



Article

urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:412F5F00-52C4-450C-9AC5-F1F638936782

A new loach of the genus *Physoschistura* Bănărescu & Nalbant (Teleostei: Nemacheilidae) from Chindwin basin, Manipur, India

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Abstract

The paper describes *Physoschistura tigrinum*, a new nemacheilid from the Chindwin basin in Manipur, India. The new species is distinguished from congeners in having 9½ branched dorsal-fin rays; 12–14 irregularly arranged light reddish brown bars on the side, some of which are broken into blotches and short bars; 5–6 dark brown saddles; forked caudal fin with 9+8 branched rays; axillary pelvic lobe well formed but not prominent; 10 pores in preoperculo-mandibular canal and suborbital flap in the male. The status of *Schistura prashadi* is also discussed, and the species is validated to *Physoschistura*.

Key words: New nemacheilid, Changa River, northeastern India

Introduction

Fishes of the genus *Physoschistura* Bănărescu & Nalbant are small fishes inhabiting the hill streams of northeastern India to southeastern Asia through the southern Yunnan province of China. They are characterized by a deep body with small scales; eight or nine branched dorsal-fin rays; distal margin of the dorsal fin slightly convex; forked caudal fin; posterior chamber of air bladder well developed, not encapsulated, more or less conical, in direct contact with the capsule; strongly arched mouth, 1.5–2.0 times wider than long; and lower lip with a median interruption forming two lateral broadly triangular pads with deep furrows (Bănărescu & Nalbant 1995; Kottelat 1990). Kottelat (1990) reported all the known species of *Physoschistura* to be generally small, attaining not more than 40 mm SL.

Hora (1921) reported that the fish fauna of the southern watershed (= Chindwin basin) of Manipur included the endemic Manipur element and the Burmese element of which the endemic species were confined to hill streams. The Chindwin headwaters in Manipur are the least explored ichthyologically. The hill streams of the basin are ideal habitats for small nemacheilid fishes.

Kottelat (1990) recognized five species of *Physoschistura*, viz., *P. shanensis* (Hora 1929), *P. rivulicola* (Hora 1929), *P. raoi* (Hora 1929), *P. pseudobrunneana* Kottelat 1990, and *P. brunneana* (Annandale 1918) from the Indochinese region. Zhu (1982) described *Nemacheilus meridionalis* from Yunnan Province, China, but Kottelat (2001) treated the species under the genus *Physoschistura*. Böhlen & Šlechtová (2011) considered the species under the new genus *Pteronemacheilus*. Chen *et al.* (2011) described *Physoschistura yunnaniloides* from the Chindwin River drainage, Sagaing Division, Myanmar. Sen and Nalbant (in Singh *et al.* 1981) described *Physoschistura elongata* from Barapani (Brahmaputra basin), India. Lokeshwor *et al.* (2012) and Lokeshwor & Vishwanath (2012) described *Physoschistura tuivaiensis* and *P. chindwinensis*, respectively, from the Tuivai River (Brahmaputra basin) and the Changa River (Chindwin drainage), Manipur, India, and considered *P. elongata* a representative of *Schistura* on the basis of its lip morphology.

A collection of fishes from the Changa River of the Chindwin drainage, Manipur, included an undescribed species, which is herein described as *Physoschistura tigrinum*, new species.