



Hypessobrycon columbianus, wild form

photo: D. Bork

SCIENCE

The red-blue Colombian finally has a scientific name

by Frank Schäfer



Hypessobrycon columbianus, „Gold“

photo: F. Schäfer

Travelling aquarists often provide the impetus for science, and that applies in this case too - the first specimens were collected by Hanau aquarist Dieter Bork and his companions during a research trip to Colombia. The species name was unknown, and so the fish was given the "working name" of "red-blue Colombian". Today thousands of descendants of the original 10 or so specimens are swimming around in aquaria all over the world.

Now at last the characiform specialists Axel ZARSKÉ and Jacques GÉRY have examined the species and described it as new, as *Hypessobrycon columbianus*. It was particularly difficult to differentiate from the very similar species *H. panamensis* and *H. savagei*. Both species are unknown in the aquarium hobby, but their live coloration is nevertheless known and hence the authors were able to include a table of colour characters in the description, on the basis of which the three taxa can be differentiated - very useful, as no-one wants to have to kill their fishes in order to identify them! According to this table, the blue sheen that makes the blue-red Colombian so attractive is restricted to the area above the anal fin in *H. savagei*, while in the blue-red Colombian it covers the entire back. *H. panamensis*, by contrast, is silver-grey and lacks this blue sheen. The caudal fin, bright red in *H. columbianus*, is orange in *H. savagei*, and colourless in *H. panamensis*.

Further details can be found in the original description: ZARSKÉ, A. & J. GÉRY (2002): Der Blaurote Kolumbien-Salmer. Das Aquarium 391: 22-30.

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SCIENCE

Rivulus sp. "Tarapoto", a new killifish from Peru

by Hans-Jürgen Zeisig and Ingo Schindler

The South American killifish genus *Rivulus* at present includes about a hundred recognised species. Not only for a better overview, but also to provide a clear indication of phyletic relationships, these taxa have been assigned to various groups, termed superspecies.



Rivulus spec. "Tarapoto"

photo: I. Schindler

The *R. hartii*-group is one of these superspecies. The species contained therein grow rather large,



Rivulus ophiomimus

photo: F. Vermeulen

and can be recognised in particular by the high anal and dorsal fin ray counts, as well as other characters. The main distribution, as currently understood, encompasses the Guianas, Venezuela, and a number of the islands of the Caribbean. Hitherto the only known species from the

Cordillera Oriental. Rainwater accumulates in these depressions and then runs away via small gullies. In September 1996, when the fishes were captured, the pH was measured as 6.0, and the water temperature varied from 25 to 28°C depending on the time of day.



Rivulus hartii

photo: S. Hellner/Archiv A.C.S.

western Amazon region attributable to this superspecies has been *R. ophiomimus*, whose type locality lies in northern Peru. Another form, *R. sp. "Tarapoto"*, can now be added, as our researches have shown that individuals of this taxon possess 16 or more anal fin rays and nine or more dorsal rays. Moreover the other

On the basis of the meristic and morphometric data gathered by us, *R. sp. "Tarapoto"* is by and large similar to the already mentioned *R. ophiomimus*, described by Huber in 1992, but there are interesting differences in colour pattern. These appear to indicate that *R. sp. "Tarapoto"* is a distinct species. In contrast to *R. ophiomimus*, *R. sp. "Tarapoto"* has up to 10 lines of dark red dots along the sides of the body, while *R. ophiomimus* possesses only three such continuous lines. In addition, *R. ophiomimus* exhibits a "Rivulus spot", which is absent in *R. sp. "Tarapoto"*. Moreover the two specimens of *R. sp. "Tarapoto"* more closely investigated by us have 46 scales in a longitudinal row, slightly more than in all the specimens of *R. ophiomimus* (maximum 44 scales) examined. However, it will be necessary to examine further specimens in order to confirm these differences.



Rivulus rubrolineatus

photo: S. Hellner/Archiv A.C.S.

characteristics of the *R. hartii*-superspecies are also present. These include, for example, the frequent lack of the "Rivulus spot", which is likewise absent in *R. sp. "Tarapoto"*.

At first glance, *R. sp. "Tarapoto"* is rather similar to *R. rubrolineatus* in its markings. However, on closer examination it is evident that although the two may look similar, they are not particularly closely related. *Rivulus rubrolineatus*, unlike *R. sp. "Tarapoto"*, belongs to the *R. urophthalmus*-superspecies and possesses only 15 anal fin rays and usually only eight dorsal rays. Additional differences are the maximum body length (*R. rubrolineatus* grows to about 6 cm, while *R. sp. "Tarapoto"* attains 7-8 cm) and various body proportions.

The town of Tarapoto, after which the new killifish is named, lies in the Peruvian province of St. Martin. According to details provided by the collector, Mr. Divosse, the collecting locality was an extensive swampy area, penetrated by the foothills of

The discovery of *R. sp. "Tarapoto"*, the second representative of the *R. hartii*-superspecies in the western Amazon region, indicates that there may be further related species of this superspecies yet to be discovered in the gap in the distribution between Guyana and Peru.