

## BOOK REVIEW

**INDOCHINESE NEMACHEILINES. A REVISION OF NEMACHEILINE LOACHES (PISCES: CYPRINIFORMES) OF THAILAND, BURMA, LAOS, CAMBODIA AND SOUTHERN VIETNAM.** by Maurice Kottelat. Verlag Dr. Friedrich Pfeil, 262 pp. P.O. Box 650086. München 65, Federal Republic of Germany. ISBN 3-923871-47-3. DM 88.

Freshwater loaches of the subfamily Nemacheilinae are relatively common fishes in Southeast Asia, important ecologically as well as in the lucrative aquarium trade. They are also among the most diverse of fishes, with over 460 published names. Not surprisingly, the same diversity has created much confusion in their systematics. Even the spelling of the nominate genus has only recently been standardised, vacillating between *Nemacheilus*, *Noemacheilus* and *Nemachilus*. The same is true of their higher classification. Until Sawada's (1982) study, they had been classified in the Cobitidae, but his study indicated closer relationships with the Balitoridae (his Homalopteridae) (Kottelat, 1988).

As the Nemacheilinae has the highest concentration of species in Indo-China and Southeast Asia, detailed and careful studies are urgently needed. The present revision of the nemacheiline fauna of Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia and southern Vietnam is an important step in that direction. Despite its title, the study effectively covers Peninsular Malaysia as well.

Kottelat is highly qualified to deal with the complexities of nemacheiline taxonomy. Since 1982, he has written over a dozen papers on nemacheilines, the present monograph being the culmination of over eight years of field and museum work on almost 4000 specimens. 62 species representing nine genera are discussed in great detail, with two genera and 20 species described as new. Holotypes have been examined whenever possible and variation discussed at length. Extensive field collections in this region by the author have given him an intimate knowledge of the biology of the various species, and this is reflected in the text. Clear figures provided for all species, complemented by easily used genera and species keys, maps, notes on colour, habitat preferences and general biology make the book very useful for professional ichthyologists, ecologists and popular aquarists alike. To keep the book current, Kottelat has even appended an update (p. 251) to record new Malaysian and Indo-Chinese taxa.

As to the nemacheiline fauna of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, Kottelat recognises only six species - *Nemacheilus selangoricus* Duncker, 1904, *N. masyae* Smith, 1933, *Schistura robertsi*, new species, *Tuberoschistura baenzigeri* (Kottelat, 1983) (in a new genus, previously *Nemacheilus*), *Barbucca diabolica* Roberts, 1989, and a new species of *Oreonectes* from Pulau Tioman (Kottelat, in press).

Kottelat is to be highly commended for his masterful treatise on the Nemacheilinae of Indo-China. It is hoped that he will be able to perform the same detailed study of the nemacheilines of insular Southeast Asia and China in the future.

## LITERATURE CITED

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- Sawada, Y., 1982. Phylogeny and zoogeography of the superfamily Cobitoidea (Cyprinoidei, Cypriniformes). *Mem. Fac. Fish., Hokkaido Univ.*, 28(2): 65-223.

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