

PUBLICATION OF A TRANSLATION OF AND THE PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED ILLUSTRATIONS FOR A LITTLE-KNOWN WORK DESCRIBING NEW TAXA OF CYPRINID FISHES FROM NORTHERN VIETNAM BY NGUYEN AND DOAN, 1969

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ABSTRACT

In 1969 a paper was presented at a meeting in Hanoi with an account of the fish family Cyprinidae in the Red River basin of northern Vietnam. The text was distributed during the meeting without reproductions of the drawings of the two new genera and seventeen new species level taxa described in the paper. Subsequent attempts to identify the taxa, based upon the very brief and in some ways inadequate written accounts, have not been entirely satisfactory. The original drawings, supposedly lost, have been kept in the Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 1 in Hubac, Hanoi (RIAH). With the figures in hand the specimens upon which most of them were based have been located in the RIAH fish collection. Consequently more accurate identification of the species level taxa is possible. Most of them evidently are valid. A translation of the original paper from Vietnamese into English, reproduction of all but two of the original figures, and a partial evaluation of their current status are provided in the following three articles in this issue of the *Natural History Bulletin*.

Key words: Cyprinidae, Red River basin, Vietnam, new taxa, original drawings, lectotypes, neotypes

Ho Chi Minh died on 2 September 1969 in the middle of a war with the United States. Despite the troubled times a scheduled scientific meeting was held in Hanoi before the end of the month. At this meeting Nguyen Van Hao reported on the fishes of the family Cyprinidae obtained during extensive surveys of the Red River basin, formally presenting descriptions of 2 new genera, 16 new species and 1 new subspecies. A hastily prepared and poorly typewritten and mimeographed text in Vietnamese with the descriptions and other information (NGUYEN & DOAN, 1969) was distributed to each person present. No copies were prepared or distributed of the original illustrations of the new taxa. The number of persons who received the text is not recorded but they were not many. Thus was this significant contribution to the ichthyology of the Red River basin, among the first to be done by Vietnamese, published.

No copy of the original paper was available at the time of my first two visits to Hanoi in 1992 and 1997. Only in 1998 was a copy obtained thanks to a Vietnamese colleague in Saigon. Additional copies were made and given to Nguyen Van Hao, Mai Din Yenh, and other Vietnamese colleagues. One of these copies was reproduced by KOTTELAT (2001).

Now for the first time the information in the original work by NGUYEN & DOAN, 1969 is made available in an English translation by Nguyen Van Canh. As surmised by FERRARIS (2002: 1168), the last page, p. 19, was missing from the copy reproduced by Kottelat. The present translation into English includes the missing last page. The original illustrations, heretofore unduplicated and unpublished, are presented in a paper by Nguyen Van Hao (NGUYEN V. H., 2007). This is followed by an article by me and David Catania in

which lectotypes or neotypes are designated for the new species (ROBERTS & CATANIA, 2007). Remarks on the current status of the taxa and on the biology of some of them also are provided.

Authorship of the paper is given in the original text as Nguyen van [sic] Hao and Doan Le Hoa. According to the first author, he alone was almost entirely responsible for the work. The date of publication is not given. Sometimes referred to by the first names of the authors, as HAO & HOA, 1969, the work should be referred to as NGUYEN & DOAN, 1969 (KOTTELAT, 2001; FERRARIS, 2002).

The paper probably would have passed into oblivion with the names in it regarded as unpublished for the purposes of scientific nomenclature except that many of the taxa were recognized in a book on the freshwater fishes of North Vietnam by Mai Dinh Yen (MAI, 1978), who attributed them to HAO & HOA, 1969. Mai had a copy of the text but did not see the specimens in the fish collection of the Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 1 or the original figures kept by Nguyen Van Hao. Some of the species were not represented in the collections that he did study. Thus his identifications of the species were based largely on guesswork and some are incorrect.

The subsequent history of the work may be reviewed briefly. The only publications to utilize it as the primary basis for systematic ichthyology and treatment of the species are MAI (1978) and KOTTELAT (2001). The original Vietnamese text of the paper (but no translation) is reprinted in the latter work. Like Mai, Kottelat tried to identify the taxa without having seen the specimens or figures, and was not always successful. Kottelat treated the taxa mentioned by MAI (1978) as published, but was undecided whether they should date from 1969 or 1978. Recognition of the 1969 work as published is supported by FERRARIS (2002), and I concur. The effect of such recognition is to validate publication not only of the taxa recognized by MAI (1978) but also of the additional species cited by KOTTELAT (2001). Based on the latter work, all of the taxa are included now in Eschmeyer's "Catalog of Fishes (online version, last updated 19 June 2007). The nomenclatural status in the Catalog follows KOTTELAT (2001).

