



A new species of the genus *Nothobranchius* (Cyprinodontiformes: Nothobranchiidae) from the coastal area of northeastern Mozambique

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Abstract

Specimens of a distinctive fish of the genus *Nothobranchius* were collected from an ephemeral pool, not directly linked to an adjacent river, from the coastal area of northeastern Mozambique. These specimens appear to be closely related to *Nothobranchius melanospilus*, known from eastern Tanzania and southeastern Kenya and to another as-yet undescribed species (*Nothobranchius* cf. *melanospilus*) from a geographically contiguous area of southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique. The new species (herein described as *Nothobranchius hengstleri*) is differentiated by several morphological characters, as well as by different male and female color patterns from the above-reported species and all the others members of the *Nothobranchius melanospilus* species group.

Keywords: *Nothobranchius hengstleri*, new species, *Nothobranchius melanospilus* species group, Mozambique, annual killifish

Introduction

The faunal regions of northern Mozambique, together with parts of the Congo River basin and eastern Angola, are among the least-studied areas in Africa. The freshwater fish fauna of Mozambique has been documented in only a few studies (Jubb, 1961; 1967; Skelton, 1994; 2001; Darwall et al., 2005). Among the species of Nothobranchiidae, the only species from this country to have formally been described are *Nothobranchius orthonotus* (Peters, 1844), *Nothobranchius rachovii* Ahl, 1926 and *Nothobranchius furzeri* Jubb, 1972. Recent ichthyological surveys of Mozambique have been limited to the southern and central parts of the country (Rosenstock, 1994; Wood, 2000; Torre, 2004; Valdesalici, 2005; Watters, 2006).

The only survey of northern Mozambique focusing on the family Nothobranchiidae is that by John Rosenstock (2003), a Danish development assistance worker. In March 2003 he found, in an area south of Mercufi (13°23.65'S, 40°31.67'E) and near Pemba (13°05.95'S, 40°28.01'E), an undescribed *Nothobranchius* species, resembling *N. melanospilus* (Pfeffer, 1896) as redefined by Wildekamp (1981). This species was also reported from southeastern Tanzania (Seegers, 1986; 1997; 2003; Wildekamp, 2004). An early report, by Peters (1868), of "*Nothobranchius orthonotus*" from "Quisanga an der Querimbaküste" (in northern Mozambique) may be applicable to this species, which is referred to as *N. cf. melanospilus* in this paper and in a recent survey of the area by Hengstler & Valdesalici (2006) (also see comments in Wildekamp, 1991).

The *N. melanospilus* species group was defined by Wildekamp et al. (1998) and includes *N. melanospilus* (Pfeffer, 1896), *N. vosseleri* Ahl, 1924, *N. interruptus* Wildekamp & Berkenkamp, 1979, *N. jubbi* Wildekamp & Berkenkamp, 1979 (males of this species have a white marginal band on the caudal fin, and in the blue morph the red on caudal fin is variable and in some specimens/populations is limited to spots (Seegers, 1997; Wildekamp, 2004); both conditions are considered to be apomorphies), and *N. elongatus* Wildekamp, 1982.