

# **CAT CHAT**

**The Journal of the Catfish Study Group (UK)**

## **In This Issue**

### **A DORADID DUO**

By  
Julian Dignall

### **PAROTOCINCLUS FROM BRAZIL**

By  
Marco Túlio C Lacerda and Hans-Georg Evers

### **WASP CATS — WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

By  
Steven Grant

### **MEET THE MEMBERS**

### **CONVENTION NOTES**

By  
Peter Liptrot

**Volume Number 2 Issue Number 2  
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# CONTENTS

- 1            **Committee**
- 2            **From the Chair**
- 3            **A Doradid Duo**  
by Julian Dignall
- 7            **Parotocinclus From Brazil**  
by Marco tulio c Lacerda and Hans-Georg Evers
15.         **Meet the Member**  
Brian Walsh
- 16         **Convention Notes**  
by Peter Liptrot
- 19         **Wasp Cats - What's in a name?**  
by Steven Grant

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Dear Members

Well! At last we have some good news. Some members may not be aware that the Leisure Department of Wigan Metropolitan Borough, from whom we used to rent the halls for the Open Show and the Convention, decided to put the cost of their halls up to £300 for the day, allegedly in line with European rules regarding Animal Shows. We naturally can't afford that amount of money.

Our President, under the guise of Functions Manager, promptly shot off to the Leisure Department to sort them out and the result is that we will have the Open Show at our normal meeting hall but the Convention will

stay at Lowton Civic Hall, at the standard cost.

Somehow, people in Wigan Authority thought that a Convention about fish is the same as a Fish Exhibition. Sad people.

Articles and pictures can be sent by e-mail direct to <[bill@catfish.co.uk](mailto:bill@catfish.co.uk)> or by post to

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Ed

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Due to the lack of articles, I had to use one from Jools' website. I realise that not all members are on the 'Net so some of you will not have seen it before. Thanks to Jools and Hans-Georg for their kind permission to reproduce the article.

Front Cover:            Designed by Kathy Jinkins.

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# From the Chair



Welcome everyone to the second issue of 'Cat Chat' 2001.

The **March** meeting included our Spring Auction. This was first of our three annual auctions for this year and, as ever, it turned out to be another a very successful day. There were a total of fourteen lots containing some quality fishes which were expertly put under the hammer by Steve Spencer our regular auctioneer. We unfortunately had a lack of seating due to the school transferring the chairs elsewhere. We have been assured that this will not happen again. We therefore look forward to seeing you at the Open Show Auction in September.

**April:** The meeting was dedicated to the group of catfish known as *Auchenipteridae* more affectionately known as Driftwood Cats. As ever, our president Trevor Morris, brought some live specimens for us to see and gave us a brief insight into their descriptions and habitat. Allan James, of ScotCat fame, continued after the break by showing us some very good slides

of the same family of fishes, which included some of the more rarer to the hobby species. He also gave us a very interesting and informative talk on his experiences with the conditions required for keeping them.

The **May** meeting was the turn of yours truly to do a talk on *Corydoras*, entitled 'Starting from Scratch'. This talk was aimed at the members who don't normally keep and breed *Corydoras*. For the first half I put on a small live display of *Corydoras*. I had chosen eight species that are not commonly seen. I discussed the types of set-ups that I use and the conditions that I consider are most suitable for these interesting little fishes. I answered questions and discussed several related topics throughout. After the break, I put on a series of slides showing about a hundred of the hundred and fifty-three known *Corydoras* species. More discussions followed.

Ian Fuller  
Chairman

## Forthcoming Meetings

15 July 01

Open Forum and Table Show  
(Oddball and Coldwater Catfish)

19 Aug 01

Catfish Habitats

by Pete Liptrot

Table Show (AV Catfish Pairs)

16 Sep 01

OPEN SHOW

See Advert

## Mini Convention

06 January 2002

Members will be pleased to know that Michael Hardman (a speaker from one of the NACG Conventions a couple of years ago) will be returning to England for Christmas. Unfortunately he will not be here in time for a December date and he will return to the USA in early January. Sunday, 6 Jan 02, fits in well with his visit so we have decided to have an extra meeting during this month. The AGM will still be on the third Sunday as planned.

Michael has given us a selection of subjects and the final choice will be left to members. Hopefully the full agenda will be published in the next journal.

# A Doradid Duo

Julian Dignall

(jools@planetcatfish.com)

Those of you who ventured to the Catfish Study Group (CSG) Convention 2001 will have been treated to an excellent array of photographs taken by Erwin Schraml. Sadly, because of bereavement, Erwin was unable to talk us through his wonderful photographs and the job was filled by one of THE names in the catfish world, Dr. Isaac Isbrücker. If you were there you would have also heard Chris Ralph describe an expedition to South America where a number of CSG members (including the author) collected and imported Peruvian catfish. Although mostly written before the convention, by sheer coincidence this article discusses two species shown both in Erwin's slides and encountered on the Peruvian expedition.

These two species belong to the South American catfish family Doradidae, more commonly known as the talking, or thorny, catfish. The first species appears to be a fairly standard doradid (if there is such a thing) and, although uncommonly imported, is documented in most good commercial aquatic literature. The second is a real oddball and, I'm sure you'll get my meaning, is a real catfish person's catfish.

## Peruvian Origins

The intertwined story of these two fish begins in Peru. Prior to setting out on our boat-based collecting expedition our party took a look round some of Iquitos' fish exporters. These all too brief visits merit a short story in themselves but suffice to say that I lost count of the number of species of fish that I saw for the first time alive. Fish were grouped roughly a species per tank, bucket, pail or pool. Closer inspection usually showed that up to 4 or 5 different yet similar species were present in each container. Catfish were everywhere. Such was the impact on the senses that I missed things. Other members of the group appeared at my elbow, tugging my arm and saying "come look at this". I had a video camera - both a blessing and a curse. A curse because I spent most of the time looking at the spectacular array of fish through a black and white viewfinder. A blessing because many of the fish overlooked at the time are now recorded for posterity on CD or website for all to see.

The collecting expedition, my first, was simply amazing. What's also amazing is how quickly you forget the bad bits. Safely home and reviewing one of the aforementioned videotapes I noticed that all was not equal in one tank of small doradids. This particular tank I remember because I bought 10 of the inch long fish within. They were purchased at the ludicrous sum of 50 US cents each - I didn't ask for a discount on numbers. Unfortunately I lost 6 of these either during or soon after return to Scotland (the return journey saw us fly with fish from Iquitos to Lima, an overnight in Lima, Lima to Atlanta, Atlanta to London and London to Edinburgh). The four survivors match pictures of *Rhinodoras dorbignyi* (Kröyer, 1855) found in Baensch (Vol. 2 p499), Sands (Vol. 4 p39) & Schaefer (p88).

## Wigan - The Missing Link

The second part of this tale begins in Wigan, catfish Mecca of the North. During a visit to Pier Aquatics I picked up a group of 10 larger doradids. I was interested in these fish because some looked like *Rhinodoras dorbignyi* and some did not. Those of you who gaze at shop tanks full of the same species in the hope of spotting something different will understand the excitement experienced when half the fish in there appear different.

The existing *R. dorbignyi* were joined by their conspecifics and these new oddballs in a 3ft tank all of their own because all but the acclimatised fish were very skinny indeed. Some feeding up was required and in the meantime research into what these other fish were. I had been told that my new arrivals were exported from Lima, a common point of export since direct flights from Iquitos were cancelled after Peru's main airline went out of business recently.

My search began by looking for Peruvian doradids. This turned out two things. Firstly, that *Rhinodoras dorbignyi* was described from the Rio de la Plata (River Plate) river system in Argentina / Uruguay. No where near Iquitos in Peru and, indeed, a separate river system altogether. Secondly, I stumbled across a line drawing of *Rhynchodoras xingui* Klausewitz &

Rössel, 1961 in Burgess' Catfish Atlas (p205). This had to be at least the correct genus for my mystery doradid. Again, the locality didn't match at all. Both the described species of *Rhynchodoras* are recorded from the upper Rio Xingù, Brazil. Although this is the Amazon River system it's half a continent downstream and hundreds of miles upstream.

In conversation with Robin Warne, another member of the Peru expedition, I was to learn that he had observed both these fish at an outlying (floating) collection station on the river. The local collectors stated that these two fish are found together in the wild. This is a stronger fact than my video footage of them together at the exporters and their subsequent import into the UK together. These fish are definitely present together in the Peruvian Amazon. It is quite possible that the fish shown in some of the more recent publications as *Rhinodoras dorbignyi* is the Peruvian fish. Leaving the taxonomy behind we can now focus on the husbandry of these two fish.

### Doradidae – A Family of Two Halves

From an aquarists point of view the Doradidae like many other catfish families can, if somewhat crudely, be halved into two groups. In one half we have the more familiar nocturnal, thorny or talking catfish types such as the evergreen *Platydoras*, *Amblydoras* or *Agamyxis* spp. They huddle together in packs during the day and cruise the aquarium, with surprising grace, after dark. They are opportunistic feeders and will eat huge amounts of virtually any food in one sitting given the chance. As I mentioned before the *Rhinodoras* or fog doradid to use its descriptively apt common name, is a typical member of this group.

The second half of the family Doradidae is less commonly encountered for sale. They often go under the common name of mouse catfish. As with their rodent namesakes, these timid catfish tend to be more active during dawn and dusk than their nocturnal compatriots. Once settled in the aquarium they can be seen for most of the day. Although both groups of doradids are very sociable animals, many of the representatives of this second group appear to actively shoal when swimming. The most commonly encountered species belong to the genera *Hassar*, *Opsodoras* and *Leptodoras* (incidentally the CSG expedition in Peru encountered representatives of all of these genera). These fish appear more smooth skinned and often have distinctive clusters of minutely feathered barbels. The best description I can think of is that these barbels resemble the tentacles of a squid.

