

Two new species of African bubble-nesting *Microctenopoma* (Teleostei: Anabantidae) from Angola

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Two new species of the bubble-nesting anabantid genus *Microctenopoma* are identified and described from the watershed reaches of the Okavango, Zambezi, Cuanza, and Congo river systems in Angola. Poll (1967) pointed out that two forms of *Ctenopoma nanum* occurred in the southern tributaries of the Congo in Angola. Study of new material more recently collected in Angola and of material studied by Poll (1967) indicates that there are two new species, described here as *M. steveboyesi* and *M. stevenorrisi*. *Microctenopoma steveboyesi* occurs in the source reaches of the Cuanza, the Cuito-Okavango and the Zambezi. *Microctenopoma stevenorrisi* occurs in the source reaches of the Cuango and Cuilo-Casai, Congo system. These new species are members of the savannah cluster of the *Microctenopoma nanum* complex as determined by Norris (1995). Each is distinguished from the widespread southern African species *M. intermedium*, by shape and pigmentation as well as modally in meristic characters such as the number of dorsal-fin spines and vertebrae.

Introduction

Microctenopoma species are relatively small (<100 mm SL) bubble-nesting African anabantid fishes, that inhabit Afro-tropical swamps and bogs from Central West Africa through the Congo basin south to the Zambezi and, on the East coast, south to KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (Skelton, 1988; Norris, 1995). *Microctenopoma* species are most closely related to African ‘*Ctenopoma*’ [a clade of deep-bodied species that have a swimblad-

der with paired extensions] (Norris, 1995, 2007; Rüber et al., 2006; Wu et al., 2019). The generally larger males have extended finnage and display brighter nuptial coloration than females (Norris, 1995). Breeding males actively establish a territory, construct a bubble-nest, attract suitable mates, and, post-spawning, guard the eggs and embryos in the nest (Norris, 1995).

Currently, 12 *Microctenopoma* species are recognized, in at least two morphological groups, one of which was identified and named as the

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