Ichthyofauna of the Tambraparani River System, Tamil Nadu

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Indroduction

River Tambraparani (Map I) originates at Agasthyamalai on the eastern slopes of Southern Western Ghats at an altitude of 2000 m. The river runs through Nellai Kattabomman and Chidambaranar districts of Tamil Nadu. Sand carried by the river is copper coloured, hence the name Tambraparani, which in Tamil means bearer of copper. Several tributaries like Servalar, Manimuthar, Gadananadhi, Pachiyar and Chittar join the main river Tambraparani to form a compact drainage basin. The main anaicuts in the river system are Kodaimelalagian anaicut, Nadiyunni anaicut, Kannadiyan anaicut, Ariyanayakapuram anaicut, Palavar anaicut, Sethamatti anaicut, Marudur anaicut and Srivaikundam anaicut.

No comprehensive account on the Ichthyofauna of Tambraparani river system is available till date. Earlier works on the upper reaches of Tambraparani river include those of Silas (1953), Jonsingh and Vickram (1987) and Rema Devi (1992, 1992 a).

The present study is based on the fish specimens collected from the upper reaches of the Tambraparani river to its confluence with the Bay of Bengal, by the survey parties from Southern Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India, from Kalakad Wildlife sanctuary from 1984 to 1987 and from the districts of Tirunelveli-Kattabomman and V. O. Chidambaranar from 1993-1995. The list comprises 70 primary freshwater fishes. It includes 62 species collected and identified by the authors. See Table.

Identification and classification are based on Day (1875-78), Jayaram (1981,1991), Menon (1987, 1993 in press) and Talwar and Jhingran (1991).

Discussion

The first account of fishes of Tambraparani river system is from its head waters by Silas (1953), who reported 9 species including two new species and one genus new to science, viz. *Puntius arulius tambraparaniei* and *Horalabiosa joshuai* gen. et. sp. nov.

Subsequent records of fishes from the high ranges include those of Jonsingh and Vickram (1987), on the fishes of Mundanthurai wildlife sanctuary, wherin they reported 33 species, all of them occurring in Tambraparani river system, chiefly from Papanasam lower and upper dam and Manimuthar dam. Of the species reported by them the following seven species viz. *Anguilla bengalensis*, *Salmostoma untrahi*, *Barbodes carnaticus*, *Hypselobarbus dubius*, *Puntius arulius arulius*, *Tor khudree* and *Noemacheilus pulchellus* could not be collected during the recent surveys by Zoological Survey of India. Three of these viz. *B. carnaticus*, *H. dubius* and *Tor khudree* are endemic and rare barbs restricted to the upper reaches which were reported for the first time from Tambraparani river by Johnsingh (op. cit).

Two other species identified as *Balitora brucei* and *Garra lissorhynchus* by Johnsingh are not included in the present list as these are restricted to the Eastern Himalayas (Menon, 1993) and their identification needs confirmation.

Further reports on fishes from the upper reaches of Tambraparani include Rema Devi (1992) who described a new species, *Garra kalakadensis* from Kalakad wildlife sanctuary and Rema Devi's (1992 a) listing of 19 species from the sanctuary. The present paper lists 70 primary freshwater species, including 3 exotic forms, under 16 families and 7 orders. Of these 35 species are reported for the first time from the river system.

The endemic species includes, *Puntius arulius tambraparani* *Horalabiosa joshuai* and *Garra kalakadensis*.

A noteworthy observation is the occurrence of *H. kurali* (known so far from the west flowing rivers of western ghats, Kerala), *Silurus wynaadensis* (Known from Cauvery and Tungabadra drainage of Western Ghats) and *Bhavania australis* (known from Western ghats, Karnataka, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu; Silent Valley, Tenmala, Wynad from Kerala) in the Tambraparani river system and is of Ichthyological significance.

Labeo dero and *L. panqusia* (Himalayan forms) could have been introduced into the system along with other *Labeo* and carp species propagated for fishery purpose.

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Systematic List of Primary Freshwater Fishes of Tambaraparani River

Order: Anguilliformes
Family: Anguillidae
1. *Anguilla bengalensis* (Gray)

Order: Cypriniformes
Family: Cyprinidae
Subfamily: Rasborinae
2. *Amblypharyngodon microlepis* (Bleeker) *
3. *Danio aequipinnatus* (McClelland)
4. *Esomus danricus* (Hamilton) *
5. *Esomus thermoicos* (Valenciennes) *
6. *Parluciosoma daniconius* (Valenciennes)
7. *Rasbora caverii* (Jerdon) *

Subfamily: Cultrinae
8. *Salmostoma clupeoides* (Bloch) *
9. *Salmostoma untrahi* (Day)