The original descriptions are brief and the figures of the new fish taxa are essential to identify the species. Until 1998 only the original illustrations were available. They were in the possession of Nguyen Van Hao at RIAH or RIA No. 1 in Hu Bac, Hanoi, and no copies had been made. Nguyen kindly brought the figures for me to study, and with his permission David Catania and I made xerox copies and photographic copies of them. Sets of the copies were given to Nguyen Van Hao.

The original figures are of particular importance for two additional reasons. No holotypes or other type specimens are indicated in NGUYEN & DOAN (1969). The specimens described in this paper are part of an extensive collection of beautifully preserved and carefully labeled fishes from the Vietnamese part of the Red River basin. This collection, made by Nguyen Van Hao and other members of the Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 1 at Hu Bac, a suburb of Hanoi, is maintained at that institute (hereafter referred to as RIAH or RIA No. 1 (RIA Nos. 2 and 3 were founded later on and are in Hue and Saigon). This collection was not catalogued, however, and thus the specimens in it could not be referred to by their catalog numbers. Although no type specimens are designated in the original paper, the original figures include scale bars and sometimes notes on the specimen drawn. With the original figures and the information on them it was possible to identify in the RIA No. 1 fish collection most of the specimens actually figured.

These specimens had labels with the names given to them in NGUYEN & DOAN (1969), but were not otherwise indicated as type specimens. The specimens were provided with RIAH catalog numbers for the first time in 1998. Designation of these specimens as lectotypes for the species named by NGUYEN & DOAN (1969) and the evidence or justification for their type status is presented in ROBERTS & CATANIA (2007).

Another reason why the original figures of the new taxa proposed in NGUYEN & DOAN (1969) are important is that they are superb illustrations, among the finest pen and ink drawings ever made of Asian freshwater fishes. The species (in some instances, the actual specimens) represented by them are readily identifiable. This is seldom so with fish illustrations but in this instance it is true. There were two illustrators and they signed most of their work. One signed "L. S. Chang". The other signed with an emblem composed of initials "DAU", but the full name of this person has not been recorded. One drawing has the encircled letter "C", presumably standing for L. S. Chang. Two drawings are unsigned.

From the original printed text it is known that there were 17 figures (numbered as "hinh" [figure] 1–17). All but two of the figures were available at the time of my visit to RIA No. 1 in 1998. In the following translation, the figure numbers and their order in the original text are preserved. All of the available figures are reproduced. Those that were not found, for *Daniops nammuensis* and *Erythroculter pseudobrevicauda macrophthalmus*, are so indicated in the text (e.g. "Fig. 4 [not found]").

The poorly-typed original version of NGUYEN & DOAN (1969) is full of typographical errors. Involved here are Vietnamese words as well as the names of foreign authors and all of the scientific names of fish genera and species. Nearly every one of the scientific names is spelled two or three different ways, often incongruously (pers. obs.; KOTTELAT, 2001; FERRARIS, 2002). Fortunately this problem has been dealt with thoroughly and satisfactorily by KOTTELAT (2001). As first reviser, he selected from the spellings used the ones most appropriate for each species. The spellings selected by Kottelat are used throughout the present English language translation (NGUYEN V. C., 2007) and in ROBERTS & CATANIA (2007).

The translation otherwise is faithful to the original, down to the idiosyncratic and sometimes inconsistent headings, paragraphing and lettering. Where there are mistakes or gaps in the original, they are mostly retained, as is the original punctuation. This should facilitate the task of Vietnamese readers should they wish to check the present translation against the original Vietnamese version.

The original paper cites a number of foreign and Vietnamese works on fishes in the body of the text but does not provide a bibliography or list of references. Several of the foreign works are obscurely cited, and three of the Vietnamese papers are otherwise unknown to me. The latter papers are not present in Eschmeyer's "Catalog of Fishes" and are not mentioned by KOTTELAT (2001) or FERRARIS (2002). No attempt is made to supply the missing bibliography here.

A few footnotes by me are included with the translation where they are deemed essential. There are no footnotes in the original paper. Designation of neotypes, current nomenclatural status of the new taxa, and other remarks are reserved for the paper following the translation and the figures.

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