

Short Communication

First record of the loach fish *Paracobitis cf. malapterura* in the Kavir basin, northern Iran

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Abstract: The loach fish *Paracobitis cf. malapterura* Valenciennes, 1846 (Nemacheilidae), formerly believed to be an endemic species in the Caspian Sea basin, was recorded for the first time in the upper Kavir basin. This extension of its recorded range makes it likely that it has been overlooked in other parts of the Kavir basin.

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Introduction

There are six valid species of the genus *Paracobitis* Bleeker, 1863 in Iran (Kottelat, 2012; Coad, 2014). From these valid species, *Paracobitis iranica* Nalbant and Bianco, 1998 is known from the Namak Lake basin, *Paracobitis longicauda* Kessler, 1872 is found in the Tedzhen and Murgab rivers of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan and in the Aral Sea basin, and in the Tedzhen (= Hari) River basin of Iran, *Paracobitis malapterura* Valenciennes, 1846 is found in the southern Caspian Sea basin, *Paracobitis rhadinaea* Regan, 1906 is restricted to the Sistan basin, *Paracobitis smithi* Greenwood, 1976 is found only from a cave in Lorestan Province in the Tigris River basin, and *Paracobitis vignai* Nalbant and Bianco, 1998 is endemic to Sistan basin (Nalbant and Bianco, 1998; Coad, 2014). And now the present study confirms the presence of the crested loach *Paracobitis cf. malapterura* for the first time in Nam River, Kavir Basin.

Materials and methods

The study was conducted in Nam River (35°44'44"N 052°34'23"E; 1975 m altitude), in Tehran Province.

The river flows into the Kavir basin. The specimens were collected by electrofishing and were preserved into 4% formaldehyde.

Results

Fourteen specimens of *Paracobitis cf. malapterura* (Fig. 1) were found on 16 August 2012 in the Nam River near the city Firouzkuh in the province of Tehran, northern Kavir basin, Iran (35°44'44"N 052°34'23"E). The body proportions and meristic counts of the preserved specimens agree well with the available keys of *Paracobitis malapterura* (Coad, 2014). The reported species was not previously recorded from the Kavir basin, and this constitutes new record.

Discussion

The new record of the genus *Paracobitis* and the species *P. malapterura* is the first in the basin of Kavir for the genus and the first outside the basin of Caspian Sea for the species. Considering the large distance between all the reported sampling localities of the genus *Paracobitis*, the fishes can be expected

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Figure 1. *Paracobitis cf. malapterura* from Nam River in the Kavir basin, northern Iran.

to occur more widely in Iranian basins than is known today.

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