My second species, the *Rhynchodoras*, doesn't sit quite right in either group. It does have the "squid face" of barbels belonging to the second group of doradids but also possesses the more leathery, thorny flanks of the former. Both described *Rhynchodoras* spp. have tiny eyes, the smallest I have seen on any doradid (including *Pterodoras*), again at odds with the large eye of mouse cats. Additionally their behaviour in my aquarium to date is very much that of the former group. They rarely venture forth during the day and then only for food. Their day is spent closely squeezed into whatever preferably wood-based refuge is available; often two or three individuals in an impossibly small crevice.

Care of these two fish is also different. *Rhinodoras* are gregarious, easily fed fish. Some of the individuals have grown two inches or more in 6 months. Baensch lists their full grown size as 6¾ inches – a reasonably sized fish for most aquarists and one that would seem likely given the fishes growth rate to date. They have a fleshy webbed base to their barbels, similar to adult *Megalechis*. Water parameters seem relatively unimportant especially once the fish has been acclimatised. Water temperature is 74F. Currently my group is doing well in a 3ft x 1ft x 1ft aquarium with some *Corydoras* and an entirely random selection of Characins. Although initially kept successfully in a stronger water current, the current in the present surroundings is more in keeping with that expected of a *Corydoras* tank.

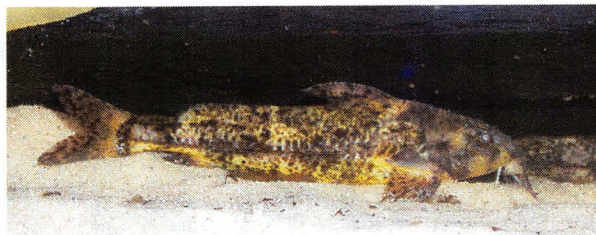
This brings me onto an important point. Initially I kept these two species together in a similar sized aquarium. The *Rhinodoras* prospered but the *Rhynchodoras* didn't appear settled. Most of these fish looked fragile and certainly were not gaining weight. They appeared underfed on import and this situation had not changed with months of care. I decided to move out the prospering *Rhinodoras* and leave the *Rhynchodoras* to themselves. A month later the *Rhynchodoras* are showing signs of growth but are, if anything, even more secretive. Perhaps, being better fed, they are less desperate in their search for food. I have started feeding more heavily at night (quickly finding that flake food is ignored) mainly tetra prima and frozen brineshrimp or bloodworm. There is not trace of this in the morning.

I have no idea as to the full grown size of *Rhynchodoras*. Given their current growth rate, I do not feel that they will turn out to be one of the gentle giants of the family. Again they are being kept in neutral pH at a temperature of around 75F. To me they prefer a little more current and so I have a larger filter in their 3ft x 1ft x 1ft tank.

**My Thoughts.**

The *Rhynchodoras* appear to have a special affinity with wood. When I have watched them feed (at night) they search vertical surfaces first: feeding on the sandy substrate doesn't appear to come naturally to them. Aside from their very small eyes, perhaps the most unusual feature of these fish is a protrusion from their upper lip. Immediately in front of their barbels is an overhanging bony structure almost like a small pick. This puts me most in mind of a beaver's front bucktooth, although the structure is certainly not a tooth or teeth. Whether this is used as a pick in the search of food or simply protection for the delicate barbels in a strong current, I do not know. The fish favours eating at the intake of the internal filter. Here the fish can easily pick off trapped food; their oddly shaped mouths are perfectly adapted for the task. Perhaps in the wild these fish cruise submerged wood (tree trunks?) using their adapted mouths to search out small invertebrates? Both species have long cigar-shaped bodies and a curved dorsal spine. I also wonder about this; perhaps indicative of their life in a flowing river rather than forest stream?

Neither fish are notably expensive or cosmetically striking. That is not to say that these fish don't both merit attention. Both are intriguing and certainly worth a look should you get an opportunity to keep them for yourself. Keeping these fish in numbers is the only way we have a chance of learning more than just how to keep them alive.



**Photographs (on right) from top:**

*Rhinodoras dorbignyi*— Lateral profile of a 3" fish

*Rhyncodoras* sp.— Lateral profile and "in hiding".

*Rhyncodoras* sp.— Close-up of mouth

*Rhyncodoras* sp. in the search for food

*Rhyncodoras* sp. Close-up of head



**References:**

Dr. Rudiger Riehl & Hans A. Baensch. Aquarium Atlas Vol. 2. Tetra Press

Dr. David Sands. Catfishes of the World Vol. 4. Dunure Publishing

Dr. Burgess. An Atlas of Freshwater and Marine Catfishes. TFH.



# **CATFISH STUDY GROUP (UK)**

# **OPEN SHOW**

**16 SEPTEMBER 2001**

**St Elizabeth's Parish Hall  
Aspull, WIGAN**

## **Catfish Classes Only**

**Doors Open : 1030 hrs**

**Benching: from 1030 hrs      Judging: 1300 hrs**

Also:

### **Auction**

Starts 1230 hrs

Booking in: Telephone: 01942 248130  
or from 1000 hrs on the day

### **Canteen**

(Hot & Cold food. Tea, Coffee, Cold drinks)

**Information - Displays - Plenty of seating**

### **Details from:**

Show Secretary:

Brian Walsh

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Auction Manager:

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# Parotocinclus From Brazil

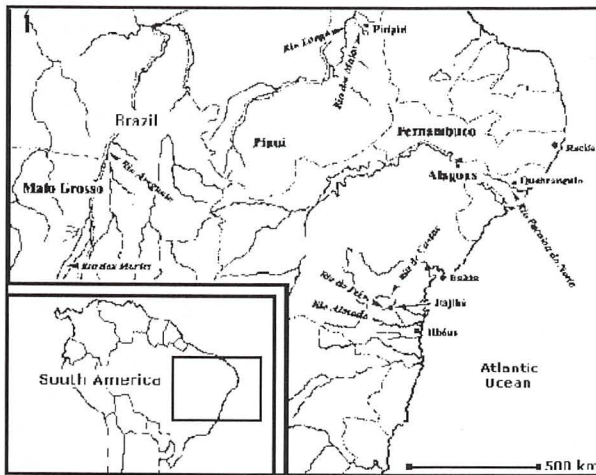
by Marco Túlio C. Lacerda and Hans-Georg Evers

Images by the authors except where stated.

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## Preface

Despite the craze for all things Loricariidae in recent years, the dwarf suckermouths of the sub-family Hypoptopomatinae has been given little attention. Exceptions to this (in the German DATZ magazine where this article was originally published) were a small entry in the 'current affairs' column (Hieronimus 1992) and two articles on care and breeding (Evers 1992; Bilke 1992). In addition to this, an interesting catalogue of the two sub families Loricariinae and Hypoptopomatinae was published (Matsuzaki & Miyake 1991). Furthermore, in the last two years, three publications have come out which deal particularly with the breeding of these fish (Elsholz & Elsholz 1992, 1994, Wendenburg 1993).



Brazil: -

**Species from the Guyana Shield, bordered in the South from the Amazon, in the West from the Rio Orinoco and Rio Negro:**

- *Parotocinclus britskii* Boeseman, 1974, Coppename and Nickerie basin in Surinam, Cuyuni basin in Venezuela and Pará basin in Brazil, state Pará;
- *Parotocinclus collinsae* Schmidt & Ferraris, 1985, Takutu basin in Guyana;

*Parotocinclus eppleyi* Schaefer & Provenzano, 1993, upper and middle areas of the Orinoco basin in Venezuela;

- *Parotocinclus longirostris* Garavello, 1988, Rio Preto da Eva and Igarapé Tarumázinho, near Manaus, state Amazonas, Brazil;
- *Parotocinclus polyochrus* Schaefer, 1988, tributary of the Río Mawarinuma, state Terr. Federal Amazonas, Venezuela.

**Species from the Amazon area:**

- *Parotocinclus amazonensis* Garavello, 1977, Ilha Sorubim, Rio Solimões, state Amazonas, Brazil;
- *Parotocinclus aripuanensis* Garavello, 1988, Rio Canumá, tributary of Rio Aripuaná, upper Madeira basin, state Mato Grosso, Brazil

**Species from north-eastern Brazil, rivers on the Atlantic coast:**

- *Parotocinclus bahiensis* (Ribeiro, 1918), Vila Nova (huete Senhor do Bonfim), state Bahia;
- *Parotocinclus cearensis* Garavello, 1977, Rio Choró, state Ceará;
- *Parotocinclus cesarpintoii* Ribeiro, 1939, Rio Paraíba, Quebrangulo, state Alagoas;
- *Parotocinclus haroldoi* Garavello, 1988, Corrego

## Introduction

The sub-family Hypoptopomatinae contains 11 genera with over 60 species (Schaefer 1991; Schaefer & Provenzano 1993), of which the genus *Otocinclus* Cope is best known to aquarists. Schaefer (1991) subdivided the sub-family into two "tribes". The first being the Hypoptopomatini with the genera *Acestridium* Hasemann, *Hypoptopoma* Günther, *Oxyropsis* Eigenmann & Eigenmann, *Otocinclus* Cope, *Microlepidogaster* Eigenmann & Eigenmann, as well as an undescribed genus. The second is the "tribe" Otothyri with the genera *Pseudotocinclus* Nichols, *Otothyris* Myers, *Pseudotothyris* Britski & Garavello, *Schizolecis* Britski & Garavello and *Parotocinclus* Eigenmann & Eigenmann.