Subfamily: Cyprininae
10. *Catla catla* (Hamilton)
11. *Barbodes carnaticus* (Jerdon)
12. *Barbodes sarana subnacutus* (Valenciennes)
13. *Cirrhinus cirrhosus* (Bloch) *
14. *Cirrhinus mrigala* (Hamilton)
15. *Cirrhinus reba* (Hamilton) *
16. *Cyprinus carpio communis* (Linnaeus)
17. *Horalabiosa joshuai* Silas
18. *Hypselobarbus dubius* (Day)
19. *Hypselobarbus kurali* Menon & Rema Devi *
20. *Labeo angra* (Hamilton) *
21. *Labeo bata* (Hamilton) *
22. *Labeo boga* (Hamilton) *
23. *Labeo calbasu* (Hamilton)
24. *Labeo dero* (Hamilton) *
25. *Labeo fimbriatus* (Bloch)
26. *Labeo panqusia* (Valenciennes) *
27. *Labeo rohita* (Hamilton) *
28. *Puntius amphibius* (Valenciennes)
29. *Puntius arenatus* Day *
30. *Puntius arulius arulius* (Jerdon)
31. *Puntius arulius tambraparniei* Silas
32. *Puntius bimaculatus* (Bleeker) *
33. *Puntius chola* (Hamilton) *
34. *Puntius dorsalis* (Jerdon) *
35. *Puntius filamentosus* (Valenciennes)
36. *Puntius sophore* (Hamilton)
37. *Puntius ticto punctatus* (Day)
38. *Puntius vittatus* Day *
39. *Tor khudree* (Sykes)

Subfamily: Garrinae
40. *Garra kalakadensis* Rema Devi *
41. *Garra mullya* (Sykes) *
42. *Garra gotyla stenorhynchus* (Jerdon) (= *G. lamta* of Silas)

Family: Cobitidae
43. *Lepidocephalus thermalis* (Valenciennes) *

Family: Balitoridae
Subfamily: Noemacheilinae
44. *Noemacheilus pulchellus* Day
45. *Noemacheilus triangularis* (Day) *

Subfamily: Balitorinae
46. *Bhavania australis* (Jerdon) *

Order: Siluriformes
Family: Bagndae
47. *Mystus bleekeri* (Day) *
48. *Mystus gulio* (Hamiltion) *
49. *Mystus malabaricus* (Jerdon) *
50. *Mystus montanus* (Jerdon) *
51. *Mystus vittatus* (Bloch)

Family: Siluridae
52. *Silurus wynadensis* Day *
53. *Ompok bimaculatus* (Bloch)

Family: Heteropneustidae
54. *Heteropneustes fossilis* (Bloch)

Order: Atheriniformes
Suborder: Exocoetoidei
Family: Belonidae
55. *Xenetodon cancila* (Hamilton)

Suborder: Cyprinodontoidei
Family: Oryziatidae
56. *Oryzias melastiqma* (McClelland)

Family: Cyprinodontidae
57. *Aplocheilus blockii* (Arnold) *
58. *Aplocheilus lineatus* (Valenciennes)

Family: Poecilidae
59. *Gambusia affinis* (Baird & Girard) *
60. *Poecilia reticulata* (Peters) *

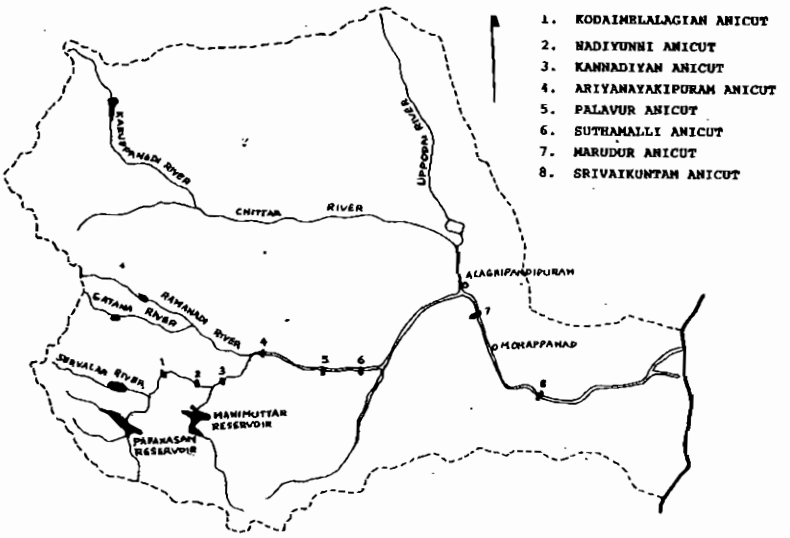
Order: Channiformes
Family: Channidae
61. *Channa qachua* Hamilton *
62. *Channa punctatus* (Bloch)
63. *Channa striatus* (Bloch)

Order: Perciformes
Family: Cichlidae
64. *Etroplus maculatus* (Bloch)
65. *Etroplus suratensis* (Bloch)
66. *Oreochromis mossambica* (Peters)

Family: Gobiidae
67. *Glossogobius giuris* (Hamilton)

Family: Belontidae
68. *Polyacanthus fasciatus* (Bloch & Schneider) *
69. *Pseudosphronemus cupanus* (Cuvier) *

Order: Mastacembeliformes
Family: Mastacembelidae
70. *Mastacembelus armatus* (Lacepede)

* Indicates first record for R. Thambraparani

Map : TAMBRAPARNI RIVER BASIN