUGAS[1, 2] & MELANIE L.J. STIASSNY[1]

[1]*American Museum of Natural History, Department of Ichthyology, Central Park West at 79th Street, New York, New York 10024. E-mail: mljs@amnh.org*
[2]*Fordham University, Department of Biological Sciences, 441 East Fordham Road, Bronx, New York 10458. E-mail: stougas@fordham.edu*

Abstract

A new *Lamprologus* is described from the lower Congo River (LCR) in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Lamprologus markerti*, new species, is readily distinguished from *L. tigripictilis* and *L. werneri*, the LCR endemic lamprologines with which it was once taxonomically conflated, in the possession of a reduced number of gill rakers on the first arch (9–11 versus 12–17), a longer head (32.1–34.7% SL versus 29.3–31.9 and 29.1–32.9% SL, respectively), and a longer predorsal length (33.0–35.9% SL versus 29.3–32.7 and 28.5–32.6% SL, respectively). Further, *L. markerti* lacks a second intestinal loop present in both *L. tigripictilis* and *L. werneri*, and has a highly reduced infraorbital series often consisting of a single first infraorbital (lachrymal) element.

Key words: new riverine *Lamprologus*, Bas Congo endemism

Resumé

Une nouvelle espèce de *Lamprologus* est décrite du cours inférieur du fleuve Congo en République Démocratique du Congo. La nouvelle espèce, *Lamprologus markerti*, se distingue facilement de *L. tigripictilis* et *L. werneri*, deux autres *Lamprologus* endémiques de cette partie du fleuve Congo avec lesquels il a été une fois confondu du point de vue taxonomique, par un nombre réduit de branchiospines sur le premier arc branchial (9–11 contre 12–17), une tête plus allongée (32,1–34,7% LS contre respectivement 29,3–31,9 et 28,5–32,6%). En outre l'intestin de *Lamprologus markerti* n'a pas la deuxième boucle présente chez *L. tigripictilis* et *L. werneri*, et l'espèce possède une série de sous-orbitaires très réduits, ne comprenant souvent qu'un seul premier élément infraorbital (le lacrymal).

Introduction

The lower Congo River (LCR), a relatively short stretch of about 420 km between Pool Malebo and the Congo's outflow into the Atlantic Ocean, harbors notably high levels of fish species richness and endemism (Stiassny *et al.*, 2011). For cichlids, the LCR is particularly rich with more than 30 species reported, of which 23 are endemic to main channel habitats (Lowenstein *et al.*, 2011). Among these, four *Lamprologus* species (*L. lethops*, *L. teugelsi*, *L. tigripictilis*, and *L. werneri*) are considered LCR endemics.

Roberts and Stewart (1976) recognized two color varieties within *Lamprologus werneri*, and Schelly and Stiassny (2004) elevated the "barred variety" to the species level, naming it *L. tigripictilis* in reference to its markedly striped appearance. Based on the materials available at the time they recorded its presence in the LCR main channel from the region of Wombe, about 90 km downstream from Pool Malebo, to just below the riverside

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