In recent years, the genus *Parotocinclus* has been the object of systematic studies at species level by various ichthyologists (Garavello 1977, 1988; Schmidt & Ferraris 1985; Schaefer 1988; Schaefer & Provenzano 1993). At present 18 species of this genus have been found (Garavello 1977; Schaefer 1991; Schaefer & Provenzano 1993), spread over the following areas of

do Otoviano and Riacho Sanharó, state Piauí;

- *Parotocinclus minutus* Garavello, 1977, Rio Vasa-Barris, Canudos, state Bahia;
- *Parotocinclus spilosoma* (Fowler, 1941), Campina Grande, state Pará;
- *Parotocinclus spilurus* (Fowler, 1941), Rio Salgado, Içó, state Ceará.

#### Species from the eastern and south-eastern Atlantic coastal rivers in Brazil:

- *Parotocinclus cristatus* Garavello, 1977, Fazenda Almada, Ilhéus, state Bahia;
- *Parotocinclus doceanus* (Ribeiro, 1918), Rio Doce, state Espírito Santo;
- *Parotocinclus jimi* Garavello, 1977, Rio do Peixe, small tributary of the Rio de Contas, Itagibá, state Bahia;
- *Parotocinclus maculicauda* (Steindachner, 1877), southern coastal rivers in Brazil, from Santa Catarina to Espírito Santo.

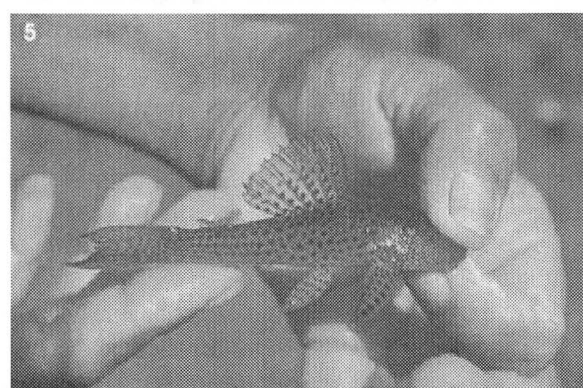
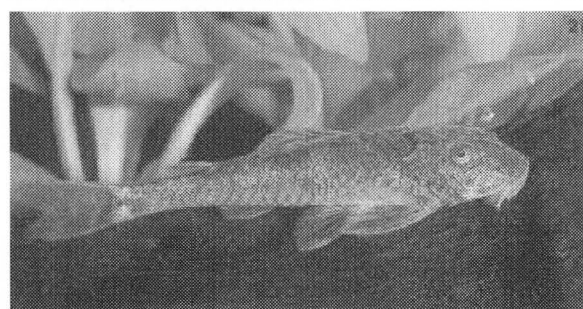
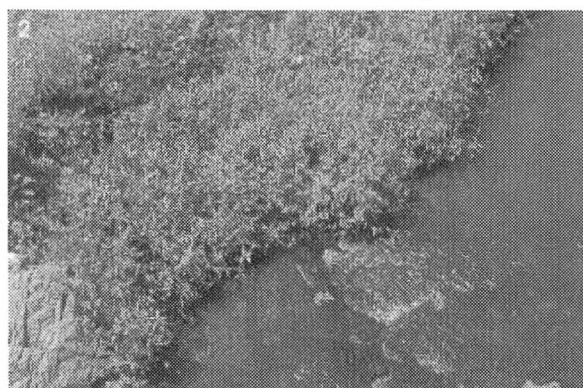
Despite this large number of species, only *Parotocinclus maculicauda* is generally known as an aquarium fish, having been exported from the Rio de Janeiro area since around the early 1980's. Many studies of their breeding habits (Franke 1961; Sands 1984; Morris 1985; Elsholz & Elsholz 1993) and fine illustrations of them (Richter in Sands 1984; Yamazaki in Matsuzaka & Miyake 1991; Evers 1992; Franke in Wendenburg 1993) have been published. So it is not deemed necessary to discuss this species any further here.

Since 1992 we have been able to catch for ourselves, or to obtain certain rare examples of Hypoptopomatini, principally *Parotocinclus* species, and rear them in the aquarium. They come mainly from Northeast Brazil, one of the 3 largest semi-desert areas of South America, known by the Portuguese name of "Nordeste" (Lacerda 1994 a and b).

Their behaviour in the aquarium, including in some cases even their reproductive behaviour, was studied for lengthy periods up to 2 years. Most of the species described in this article have not ever been dealt with before in the specialist literature.

Additionally we show the relevant measurement data in tabular form from preserved material. After measurements were taken this was given to the Amsterdam Institute for Systematics and Population biology (Zoological Museum of Amsterdam - ZMA), in order to facilitate a distinction of the presented species (with exception of *Parotocinclus* sp. "Recife", of which preserved material was already present). The measurement criteria are taken from Garavello (1977) and are:

- Standard length: of the Ethmoid up to the base of the caudal.
- Body height: measured before the base of the first dorsal ray.
- Head length: from the Ethmoid to the rear edge of the Operculum.
- Body width: Space between outside edges of the Cleithrum.
- Eye diameter: Measured horizontally.



- Interorbital distance: shortest distance between the eyes.

#### ***Parotocinclus cristatus* Garavello 1977**

Five individuals (ZMA 121.258), 26.2 to 35.7 millimetres standard length (mm SL); Rio Tariri, branch / tributary of the Rio Almada, Ilhéus, Bahia, Brazil, 21/12/1992, M.T.C. Lacerda, S. Valerio, V. Alves.

During an excursion into the Nordeste in December 1992 (Lacerda 1994 a) we succeeded in discovering *Parotocinclus cristatus*. Garavello (1977) described this species on the basis of eleven individuals collected by a Mr. Pereira in February 1945 in Fazenda Amada, close to Ilhéus in the Federal State of Bahia. We found it to a narrow brook that flows into the Rio Almada, likewise in the proximity of Ilhéus. The city is close to the Atlantic coast rain forest, thus not in dry area. The brook was not deeper than a meter and about eight meters wide; the water was quite clear and fast flowing. Contrary to *Parotocinclus maculicauda*, which predominantly is found in flooded onshore vegetation, *P. cristatus* lives on stones and submerged tree trunks. This gives rise to the name the locals call these fish "chupapedras" (stone licker or stone sucker), a name which is used also for other *Parotocinclus* species of the Nordeste (Garavello 1977).

Also living here and sharing a habitat with *P. cristatus* were *Hypostomus* sp., *Aspidoras* sp. (shown in Lacerda 1994 b as *A. cf. maculosus* Nijssen & Isbrücker), *Nematocharax venustus* Weitman, Menezes & Britski (see Lacerda 1994 a, there labelled as 'Ultra Sailfin Tetra'), *Astynax* sp., "*Geophagus*" cf. *brasiliensis*, a pike shaped dog characin of the tribe Acestrorhynchini and an unclassified Characide.

Investigations revealed that *P. cristatus* was also found in two further tributaries of the Almada although in small numbers. In one of these tributaries a further interesting pleco shares the same habitat. This was exported by the firm Trop-Rio exports under the description *Hypostomus unae* and which was introduced under the number LDA17 (Schraml 1994). *Corymbophanes bahainus* Gosline, 1947 is also exported by this firm.

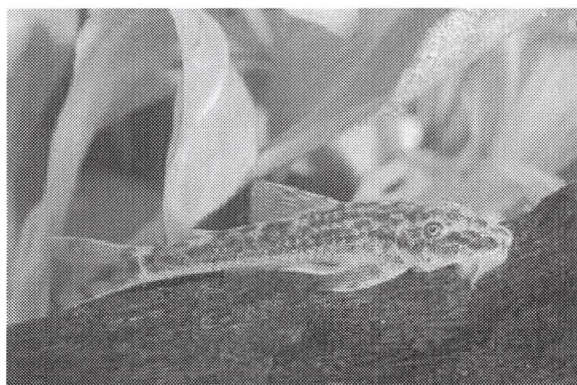
A few of the fish from this habitat have reached Germany and already a thorough report on care and breeding has been published (Elsholz & Elsholz 1994). After W and K B Elsholz (1994 and personal communications) bred a single male and three alternating females in an 80 litre tank (water conditions pH 7.0, 15 °dH, 25°C). The eggs have a diameter of around 1.5mm and are therefore larger than those of

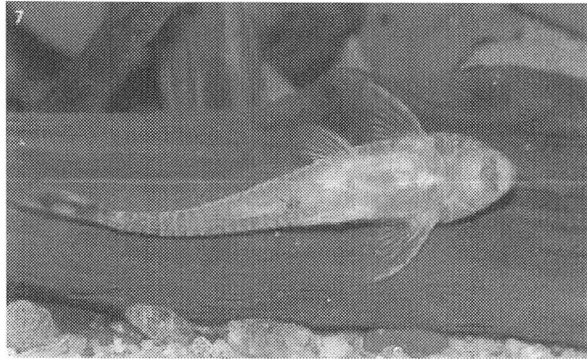
*Parotocinclus maculicauda* and those of *Otocinclus* species. The fish never produced more than ten fertilized eggs per spawning. This is probably because of the lack of sufficient numbers of males. In the peak season the group spawned almost weekly. The rearing was very successful with TetraOvin and trout pellets. An absolutely clean breeding tank is of greatest importance (the floor and sides must be kept free of bacteria (slimy 'lawns' of bacteria)) with crystal clear water. The young *P. cristatus* grew in eight weeks to a size of 16mm.

