

A review of the genus *Esomus* in Sri Lanka (Teleostei: Cyprinidae)

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Molecular and morphological analyses show that *Esomus thermoicos* is the only species of *Esomus* in Sri Lanka. *Esomus thermoicos* is distinguished from its congeners by the combination of having a complete lateral line, a dark mediolateral stripe, a short pectoral fin that does not reach the anal-fin origin when adpressed, and by lacking conspicuous spots or blotches on the body. A limited series of specimens from southern peninsular India are also identified as *E. thermoicos*. *Esomus brevibarbatus* is a junior subjective synonym of *E. thermoicos*.

Introduction

Fishes of the genus *Esomus* Swainson, 1839 range from the South to Southeast Asia and consist of nine species (Kottelat, 2013; Tan & Armbruster, 2018), namely: *Esomus ahli* Hora & Mukerji, 1928; *Esomus altus* (Blyth, 1860); *Esomus barbatus* (Jerdon, 1849); *Esomus caudiocellatus* Ahl, 1924; *Esomus danrica* (Hamilton, 1822); *Esomus longimanus* (Lunel, 1881); *Esomus malayensis* (Matte & Reichelt, 1908); *Esomus metallicus* Ahl, 1924; and *Esomus thermoicos* (Valenciennes, 1842). *Esomus* is characterized by having a pair of long maxillary barbels extending beyond the pectoral-fin origin, and a single row of pharyngeal teeth on the fifth ceratobranchial (Hora & Mukerji, 1928).

The genus was first reported from Sri Lanka by Valenciennes in Cuvier & Valenciennes, 1842 (hereafter Valenciennes, 1842) who described

Nuria thermoicos based on specimens collected in the hot springs of “Cania” (Kanniya, near Trincomalee) by August-Adolphe-Marc Reynaud. Günther (1868: 200) and Day (1878: 583, 1889: 334) synonymized it with *Nuria danrica* (Hamilton, 1822), currently *Esomus danrica*. Some authors, however, recognized the Sri Lankan taxon as a subspecies of *N. danrica*, i.e. *N. d. malabarica* (Day, 1867) (e.g. Duncker, 1912: 266) and *E. d. thermoicos* (e.g. Deraniyagala, 1952; Munro, 1955; Mendis & Fernando, 1962; Senanayake, 1980). Hora & Mukerji (1928), in their revision of the genus, recognized *E. thermoicos* as a valid species endemic to Sri Lanka, followed by Talwar & Jhingran (1991) and Pethiyagoda (1991: 71), although the latter doubted its endemism. Meanwhile, Deraniyagala (1958) described *Esomus danricus brevibarbatus* characterized by a shorter maxillary barbels in comparison to *E. thermoicos*. However, the validity

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