

First record of the freshwater loach, *Turcinoemacheilus kosswigi* (Bănărescu and Nalbant, 1964), from Iran (Karoun drainage)

(Teleostei: Nemacheilidae)

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Abstract. *Turcinoemacheilus kosswigi* (Bănărescu and Nalbant, 1964) was recorded for the first time in Iran from the River Karoun drainage, which belongs to the Euphrates-Tigris drainage. Formerly believed to be an endemic species in the basin of River Tigris, it is now recorded in the upper River Euphrates basin. This extension of its recorded range makes it likely that it has been overlooked in other parts of the Euphrates-Tigris system. The species is distinguished from all other loaches by the pelvic-fin origin in front of the dorsal-fin origin and having the anus closer to the pelvic-fin base than to the anal fin origin.

Key words. Iran, Nemacheilidae, *Turcinoemacheilus*, Karoun drainage, River Dez, first record.

Introduction

The Nemacheilidae is the second largest family of Teleostei, consisting mostly of small benthic fishes inhabiting running waters in Europe, Asia and Ethiopia. The nemacheilid loaches of Western Asia are poorly known due to their small size and limited commercial value (KOTTELAT 1990). Moreover, the nemacheilid diversity of Western Asia is massively underestimated as most ichthyologists are discouraged from studying nemacheilids due to their great unresolved species diversity.

In the last review of this group, NALBANT & BIANCO (1998) reported three genera and 14 species of nemacheilid loaches from Iran. Since then, one additional genus and species, *Ilamnemacheilus longipinnis*, has been described by COAD & NALBANT (2005). NALBANT & BIANCO (1998) already suspected that several additional species should be present in Iran including the conspicuous loach *Turcinoemacheilus kosswigi* (Bănărescu and Nalbant, 1964) (Fig. 1) which was only known from the Euphrates-Tigris basin in Turkey (BĂNĂRESCU & NALBANT 1964; BREIL & BOHLEN 2001). In the present note we report the first findings of *T. kosswigi* in Iran (see Fig. 2).

Methods

Measurements were made point-to-point with a dial calliper and recorded to 0.1 mm, never by projections. Methods for counts and measurements follow KOTTELAT (1990). Standard length (SL) is measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the hypural complex. The last two branched rays articulating on a single pterygiophore in the dorsal and anal fins are noted as "1½".