As with all *Parotocinclus* species, these dwarf fish need only small aquarium with water flowing as fast as possible, generated by a reliably working pump or an efficient filter. Along with quite normal fish food like daphnia, cyclops, frozen mosquito larvae and so on, the dwarf suckermouths also require vegetable food like lettuce, spinach, or peas. All *Parotocinclus* known up until now react very sensitively to a deterioration of water quality in captivity. Given a decrease in water quality, they are always the first fish to hang on to the side just under the surface and try to get out of the water. This must be watched if, for example, a massive increase of infusorien has occurred.

#### ***Parotocinclus jimi* Garavello, 1977**

Four specimens (ZMA 121.257) 26.0 to 30.85mm SL; Rio do Peixe, Brazil, 12/1994, D Byron. In August 1994 the collectors of the Trop Rio export company organized a trip in order to make this kind of aquarium fish accessible to the external market. Garavello (1977) had described them using specimens that were caught in 1973 and '74 in the Rio Contas system in a river flowing in isolation in the Nordeste. Despite the fact that the type locality was not really that far from the place where *P. cristatus* was found, it is in a region of almost desert-like character and one that, for most of the year, has a dry climate. As well as the Terra Typica, the Rio do Peixe was visited. This flows into the Rio Gongoji that in turn drains into the Rio de Contas. The Rio do Peixe has its source in the mountains and has many waterfalls along its path. *Parotocinclus jimi* could only be found in areas where



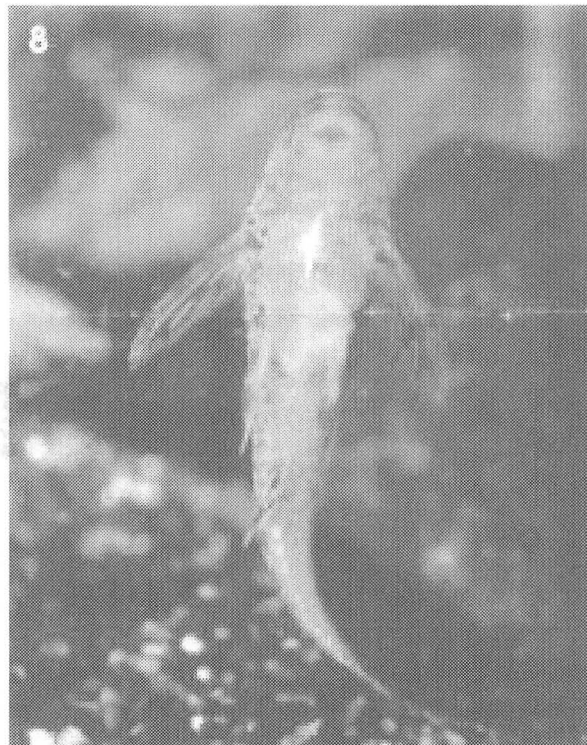


the water was very turbulent and where much brown jellylike algae grew. One of the authors had observed similar in a clear water stream in Venezuela near Puerto Ayucucho. There, however, the colour of the layers (of algae) was a deep green.

Helmut Dittmar, Hamburg was good enough to examine the sample from Venezuela brought along in formalin. It was a question of this thin green layer of algae, not yet ascertainable, which was covered with a thick layer of bacteria and was consequently presented a very useful substratum for infusorien and insect larvae.

*Parotocinclus jimi* could never be caught in submerged land vegetation as is normal for *P. maculicauda*, or sitting on stones as *P. cristatus* is reported to do. Both of these species appear to live sociably, they were always observed in large groups. *Parotocinclus jimi* on the other hand lives in isolation, in smaller groups.

Right beside the waterfalls lived a further Loricariidae



similar to *C. bahainus*. Other sorts of fish that were found in the river were "*Geophagus*" cf. *brasiliensis*, *Astynax* sp. and *Poecilia reticulata*.

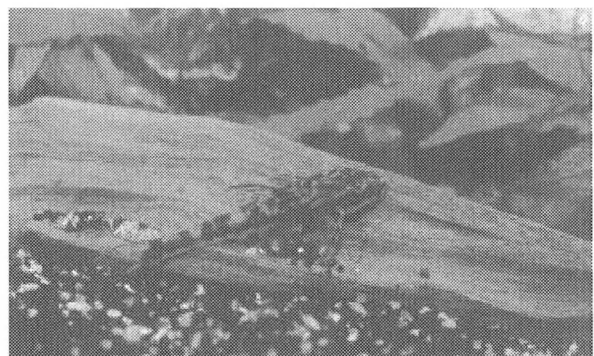
Three dams have destroyed a few of the earlier waterfalls of the Rio do Peixe. They were built five or six years ago. The local inhabitants use the artificial lakes as reservoirs and places for bathing with bars, showers etc. *P. jimi* was probably seen more often before the construction of these dams. No dwarf suckermouth catfish were found in the Rio de Contas. Admittedly, the work of the collectors was hindered by a massive occurrence of water hyacinth, *Eichhornia* sp. that covered large areas of the water surface.

The first weeks of keeping *P. jimi* in an aquarium have confirmed what the origin of the fish led us to suspect. They need a lot of oxygen and are even more sensitive to infusorien than *P. cristatus*. As opposed to the daytime activity of *P. cristatus*, *P. jimi* does not become active until dusk and at night.

#### ***Parotocinclus* cf. *cesarpintoi* Ribeiro 1939 and Hypostominae 'Quebrangulo'**

*Parotocinclus* cf. *cesarpintoi*, three specimens (ZMA121.260) 24.0 to 28.75mm SL, Rio Paraiba do Norte, Quebrangulo, Alagoas, Brazil, 27 and 28. 12. 1992 M. T .C Lacerda, S Valerio, V Alves. Hypostominae sp. five specimens (ZMA 121.259) 24.1 to 33.4mm SL, other data as ZMA121.260.

In 1939, Paolo de Miranda, an ichthyologist from the Museo Nacional in Rio de Janeiro described a new *Parotocinclus* from the Nordeste and named it in honour of its collector *P. cesarpintoi*. The description consisted of three black and white photos, one of a pair of the new species and two of the place of discovery, the Rio Paraiba near the village of Qebrangulo in the state of Algoas. The original description is really kept very short but Garavello (1977) portrayed the species more thoroughly.

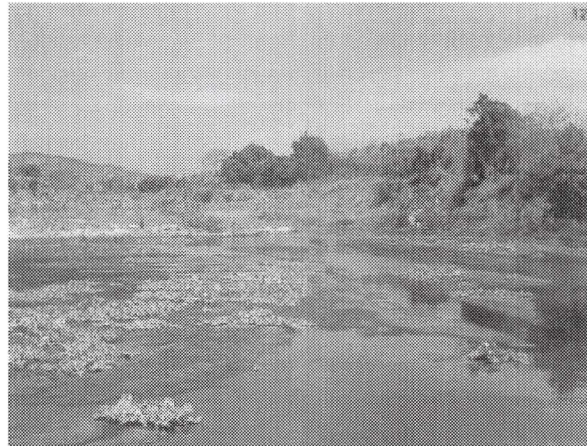


During a journey through the Nordeste in December 1992 it was also possible to visit the place of discovery of *P. cesarpintoi*. The Rio Paraiba (actually Rio

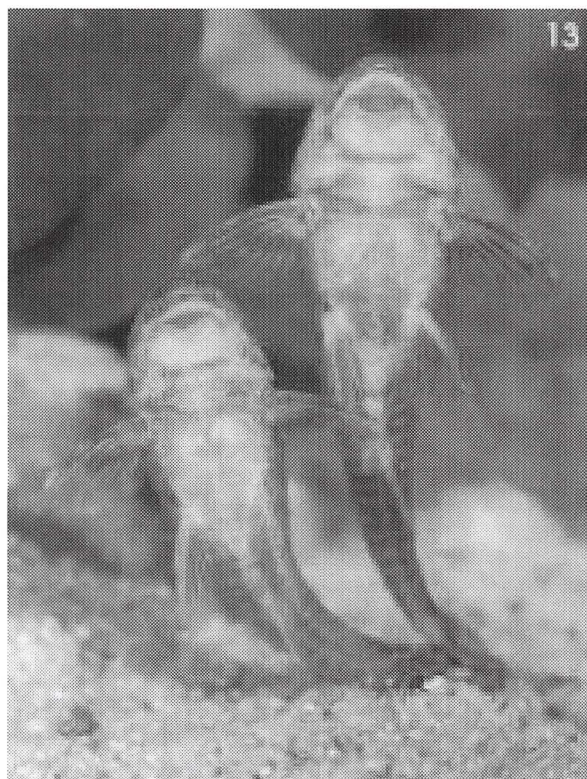
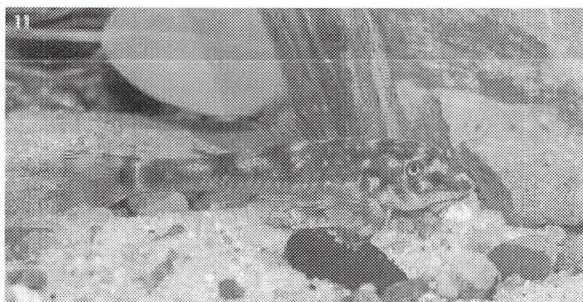
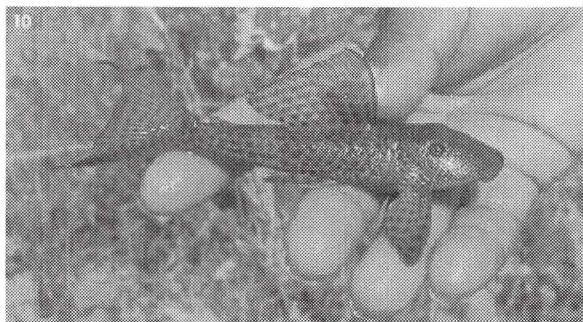
Paraiba do Norte as opposed to Rio Paraiba do Sul, one of the largest rivers in the southwest of Brazil) around the town of Quebrangulo is very heavily polluted; there were no Loricariidae to be found here. The only 'survivors' are *Tilapia* introduced from Africa. In Ribeiro's description, the Rio Paraiba shown was near the town by a bridge, this area is now very heavily polluted. In talking with the locals it came out that further upstream a dam had been constructed for the water supply of the town of Palmeira do Indios. The water remains unpolluted there. We reached this place by a narrow, treacherous horse path. We collected two small dwarf suckermouths that at first we took to be members of the sub family Hypoptopomatinae. One of the species was quite dark, almost black with small green metallic spots, mostly in the region of the head. This one stayed near stones. The second was brighter with golden flecks with particularly unusual shape. We caught it on the sandy bed. Only a little water was flowing the Rio Paraiba and many sandbanks were visible (it was the dry season and most of the rivers in the Sertão in the Nordeste completely dry up: Lacerda 1994 a). The water was very clear and transparent, fast flowing and during the day reached 35°C and more! The number of dwarf suckermouths was very high and obviously these fish needed such high temperatures. Other species encountered were *Tilapia* which have probably replaced the "*Geophagus*" *brasiliensis*.

