

## NEW DESCRIPTIONS

### ON A NEW SILURID CAT-FISH FROM UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA<sup>1</sup>

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(With a text-figure)

#### INTRODUCTION

During the course of faunistic and ecological studies of the fishes in and around Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India, three specimens of a new cat-fish of the family Siluridae were collected. The specimens are akin to *Wallago attu* (Bloch) but differ from it in possessing a second rayed dorsal fin, not confluent with caudal and for that matter from all other forms of the superfamily Siluroidea where the smooth adipose dorsal fin is not so uncommon. After examination of the specimens and on comparison with the material present in the National Zoological Collections in Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta, (by one of us KCJ), it was thought fit to describe it as a new genus of Silurid cat-fish.

This paper presents the description of this new fish.

#### *Piniwallago* gen. nov.

Similar to *Wallago* Bleeker but distinguishable from it by the presence of second dorsal rayed fin without spines. All other characters as in the type-species.

#### *Piniwallago kanpurensis* sp. nov.

(Fig. 1)

B. 21; D<sub>1</sub> 5-6; D<sub>2</sub> 30-36; P. 1/14; V. 10; A. 84-89 (4/80-85); C. 18. Body depth 5.2 (4.8-5.5); head length 4.43 (4.2-4.6); head width 7.73 (7.7-7.8); head depth 7.7 (7.4-8.1); pre-dorsal length 3.3 (3.29-3.31); post-dorsal length 1.42 (1.42-1.43); pre-pelvic distance 2.7 (2.5-2.9); in standard length. Eye 8.0 (7.9-8.1) in head length; 3.60 (3.45-3.72) in inter-orbital space width; 3.11 (2.81-3.27) in snout length. Width of base of first dorsal fin 9.9 (9.0-10.8); width of base of second dorsal fin 1.21 (0.90-1.57) in head length. Least depth of caudal peduncle 0.43 (0.40-0.47) in its length.

Body elongate, compressed. Head broad, large, depressed. Snout depressed, sharp but not pointed. Eyes large, inferior, visible from below ventral surface. Mouth large, gape extending beyond eyes. Jaws subequal, lower jaw slightly longer than upper with numerous depressible cardiform teeth; an oblique vomerine patch on either side, palatines without teeth.

Barbels two pairs, one each of maxillary and mandibular; former thick reaching slightly beyond origin of anal fin, latter thin, filamentous extending to a distance slightly posterior to the eye. Two dorsal spineless fins,

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first short with five or six rays, second long with 30 to 36 rays and widely apart from caudal fin. Pectoral fin short with a spine. Anal fin long, ending near caudal fin but not confluent with it. Caudal fin forked with rounded lobes. Lateral line simple and complete.

Fresh specimens greyish with a yellow tinge along the back; sides and belly, yellow. First and second dorsal, caudal and anal, grey; ventral, yellow, blending with sides and belly coloration. Alcohol preserved speci-

*Affinity:* This new species is undoubtedly related to the widely distributed *Wallago attu* from which it differs in having the second rayed dorsal fin.

*Discussion:* In Indian Siluroid fishes, the second dorsal fin whenever present, is smooth and adipose except in the genera *Choca* Gray and *Plotosus* Lacépède where the second dorsal is rayed but confluent with the caudal. Jayaram (1966),<sup>4</sup> while discussing the affinities of the genus *Clarotes* Kner of the family Bagridae from Africa, pointed out the unique modifi-

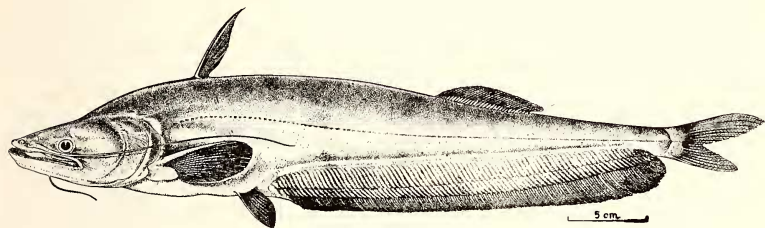


Fig. 1. *Piniwallago kanpurensis* sp. nov.

mens dark grey along upper half of body and anal fin base, light grey along ventral half.

*Distribution:* Ponds in and around Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India. All known specimens were collected from 'Bara Tal' near village Bhitargaon, Tehsil Ghatampur, District Kanpur.

*Holotype:* in Z.S.I., Calcutta, collected on 27-6-1976 from above locality; F.F. 1443.

*Paratypes:* Two, one in Z.S.I., Calcutta, F.F. 1444 and the other in the museum of Zoology Department, D.A.V. College, Kanpur, collected on 5-vii-1976 from above locality.

cation of the adipose dorsal fin as a fin with rays and spines which justified the provision of a generic rank for the African fish. Phylogenetically *Wallago* is primitive and the new genus can be stated to be slightly better evolved in possessing the second rayed dorsal fin.

The species is named after Kanpur, India from where it has been first reported.

<sup>4</sup> JAYARAM, K. C. (1966): Contribution to the study of the Fishes of the family Bagridae. 2. A systematic account of the African genera with a new classification of the family. *Bulletin de l'Institut Fontamental d'Afrique Noire*. Tome xxviii, Ser. A. n 3 juillet pp. 1094-1095.