

Two new species of the gudgeon genus *Gobiobotia* (Teleostei: Gobionidae) from southern China

Man Wang^{*,**}, Xiao Chen^{***} and E Zhang^{*}

Two new Chinese species of *Gobiobotia* are described from southern China. Both are placed in the species group having an unscaled region of the abdomen adjacent to the ventral midline extending to pelvic-fin insertions. *Gobiobotia incarinatus*, from the Gan-Jiang in Jiangxi Province, is distinguished from other species of the group by a combination of more vertebrae, more lateral-line pored scales and non-keeled scales on the predorsal body above the lateral line. *Gobiobotia bouommatos*, from the Liu-Jiang in Guangxi Province and the Yuan-Jiang in Hunan Province, is distinguished from other members of this group with fewer vertebrae, fewer lateral line pored scales and its colour pattern exclusive of *G. paucirastella*, further from *G. paucirastella* by keeled scales on the predorsal body above the lateral line. A molecular phylogenetic analysis based on the cytochrome b gene and significant genetic distances with sampled congeneric species support the specific distinctness of the two new species. The specific status of *G. intermedia*, *G. fukiensis* and *G. yuanjiangensis* is also scrutinised based on our examination of type material and molecular evidence.

Introduction

The gudgeon genus *Gobiobotia* is an endemic East Asian group of small-sized rheophilic benthic freshwater fishes characterised by having four pairs of barbels (one pair of maxillary barbels and three pairs of mental barbels), a gas bladder with a minute free posterior chamber and without pneumatic duct, and scales large with five or six scale rows above the lateral line (He & Chen, 1998; Chen et al., 2022). As recently suggested by Chen et al. (2022), species of *Gobiobotia* can be

subdivided into different species groups based on squamation of the abdomen. The genus is currently composed of 18 species primarily known from China, but with several species having an extended distribution in northern Vietnam and the Korean Peninsula (Zhang et al., 1995; He & Chen, 1998; Kottelat, 2001; Kim & Park, 2002; Chen et al., 2022).

Chen & Cao (1977) were the first to provide a systematic taxonomic revision of *Gobiobotia* from China, in which 12 species were recognised. Since then, only two taxonomic studies on this genus

* Institute of Hydrobiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Wuhan 430072, Hubei Province, P. R. China.
Email: zhange@ihb.ac.cn (EZ, corresponding author).

** University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100049, P. R. China.

*** College of Animal Science and Technology, Anhui Agricultural University, Hefei 230000, Anhui Province, P. R. China.

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