We had the opportunity of following the river a few kilometers upstream on foot. During this walk, we could see thousands of the second brighter species through the shallow water. Isaac Isbrücker was good enough to give expert advice on these fish afterwards.

He ascertained that it was apparently a species of the sub family Hypostominae that remained very small! Young specimens lay in the shallower areas of water on the sand; the older and fully grown fish, never larger than four to five cm total length, were concentrated around larger stones in the deeper part of the river (from about a meters depth). We feared that the high temperatures would eventually result in overheating of the fish collection bags. However, this concern turned out to be unfounded as all the fish survived capture and transit unharmed.



The Hypostominae species is by far more common than *Parotocinclus* species. Measurements of the former produced a few differences to the details in the original description; a more thorough examination was not possible because of the lack of materials for comparison. Therefore, we describe this species for the time being as *P. cf cesarpintoi*.



In two years of captivity clear differences in behavior of the two species was recognized. *P. cf. cesarpintoi* is a typical member of its genus, which only becomes noticeably active and goes looking for food in reduced light. In the early morning and in the evening after the lights have been switched off, one can observe that the fish leave their quiet places of rest (dark corners of the tank, pieces of wood or holes) and graze on the objects. The Hypostominae species on the other hand is also active during the day. These fish eat any food offered in large quantities. Both sexes gorge themselves so full that the observer believes he has only pregnant females in front of him. The males however become slim again very quickly and besides can be distinguished from the fatter females by an orange brown are on the upper side of the head which is sometimes visible.

When the fish sense danger they bury themselves in the fine sand. This behavior has not been previously reported in members of Hypostominae. The second Hypostominae from Pernambuco shows the same behavior. Likewise, the supposed courtship behavior of these dwarves is interesting: the male does a kind of hopping dance around the female. He sits on the ground near the females head and suddenly performs three or four jumps from one side of the females head to another: sometimes he also jumps over her body at the same time or presses his body against the females. We were able to observe this unusual behavior three times altogether but no spawning followed. Perhaps an increase in temperature could have triggered the spawning (the fish were kept at 22 to 24°C).

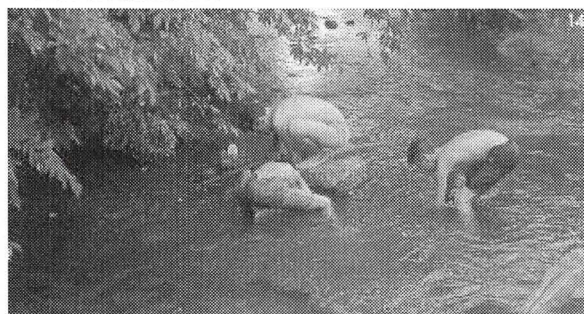
Apparently both kinds were larger in the aquarium than in the natural habitat. At the end of September 1994 the aquarium specimens of *P. cf. cesarpintoi* measured 37.3mm (female), the smallest (male) at least 32.7 mm (SL). The largest female of the Hypostominae measured 43.0, the male 40.9, (SL).

#### ***Parotocinclus haroldoi* Garavello, 1988**

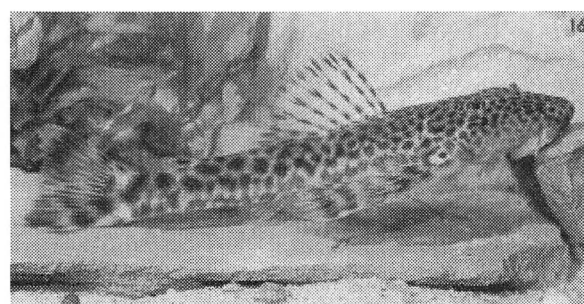
Three specimens (ZMA 121.256) 33.6 to 34.7mm SL, Rio dos Mato (branch of the Rio Longa, Rio Parnaíba system) Piripiri, Piauí, Brazil 27.12.1993 M.T.C. Lacerda, V. Alves.

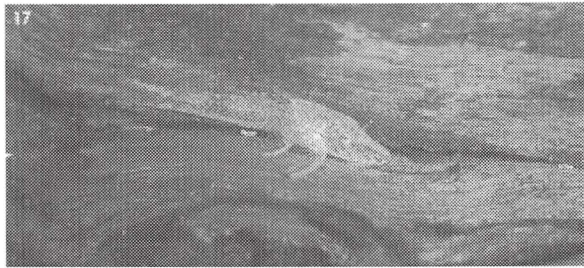
In December 1993 another trip to the Nordeste was undertaken, mainly in search representatives of the genus *Aspidoras* (Lacerda 1994 b). After a few collection expeditions in the state of Ceará, we flew from Fortaleza to Teresina, in the state of Piauí so that we could travel from there by car northeast on the BR343. Teresina lies near Rio Parnaíba, one of the largest rivers in the Nordeste with immense Galer

forest, which in its vegetation is reminiscent of the amazonian rainforests, near Belem. Along the road the surroundings became drier and drier, almost desertlike as in Ceará. The rivers in Campo Maior, the next largest city after Teresina, were all dried up. It took us a further 80 km to find water in a branch of the Rio Longa. It looked more like a stream full of stones with very shallow water. We were able to catch *Crenicichla cf. lepidota* there, *Hypostomus* sp., *Ancistrus* and the most beautiful *Parotocinclus* we had ever known. On a background of black brown, the fish had yellow orange coloured spots, similar for example to the Ancistrine L4.



We did not come across these dwarf suckermouths that often. We were able to capture only about 20 in total. They lived in the crevices between the rocks so that they could not be caught in our nets but required us to collect them by hand. One by one, they were collected from the niches in the rocks. A comparison of measurements confirmed the suspicion that we were dealing with *P. haroldoi*. Garavello does not mention the unique spotted markings as they disappeared in the preserved specimens. The place where the type species was found, 'Córrego do Otaviano, Poco do Sanharó, Riacho Sanharó' likewise belongs to the region of the inlet of the Rio Parnaíba.





***Parotocinclus* sp. 'Rio Cristalino'**

Five specimens (ZMA 121.261) 16.4 to 19.2mm, Rio Cristalino (branch/tributary of the Rio das Mortes) Rio Araguaia system, Mato Grosso, Brazil, 7.1994, S. & P. Valerio da Silva. 34 specimens (ZMA121.262) not measured similar data to ZMA 121.261.

In July 1994 an interesting 'Mini *Parotocinclus*' came into our hands through two travelling aquarium fish hunters, Savio and Paulo Valeria da Silva. They had caught these fish in small stream-like tributaries of the Rio Cristalino. The water of these streams was absolutely clear to a depth of 50 cm, the river bed consisted of fine white sand. The dwarf suckermouths live in the bends in the places where the water flow is faster. They cling to the vegetation that hangs into the water from the bank which these are mainly grasses. The following species live here side by side: *Apistogramma* sp. (*A. regani*-group), *Cichla* sp., *Hyphessobrycon* sp., *Iguanodectes* sp., *Thayeria boehlkei*, *Imparfinis minutus*, *Brycon* sp., *Corydoras* cf. *araguaiaensis*, *Phractocephalus hemioliopus*, *Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum* and *Potamotrygon* sp.

The most noticeable feature of this new species is its small size. The fish grow no bigger than 20mm (SL).

Their heads are proportionately very long (see table). The collectors of these fish, collecting from January to November never found specimens of more than 2.5 cm (total length). The smallest *Parotocinclus* species so far described is *P. amazonensis* at 15mm long. In this context it should be noted that all Guyana-shield and Amazonian *Parotocinclus* catfish have a standard maximum obtainable length under 30mm. The species of the Atlantic rainforest reach mostly 35mm length (SL) and more (apart from *P. minutus* and *P. doceanus*).

15 specimens of these dwarves are kept at present in a 40 litre aquarium. The tank is densely planted (*Najas* and *Limnophila*), the substrate is fine white sand and the temperature varies between 25°C by day and 27°C by night. The small suckermouth catfish are fed with *Artemia*-Naupali, frozen *Cyclops* pellets and fallen leaves. The first females ready to spawn have already been observed.

