

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE FISHES OF THE KURRAM AGENCY, PAKISTAN

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Abstract: The fish fauna of the river Kurram and its tributaries in the Kurram Agency has been discussed. *Labeo calbasu* (Hamilton), *Racoma labiata* McClelland, *Shistura punjabensis* (Hora), *Glyptothorax kashmirensis* Hora and *G. naziri* Mirza and Naik have been recorded for the first time from this river. *Tor putitora* (Hamilton) and *Cyprinion watsoni* (Day), previously recorded from Kurram Agency, have not been collected.

INTRODUCTION

The Kurram Agency lies at an altitude of 3000 feet at Chappary and 7830 feet at Trymangal. These mountains include Koh-i-Siah and Charmaghaz. Parachinar, the headquarter of Kurram Agency, is situated at a distance of 116 miles from Kohat.

The Kurram river originates in the Koh-i-Siah in Afghanistan. It enters the Kurram Agency at Kharlachi and leaves at Chappary. The current of water is rapid and the bed is rocky and stony. The water temperature usually is between 11-17 °C and pH 6.5. Water is almost clear but it becomes muddy during rains.

The collection of specimens was done from the Kurram river. The following places were selected for collection.

Kharlachi: December 1991, January and March 1992, temperature 12 °C; pH 6.5

Shangak: December 1991, January, March and April 1992, temperature 12 °C; pH 6.5

Ahmadzai: March and April 1992, temperature 11 °C

Agrah: October and November 1992, temperature 11 °C

Sultan: November and December 1992, temperature 13 °C

Lower Alizai: March and April 1992, temperature 17 °C

SYSTEMATIC ACCOUNT

Cohort	:	EUTELEOSTEI
Superorder	:	OSTARIOPHYSI
Order	:	CYPRINIFORMES
Family	:	CYPRINIDAE

1. *Aspidoparia morar* (Hamilton)

Only one specimen of this species, 72mm long, was captured from Kharlachi.

2. *Barilius pakistanicus* Mirza and Sadiq

It is a small-sized laterally compressed fish. The description of this fish is also based on the single specimen 59.5 mm long from Kurram river at Kharlachi.

3. *Garra gotyla* (Gray)

This is a small-sized fish of fast streams. Characteristic feature is the presence of a deep, transverse groove in front of nostrils, spiny tubercles and a vestibule and sucker along the oral side of head for the attachment to rocks. Five specimens were captured from the Kurram river at Agrah, the longest being 130 mm.

4. *Crossocheilus diplocheilus* (Heckel)

It is a small-sized fish in which upper lip forms a vestibulum. It is common throughout Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. Four specimens including the longest 132.25 mm were collected from Kurram river at Agrah.

5. *Schizocypris brucei* Regan

There are three specimens of this species from Agrah. The longest specimen measures 11.5 cm in total length and 10.2 cm in standard length.

6. *Schizothorax plagiostomus* Heckel

It is a medium-sized fish with long cylindrical body. Lower lip in this fish forms a papillated plate. This fish is common in fast moving waters. Eleven specimens are present in our collection captured from Kurram river at Sultan and Shangak. The maximum length of the specimen is 172 mm.

7. *Racoma labiata* McCelland

R. labiata is a fish with streamlined body and is an active swimmer. lower lip in this fish forms a continuous fold with trilobed edges. Nine specimens were captured at Shangak and Sultan with maximum length of 221 mm.

Family: NOEMACHEILIDAE

8. *Schistura curtistigma* Mirza and Nalbant

It is also a small-sized fish with incomplete lateral line and visible scales. This fish is endemic to Pakistan. Only two specimens were captured from Kurram river at Shangak. The largest specimen is 81.5 mm long.

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9. *Schistura punjabensis* (Hora)

This small-sized fish is of no food value. Only one female fish 67mm long is present in our collection which was captured at Sultan. It is a new record from Kurram river.

Order: SILURIFORMES
Family: Sisoridae

10. *Glyptothorax naziri* Mirza and Naik

A small fish with a U-shaped thoracic sucker. Three specimens were captured from Kurram river at Sultan village. Of these the longest specimen is 94 mm. It is a new record from the river Kurram.

11. *Glyptothorax stocki* Mirza and Nijssen

This fish is endemic to Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. It is characterized by the presence of an oval sucker. The longest specimen in our collection is 100.25 mm.

12. *Glyptothorax kashmirensis* Hora

Four specimens with maximum length of 136.5 mm were captured from Kurram river at village Sultan. This is the first record of this species from Northwest Frontier Province. It is also being recorded for the first time from Pakistan.

13. *Gagata cenia* (Hamilton)

Four specimens with maximum length of 81 mm were captured at Sultan village and Ahmadzai.

DISCUSSION

The fishes of the river Kurram were listed by Mirza *et al.* (1989). The present report includes some new records, i.e. *Racoma labiata*, *Schistura punjabensis*, *Glyptothorax naziri* and *Glyptothorax kashmirensis* from the Kurram river. In addition one specimen of *Labeo calbasu* was captured from Kurram Garhi near Bannu. It is also a new record for the river Kurram. This specimen (365 mm long) is dirty brown in colour, quite different from the normal slaty colour of this species.

The following species previously recorded from the Kurram Agency are not represented in our collection:

1. *Tor putitora* (Hamilton)
2. *Cyprinion watsoni* (Day)

The mahseer (*Tor putitora*) was widely distributed in the river Kurram in the past. Its absence from the present collection is alarming. This is a game fish of great economic importance. The causes of its disappearance from the Kurram Agency should

be studied. The other species was recorded from Parachinar by Ahmad and Mirza (1963). Its absence is also noteworthy.

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to Dr. Azizullah, Head of Zoology Department, Government College, Lahore for providing facilities during this research work. We are also obliged to the Fishery Officer of Bannu for helping in collection.

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(Received: December 27, 1992)