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Cryptic diversity of the genus *Rasbora* (Cyprinidae) in Sri Lanka revealed by morphometric analysis

K B S Gunawickrama and R G D R Jayawickrama

Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna, Matara

Slight morphometric distinctions existing among several species of *Rasbora* in Sri Lanka demand close observations for reliable species demarcation. All striped rasboras in Sri Lanka bear some superficial similarities, thus identifying them as a single "Dandiya" species (trivial name in *Sinhala*) is a common practice. Recent taxonomic work named previously known *Rasbora daniconius* in Sri Lanka as *Rasbora dandia*, and described two new closely related species. The present study was carried out to reveal obscure diversity among sympatric *Rasbora* species using morphological differentiation of taxonomic importance, and to assess the contribution of morphometrics for characterizing striped Rasboras. A sample of striped Rasbora (n=132) was collected from a single location (Pattiyapola tank hydrologically connected to Walawe River), and data on 16 morphological characteristics were collected. The data were categorized *a priori* into four groups based on a single character ED (distance from posterior eye margin to dorsal fin origin). The Discriminant Function Analysis (DFA) that utilized all size-corrected variables resulted in a model function with ten significant contributors [Wilk's lambda = 0.039, Approx. F (68, 465) = 8.75, $p<0.0001$] where ED had the greatest contribution for discrimination of fish into identified groups. The classification functions categorized them into designated groups, where 98% of group 1 fish (n=104), 80% of group 2 fish (n=15), 100% of group 3 fish (n=13) and 100% of group 4 fish (n=6) were successful. The plot of canonical roots revealed four discernible clusters representing these four groups. According to the features listed for the striped Rasboras, group 1 is identified as *Rasbora dandiya* (previously named *R. daniconius*), Group 3 can be identified as *Rasbora naggsi*, and group 4 may be identified as *Rasbora microcephalus* (previously named *Rasbora caverii*). The fish in the Group 2 seem to represent another sympatric species hitherto unknown, yet further work including osteology and genetic analyses are needed to confirm, and establish the cryptic diversity of the Genus *Rasbora* in Sri Lanka.

suneetha@zoo.ruh.ac.lk Tel: (0)41-2222681/82