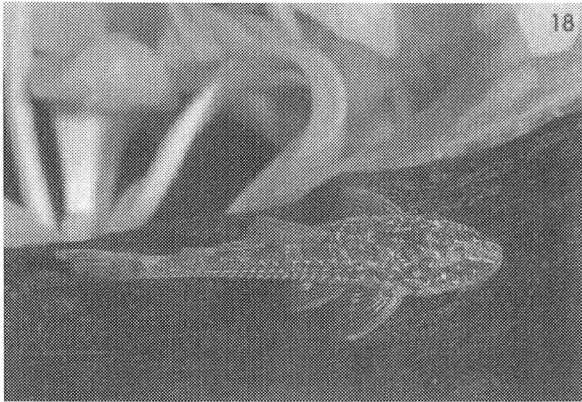
Mostly small groups of four or five fish sit on the plant leaves or on the side of the tank, a fish alternates his position back and forth swimming a little through open water. The colouring gets brighter at night, this species is obviously more active in daytime.

***Parotocinclus* sp 'Recife' and *Hypostominae* sp 'Recife'**

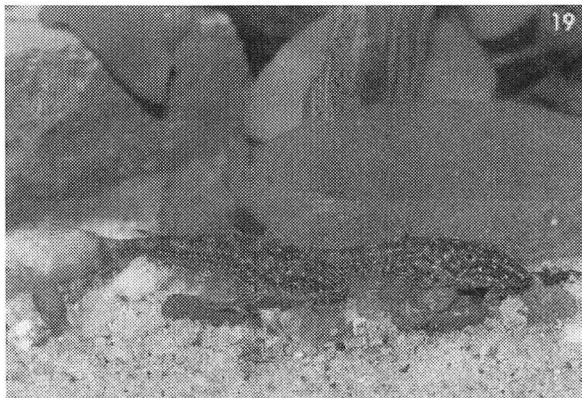
*Parotocinclus* sp. : five specimens (ZMA 121.263) 28.5 to 32. 4. SL 'clear fast moving stream near Recife' Pernambuco, Brazil, 9 1994, D Byron. *Hypostominae* sp. 13 specimens (ZMA 121.264) not measured, other data as 121 263.

Comparison of measurements.	Standard Length	Body height	Head length	Body width	Eye diameter	Interorbital distance
1. <i>Parotocinclus haroldii</i> (n=3)	33.6 - 34.7	14.3 - 17.1	28.3 - 29.1	25.4 - 26.0	5.1 - 6.2	11.8 - 13.8
2. <i>P. jimi</i> (n=4)	26.0 - 30.85	14.2 - 17.5	26.6 - 28.5	24.6 - 26.9	5.0 - 5.7	11.5 - 13.5
3. <i>P. cristatus</i> (n=5)	26.2 - 35.7	17.6 - 19.2	26.9 - 28.7	26.6 - 28.4	5.5 - 6.1	12.6 - 14.3
4. <i>P. cf. cesarpintoi</i> (n=3)	24.0 - 28.75	12.7 - 14.6	26.7 - 27.9	25.5 - 27.2	6.0 - 6.7	12.9 - 13.8
5. <i>P. sp.</i> "Rio Cristalino" (n=5)	16.4 - 19.2	14.6 - 16.7	28.4 - 32.1	21.9 - 23.8	5.5 - 6.0	11.6 - 12.8
6. <i>Hypostominae</i> sp. "Quebrangulo" (n=5)	24.1 - 33.4	19.0 - 20.6	24.3 - 28.1	25.0 - 26.7	5.8 - 7.5	9.7 - 10.0
7. <i>Hypostominae</i> sp. "Recife" (n=5)	28.5 - 32.4	15.2 - 17.5	22.8 - 26.2	22.8 - 24.1	5.2 - 6.5	7.4 - 8.4

Standard length in mm. All other data in percentage of SL measurements from Garavello (1977) with a scale calliper rule to 0.05 mm.

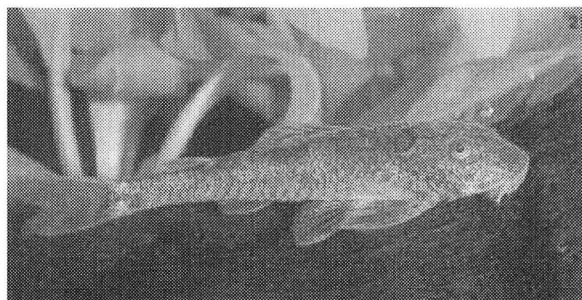


In September 1994 we received two species originating from the same place, the area around Recife, in the North East of Brazil. At first they resembled both species from Quebrangulo (see above) but closer comparisons showed that we were dealing with a different species (see table).



Not only the outward appearance but also the behavior resembled the two species of Quebrangulo. Admittedly, there are great differences in coloring and with *Hypostominae* sp. 'Recife' the distance between the eyes is noticeably smaller than in *Hypostominae* sp. 'Quebrangulo'.

Also both species are well suited as Aquarium fish, in so far as that can be said after a short time thus far. *Hypostominae* sp. 'Recife' behave territorially amongst themselves. They lie on the bed in the place where the water is flowing fastest and try to push each other away when food swirls by. However, these fish do not fight against each other, which, we know, sometimes happens with the larger species of the genus.



## In Finishing

All of the *Parotocinclus* species presented here and both the *Hypostominae* are definitely interesting subjects for rearing in the Aquarium and committed fishkeepers' should succeed in breeding. Most of all, the *Hypostominae* were a great surprise to us. It cannot yet be said with certainty that we have a new genus, since the fact that they possibly belong to the *Hypostominae* genus of the small species like perhaps *Hemipsilichthys* has not yet been checked.

## Thanks

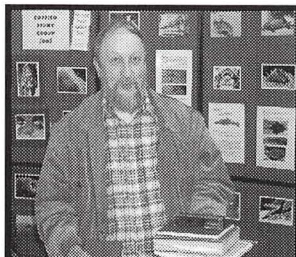
We thank Mrs. Valeria Alves for her invaluable help during the two trips to the Nordeste. For help in the field, we thank Savio Valerio and the fishers/collectors whom we do not know by name. We are indebted to Savio and Paulo Valerio for information on habitats, equally D. Byron for the collection of *P. jimi* and both species from Pernambuco. Isaac Isbrücker deserves our thanks for his help in classifying the fish left behind (*Hypostominae*). We thank in addition Waltraud and Klaus Peter Elsholz for useful information and pictures. In addition, our thanks goes to Werner Seuss for letting us have the pictures of *P. haroldii*. Thanks to Friedrich Bitter his help and for useful contacts in Germany.

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## MEET THE MEMBERS

### Brian Walsh

CSG Show Secretary

I first began keeping fish about 25 years ago. A neighbour gave me a 2' aquarium and I've never looked back. My interest in catfish began in earnest when I attended the Northern Area Catfish Group Open Show, their second, and joined the Group in 1979. This was the start of a hobby which has opened up so many other avenues of interest to me. I go fishing because I enjoy the outdoors and the natural environment. I started my photography hobby because of my enthusiasm to picture things fish do that aren't in the books and I now have an extensive library of fish related slides. I am a joiner by trade and my interest in fish extended into wood carvings of them. At first this was just a hobby but people liked them and started to ask me for them. The carvings are extremely time consuming so now I include them as part of my business (my advertisement is at the rear of this journal).

Such is my interest in the fish world, that I am now the Chairman of the Federation of Northern Aquarium Societies, Chairman of my local club, Darwen, (Pronounced 'Darren' by us locals), Show Secretary of

the CSG and an 'A' Class Judge. I have judged and given talks all over the UK and still do. Because of being able to visit so many clubs around the country and see so many different fish, I revised the catfish sizes for judging about two or three years ago. Now the Size Guide is being used by all the major UK hobby organisations and it is being updated on a regular basis as more information becomes available.

My main fish interests lie with catfish, characins, cichlids and plants, especially tropical bog plants. Over the years I have bred many kinds of fish including *Ancistrus*, *Sturisoma auruem*, whiptail species, *Sturisomatichthys*, *Brochis splendens* and several types of *Corydoras*.

I have a fish house which contains around 700 gallons of water with 6 of the aquariums linked as one system. Most of the tanks are filtered through trickle filters which are utilised for growing the bog plants.

My favourite catfish is *Pseudocanthicus leopardus* or Jaguar Cat.

BW

# Convention Notes

by Pete Liptrot

The Catfish Convention 2001 was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> February. This was only the second time that it has been organised by the Catfish Study Group and it was hoped that the success of the previous year would be repeated.

The main speaker, Erwin Schraml, unfortunately had to pull out at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour because of a serious family problem but thanks are owed to Erwin who, in spite of his worries, still found the time to contact another speaker to replace himself. Isaac Isbrücker is a name synonymous with the descriptions of many of our most popular aquarium fish and for me it was exciting news that he had agreed to take Erwin's place. Isaac had Erwin's slides and notes on wood eating catfishes. As some of the fish were new to the hobby and completely unknown to science, this would have been quite a challenge for him, but as it turned out his excellent efforts were marred by the sound system rendering him almost inaudible on occasions, but there was more than enough to keep any keen aquarist in their seats, and some of his insights into the science behind the fish were especially rewarding.

The other speaker was to be Chris Ralph, a long-standing aquarist familiar to all who have been involved with the hobby for any length of time. A contributor to a UK aquarium magazine, he was going to be giving a travelogue of the trip to Peru which had been enjoyed by some of the group members during 2000.

