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Description of two new species of *Laubuka* (Teleostei: Cyprinidae) from River Cauvery, southern India

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Abstract

Fishes currently identified as *Laubuka laubuca* from the Cauvery River and its tributaries in the Western Ghats of India are shown to represent two different species: *Laubuka trevori*, **sp. nov.**, and *L. latens*, **sp. nov.**, distinguished from all species of *Chela* and *Laubuka* by possessing 7½ branched dorsal-fin rays; 14 precaudal vertebrae; 17–18 predorsal scales; 5 branched pelvic-fin rays and 5+4+2 teeth on the fifth ceratobranchial. *Laubuka trevori* is further distinguished from its congeners by possessing 14½–15½ branched anal-fin rays; ½6/1/1½ scales in transverse line on body; a short pelvic fin (10.1–16.3% SL) and two longitudinal stripes: a golden and a bluish-green stripe on the body, running from behind the opercle to the base of the caudal fin, the latter broken and less distinct in the anterior half of the body. *Laubuka latens* is further distinguished by its long pelvic fin (23.2–26.9% SL) and the absence of any markings on the side of the body other than a humeral spot and a caudal-peduncle spot.

Key words: Freshwater, Taxonomy, Coorg, Karnataka, Morphology, *Chela*, *laubuca*

Introduction

Hamilton (1822), in his account of the fishes of Ganges River, described *Chela* as the first division under the genus *Cyprinus*. *Laubuka* Bleeker, 1859 (shown to be senior to *Laubuca* Bleeker, 1860, by Kottelat 2011) and *Chela* Hamilton, 1822, were considered synonyms by Silas (1958), an act followed by most subsequent authors (e.g., Bănărescu 1969; Talwar & Jhingran 1991) until Pethiyagoda *et al.* (2008) reviewed the former genus and differentiated *Laubuka* from *Chela*, considering the latter to be a monotypic genus (type species *C. cachi*). Recently, Knight & Rema Devi (2014), while pointing out that *C. cachi* is a synonym of *C. atpar*, described *Chela macrolepis* from Tamil Nadu, India, thereby raising the number of valid species in *Chela* to two.

The genus *Laubuka* is widely distributed across India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and South East Asia (Silas 1958; Talwar & Jhingran 1991) with *L. lankensis*, *L. insularis*, *L. varuna* and *L. ruhuna* endemic to Sri Lanka, *L. fasciata* endemic to the Western Ghats of India, *L. caeruleostigmata* and *L. siamensis* endemic to Southeast Asia and *L. laubuca* occurring apparently across India and Bangladesh. Interestingly, Shaji & Easa (2003: 19, fig. 28) illustrated two specimens of *L. laubuca* from Kerala which were strikingly different from typical *L. laubuca* (type locality: northern Bengal). In addition, Silas (1958) mentioned that among the numerous specimens of *L. laubuca* he examined from across its range, the specimens from the Cauvery River had a more elongate (less deep) body, a more anteriorly-placed pelvic fin and a lower dorsal-fin ray count when compared to *L. laubuca* *sensu stricto*. In order to assess this nominal species more closely (no known type material of *L. laubuca* survives), fresh collections were made in northern Bengal. Meanwhile, a collection from the Cauvery River in southern India revealed the presence of two undescribed species of *Laubuka*, which are herein described as new.