

Osteology of ‘*Monopterus*’ *roseni* with the description of *Rakthamichthys*, new genus, and comments on the generic assignment of the Amphipnous Group species (Teleostei: Synbranchiformes)

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We provide a detailed description of the head and shoulder girdle osteology of the holotype of the synbranchid ‘*Monopterus*’ *roseni* Bailey & Gans. Collected from a well in Kerala, this subterranean synbranchid shows a number of unique and highly derived characters in the gill arch skeleton. In ‘*Monopterus*’ *roseni*, basibranchial 2 does not articulate with basibranchial 1, but is situated more posteriorly between the proximal ends of hypobranchials 2, with which it articulates; and ceratobranchial 2 does not articulate with hypobranchial 2, but is offset posteriorly so that the distal tip of hypobranchial 2 is situated in between the proximal ends of ceratobranchial 1 and 2. Based on these striking osteological differences and a combination of additional diagnostic characters, we erect the new genus *Rakthamichthys* with the type species *Monopterus roseni*. We also include the other two southern Indian subterranean species formerly referred to as *M. indicus* Eapen (= *M. eapeni* Talwar) and *M. digressus* Gopi in the new genus *Rakthamichthys* along with the northeast Indian *M. rongsaw* Britz, Sykes, Gower & Kamei. *Rakthamichthys* also differs genetically from the other Asian genera of synbranchids, *Monopterus* and *Ophichthys*, by an uncorrected p-distance of 18.9–23.9 % in the *cox1* barcoding gene. We further resurrect the genus name *Typhlosynbranchus* Pellegrin for the two West African species ‘*M.*’ *boueti* and ‘*M.*’ *luticolus*.

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