The next presentation was by Chris Ralph, and fortunately, the sound system having been sorted out by this time the whole room enjoyed an entertaining and informative account of the Peruvian trip, not just as it relates to the fish that were obtained. I'm sure anyone fond of small pets must have shuddered at one or two points.

The final section was back to Isaac, this time audible, where he again was using Erwin's notes on new imports in the Catfish world. Some of the species shown are unlikely to be seen in this country for the next few months, as the Japanese seem to be happy to pay far more than ourselves for new and unusual fish.

Still, it certainly wetted the appetite for the future, as examples from almost every family were shown.

As always I thoroughly enjoyed the Convention, it is one of the aquatic highlights of the year and the only



Dr Isaac Isbrücker at Pier Aquatics, in Wigan, who sponsor his articles in Cat Chat .

negative aspects were completely beyond the control of the organisers.

I will await next year's Convention as eagerly as I awaited this year's. The wider use of e-mail brings the international aquarist community far closer together, and opens up opportunities for speakers to be contacted who we would never have seen in the past, so watch this space.

PL

## STOP PRESS

### Breeding Corydoradine Catfishes

by Ian Fuller

A new publication describing the breeding antics of 67 species of Corydoradine. This comprehensive book is a complete record of one person making notes, taking photographs and making line drawings of his own fish in the aquarium.

The book is due for release in early September 2001 and will be on sale first at the Catfish Study Group's Open Show .

Initial issue will be a softback edition priced at £29.95 with a hardback edition to follow. Copies can be ordered direct from Ian, cash with order. His address is in the attached Membership List.

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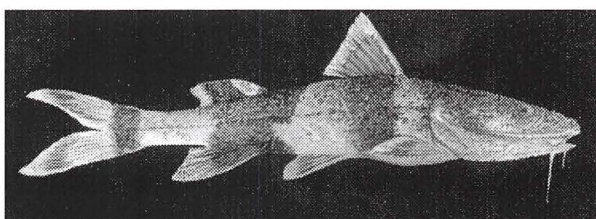
# Wasp Cats — What's in a name ?

By  
Steven Grant

This article has been written to put forward to fellow aquarists my personal views on the nomenclature (scientific names) and identity of the large South American 'bumble bee' catfish. I know that some (most ?) members are not interested in keeping up with the correct scientific names for the fish we keep, but I for one am interested in this and feel that if we are to use the scientific names they should be the 'correct' ones. I say 'correct' in that nomenclature is sometimes subjective and as such the usage of names vary from person to person.

Since the work of Mees (1974) most shops, aquarium books and fish show exhibitors have used the name '*Pseudopimelodus zungaro bufonius*' for the large South American 'bumble bee' catfish. Below is a table of the genera and species names caught up in the 'bufonius' and 'zungaro' muddle, which Mees reviewed, and his thoughts on the valid (correct) scientific names:

The main problem with Mees' synonymy was his inability to identify the type species of *Zungaro* with any living or preserved specimen of fish at his disposal. He admitted that his synonymy were only tentative and unsatisfactory, but faced with the problem of the identity and subsequent generic placement of *Pimelodus zungaro*, he placed it in *Pseudopimelodus*, and with three subspecies. Thanks to Silfvergrip (1992) the identity of *Pimelodus zungaro* and subsequently the genus *Zungaro* (as *Pimelodus*



*zungaro* is the type species of *Zungaro*) was solved. *Pimelodus zungaro* is in fact the fish aquarists new as *Paulicea luetkeni*, and because *Pimelodus zungaro* was described prior to *Paulicea luetkeni*, the species name *zungaro* takes precedence. Due to the same Principle of Priority, the genus *Paulicea* became a junior synonym of *Zungaro*. As a result of Silfvergrip's work, below is a list of the old names, and the current correct ones:

I (Grant 1999) hinted that *Zungaropsis multimaculatus*, Steindachner 1908 was possibly a synonym of *Zungaro zungaro* (therefore making the genus *Zungaropsis* a possible synonym of *Zungaro*); and I also moved *Pimelodus mangurus* (referred to as *Pseudopimelodus zungaro mangurus* by Mees) to the genus *Zungaro*, making its name *Zungaro mangurus*! I moved *Zungaro mathisoni*, Fernández-Yépez 1972 into *Pseudopimelodus* but as a doubtfully valid species.

Although *Zungaro zungaro* appears in several catfish books, it is not an aquarium fish as it can reach up-to 6 feet in length. Because of these nomenclatural changes we need to finally disassociate the word 'zungaro' with the South American 'bumble bee' cats, as it is only leading to

<u>Original name</u>	<u>After Mees (1974)</u>
<b>Genera</b>	
<i>Pseudopimelodus</i> , Bleeker 1858	valid
<i>Cephalosilurus</i> , Haseman 1911	synonym of <i>Pseudopimelodus</i>
<i>Zungaro</i> , Bleeker 1858	synonym of <i>Pseudopimelodus</i>
<i>Batrochoglanis</i> , Gill 1858	synonym of <i>Pseudopimelodus</i>
<b>Species</b>	
<i>Pimelodus zungaro</i>	<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro zungaro</i>
<i>Zungaro humboldtii</i>	<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro zungaro</i>
<i>Pimelodus mangurus</i>	<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro mangurus</i>
<i>Pimelodus bufonius</i>	<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro bufonius</i>
<i>Pimelodus charus</i>	<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro bufonius</i>
<i>Pseudopimelodus roosevelti</i>	<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro mangurus</i>
<i>Pimelodus pulcher</i>	<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro zungaro</i>
<i>Pseudopimelodus variolosus</i>	<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro zungaro</i>
<i>Zungaro zungaro schultzi</i>	<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro</i> subsp 1?

Genera	
<i>Zungaro</i>	valid as <i>Zungaro</i>
<i>Paulicea</i>	synonym of <i>Zungaro</i>
Species names and combinations	
<i>Pimelodus zungaro</i>	<i>Zungaro zungaro</i>
<i>Pseudopimelodus zungaro zungaro</i>	<i>Zungaro zungaro</i>
<i>Paulicea luetkeni</i>	<i>Zungaro zungaro</i>
<i>Paulicea jahu</i>	<i>Zungaro zungaro</i>
<i>Zungaro humboldtii</i>	<i>Zungaro zungaro</i>

placed in brackets). The *raninus* species complex belong in the nominotypical subgenus *Pseudopimelodus*; I then used *Cephalosilurus* as a subgenus and placed four species in it, and at least two others in a subgenus I described as new, *Vespaglanis*. I commented at the time that *Cephalosilurus* and *Vespaglanis* could be elevated to full genus level in the future. Unbeknown to me at the time of my 1999 work, de Pinna (1998) also hinted that *Cephalosilurus* may be deemed a valid full genus in future works.

further confusion. The genus *Zungaro* is not a member of the subfamily (\* see further on) Pseudopimelodinae to which the South American 'bumble bee' cats belong; in my opinion it is related to the red tailed catfish genus *Phractocephalus*.

Once the species *zungaro* and *mangurus* are removed from the genus *Pseudopimelodus*, we come across other problems. The first one is with regard to the validity or correct usage of the generic names.

*Pseudopimelodus* was described in 1858 by Bleeker. He did not originally fix a type species for the genus, but did so in 1862 by fixing *Pimelodus raninus*. Also in 1858, Gill described the genus *Batrochoglanis*, but he did fix a type species at the same time; he chose *Pimelodus raninus* as well. To my knowledge it has not yet been possible to put an exact date of publication to the two works in which the two generic names were described, and if this is the case I do not think that any of the subsequent works I have seen can have given *Pseudopimelodus* precedence by way of the Principle of the First Reviser. Historically *Pseudopimelodus* has been used, but if it was shown that *Batrochoglanis* was published earlier in 1858 than *Pseudopimelodus* it could be argued that due to the Principle of Priority *Batrochoglanis* was the valid name, although the Fourth Edition of the ICZN allows a later name to become the valid one if used by at least twenty different authors and if it is in the interest of nomenclatural stability to continue to use the later name, and in this case in view of the fact that *Pseudopimelodus* has been in use for so long, and is the basis/stem for a subfamily (soon to be a family) name, *Pseudopimelodus* should be used instead of *Batrochoglanis*.

In my 1999 work I ended up splitting *Pseudopimelodus* into three subgenera to attempt to show the relationships of the three basic morphological forms which exist (subgeneric names still start with a capital letter but when used in conjunction with the generic name they should be

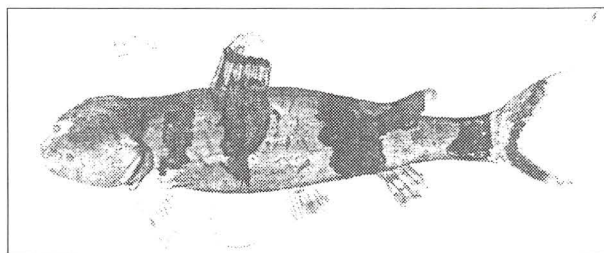
I am now convinced that *Vespaglanis* should be deemed as a full valid genus, and that it is more easily justified as a genus than is *Cephalosilurus*. *Cephalosilurus* probably is a valid genus but apart from body and head morphology there does not yet appear to be any other defining character, whereas in *Vespaglanis*, (amongst other things) not only is the head and body morphology different to *Pseudopimelodus*, and the caudal fin is forked but more importantly the gill raker morphology differs to both *Pseudopimelodus* and *Cephalosilurus*. In *Vespaglanis* the outer branchial/gill arch has five rakers confined to the top (Mees 1974 and Galvis, Mojica & Camargo 1997), whereas in *Pseudopimelodus* and *Cephalosilurus* the rakers appear to be evenly spread across the arch, although differing in length. Comparative work needs to be done on the external and internal structures/morphology of *Cephalosilurus* and *Vespaglanis* species.

