



Revision of the *Amphilius jacksonii* complex (Siluriformes: Amphiliidae), with the descriptions of five new species

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Abstract

The *Amphilius jacksonii* complex is revised, and five new species are described: *A. ruziziensis* n. sp. from the Ruzizi River drainage and northeastern tributaries of Lake Tanganyika; *A. pedunculus* n. sp. from the Malagarasi River drainage, Lake Rukwa basin, and upper Great Ruaha River drainage, Rufiji basin; *A. frieli* n. sp. from the upper Congo basin; *A. crassus* n. sp. from the Rufiji and Wami basins; and *A. lujani* n. sp. from the Lake Kyogo drainage, northeastern tributaries of Lake Victoria, and the Lake Manyara basin.

Key words: taxonomy, catfish, Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Introduction

The African catfish genus *Amphilius* is the most diverse and widely distributed genus in the family Amphiliidae. As currently recognized the genus includes 29 species distributed throughout Low Africa (northern and western Africa in which most of the land is at elevations between 500 and 1000 meters) and High Africa (southern and eastern Africa in which most of the land is at elevations well above 1000 meters (much above 4000 meters). Skelton (1984) identified two characters that distinguished most of the species from Low Africa from most of the species from High Africa. The Low African species have an epidermal fold at the base of the caudal fin and 6 + 7 or 7 + 8 principal caudal-fin rays, while the High African species lack the epidermal fold and have 8 + 9 principal caudal-fin rays. Only two species of the Low African group occur in High Africa: *Amphilius lentiginosus* in Angola and *Amphilius jacksonii*, widely distributed in eastern Africa.

Amphilius jacksonii was described from a single specimen collected from the Hima River, a tributary of Lake George in western Uganda (Boulenger, 1912). Subsequent authors have recorded this species throughout much of eastern Africa including the Lake Edwards drainage in western Uganda (Walsh *et al.*, 2000), the Malagarasi River drainage in Burundi & western Tanzania (David, 1937; De vos *et al.*, 2001), the Ruzizi River drainage [as *Amphilius platychir* (Marlier, 1953)], the Rufiji basin in eastern Tanzania [as *Amphilius platychir* (Matthes, 1967; Bailey, 1969)], the Lake Rukwa basin in Tanzania (Seegers, 1996a), and the Upper Congo basin in Zambia (Seegers, 1996a).

Beyond distributional data, very little information is published on *Amphilius jacksonii*. Greenwood (1958, 1966) described and figured the species in both editions of “Fishes of Uganda”. Seegers (1996a) figured the type specimen and described specimens from the Lake Rukwa basin. Walsh *et al.* (2000) redescribed the species and provided habitat and life-history notes from the Lake George drainage, Uganda. The Weberian complex of this species was described and figured by Chardon (1968), and Diogo & Chardon (2000) described the mandibular barbel structure. No studies have examined geographic variation in *A. jacksonii*.

A study of geographic variation in specimens identified as *Amphilius jacksonii* revealed substantial