This gives us the following genera which currently belong to the family Pimelodidae, subfamily Pseudopimelodinae: *Pseudopimelodus*, *Cephalosilurus*, *Vespaglanis*, *Microglanis*, Eigenmann 1912, and *Lophiosilurus*, Steindachner 1876 (although de Pinna (1998) hints that the family Pimelodidae will be split into three separate families, with the Pseudopimelodines having their own).

The next problem is which of the *Vespaglanis* species are valid.

The type species of *Vespaglanis* is *Pimelodus charus*. *P. charus* was described by Valenciennes in the same paper as was *Pimelodus bufonius*, however most subsequent workers have classed *charus* as a





synonym of *bufonius* and the First Reviser chose the name *bufonius* as having priority of usage over *charus* if the two are the same species. Mees stated that *charus* could end up being revalidated and in his references he listed three famous ichthyologists who considered it valid; Gomes (1946) listed it as tentatively valid, and in my 1999 work I gave my reasons for considering it as not being conspecific with *bufonius*. The major problem is that the type specimen of *bufonius* appears to have been lost shortly after it was described, and the species was not illustrated by Valenciennes so direct and detailed comparisons with *charus* is impossible. No type specimen of *charus* was preserved but Valenciennes made his description from a drawing which Mees published, and we can readily identify the fish pictured with species described since or specimens alive or preserved; thus making the name *charus* a more useful and safer option to use than *bufonius*.

Another point which needs clarifying is the type localities of *bufonius* and *charus*. Valenciennes gave the type locality of *bufonius* as Cayenne (French Guiana?) but Boeseman (1972) stated that judging by similar cases (of type specimens used by Valenciennes) this should be changed to Surinam, environs of Paramaribo. I am unsure whether or not Boeseman is correct in this assumption. The type locality of *charus* is Rio Sabará (Minas Gerais, Brazil), but it does appear to extend into Surinam.

In my opinion it is a strong possibility that members of *Vespaglanis* are sexually dichromatic, males having lighter and plain base colour, females having a darker and speckled base colour. This **may** account for the differences mentioned by Valenciennes between *charus* and *bufonius* but this is just speculation on my part.

There are at least three, possibly four other taxa that should be placed in *Vespaglanis* but their validity as species or subspecies has still not been resolved; they are:

*Pseudopimelodus roosevelti*, Borodin 1927

Quite possibly a junior synonym of *V. charus*. This species was described from three specimens measuring between 14.5 and 22 cm SL. Two from

Parassununga, Province of Sao Paulo, and one from Itaqui, Province of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

*Pimelodus (Pseudopimelodus) pulcher*, Boulenger 1887

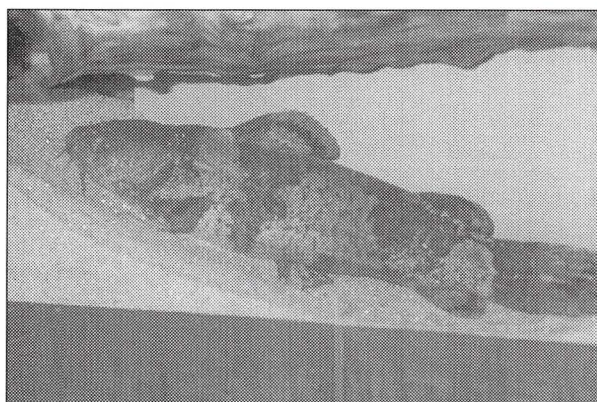
Based on three specimens measuring between 5.78 and 6.84 cm SL from Canelos, Ecuador. This species, and the following one may be based on juvenile specimens of *V. charus*, but either species may represent the dwarf versions of *charus* that turn up in the hobby now and again (Sands 1984 page 65, and Grant 1999) and as such they may represent valid species or subspecies. I have feeling that *pulcher* will be deemed as a valid species in the future.

*Pseudopimelodus variolosus*, Miranda-Ribeiro 1914

Based on seven specimens, the largest of which is only 5.5 cm SL, from Coxim, Rio Taquary, Mato Grosso, Brazil. The fish in Sands 1984 is probably this species as it ties in with the pattern and locality (see notes above). The specimens pictured here could also be this species. I have one specimen which originally had two black spots on its nape (see image in Grant 1999) but its head is now almost completely black.

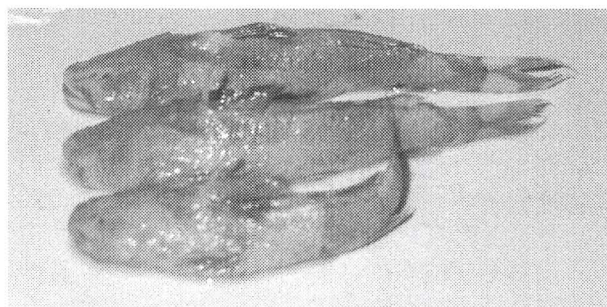
*Zungaro zungaro schultzi*, Dahl 1955

Based on specimens from Cereté, Tierra Alta, and Playa Pineda, Colombia. The holotype measured 16 cm SL. So far the type specimens have not been found or identified in any Museum collection and this is a major headache because the description is not very good, and it leaves the identity of this species in question, never mind the generic placement of it. When I first read the description, the colour (black and white) and pattern reminded me of *Merodontotus tigrinus*, Britski 1981, but the details given by Dahl on the maxillary barbel length, and head proportions do not tie in with this genus. I also considered *Brachyplatystoma juruense* (Boulenger, 1898) but again the maxillary barbel length may rule out this species, assuming the barbels on Dahl's types were not damaged.





The title of this article refers to the common name Wasp Cats. I have coined this name from the etymology of the genus name *Vespaglanis* which means 'Wasp Catfish'. With regards to the "what's in a name" comment, I'm sure you will agree that there is a lot of history surrounding the names of the Wasp Cats and their relatives, and I am sure that it won't end here.



### Glossary

**type species**—The species that is chosen as the name-bearing species for a genus or subgenus.

**name-bearing type** (of a genus or subgenus)—the species which provides the objective standard of reference whereby the application of a generic or subgeneric name can be determined.

**Principle of Priority**—The principle that the valid name of a taxon is the oldest available name applied to it, provided that the name is not invalidated by any provision of the Code or by any ruling by the Commission.

**Taxon** (plural is taxa)—any taxonomic unit e.g. genus, subgenus, species

**Principle of the First Reviser**—The principle that the

relative precedence of two or more names or **nomenclatural** acts published on the same date, or of different original spellings of the same name, is determined by the first revisor.

**nominotypical**—the taxon that shares the name of the type within a subgenus, subfamily or subspecies.

**conspecific**—the same as another species.

**type locality**—The geographical place of capture or collection of the name bearing type specimen of a species or subspecies.

**branchial/gill arch**—small curved bones or cartilages behind the gill cover. On the inner edge are the gill rakers, on the outer edge are the soft red lamellae.

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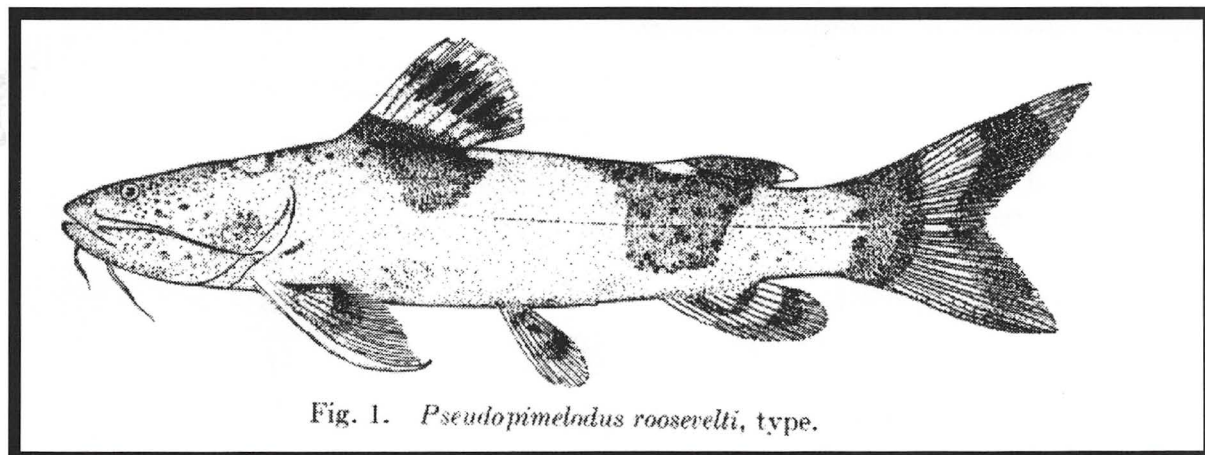


Fig. 1. *Pseudopimelodus roosevelti*, type.












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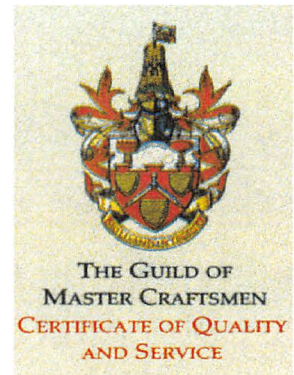
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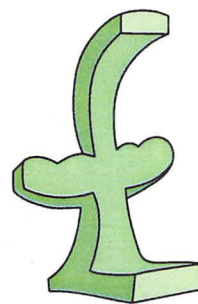
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