

Corydoras boehlkei, a New Catfish from the
Río Caura System in Venezuela
(Pisces, Siluriformes, Callichthyidae)

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ABSTRACT.—A new species of the neotropical callichthyid catfish genus *Corydoras* from Venezuela is described and figured. It is named *Corydoras boehlkei* in memory of the late Dr. James E. Böhlke, who collected the specimens in Río Cuchime. [Callichthyidae, *Corydoras*, new species, Pisces, Siluriformes, systematics, Venezuela]

During an expedition in 1977 to the Río Caura system in eastern Venezuela (with the aid of the National Geographic Society), Dr. James E. Böhlke and Mr. William G. Saul collected “. . . at one station above the falls . . .” three specimens of “. . . what I thought to be an undescribed *Corydoras*” (James E. Böhlke, in litt., 8 XI 1981). In the same letter, Böhlke stated: “I have now determined that the species is most like *C. leucomelas* if, indeed, distinct from that species. My three specimens differ from *leucomelas* (and Fowler’s synonym *caquetae*) principally in the nature and extent of the spotted colour pattern. On my fish the boldest row of (large) spots is along the overlap of upper and lower body scutes, with two rows of large bold spots above and one row of large but rather faint spots below it. Also, the head (including the snout) and the predorsal area are profusely and boldly spotted—something not shown for the two nominal forms.”

The specimens were sent to us with a re-

quest to examine them. Soon after their arrival we received the announcement of the sudden death of Dr. Böhlke. With the permission of Mrs. Eugenia B. Böhlke, we herein describe this fish as a new species and name it *Corydoras boehlkei* in the memory of our colleague and friend, who contributed much to ichthyology. Included among his many publications are the original descriptions of *Corydoras fowleri* in 1950 and *C. osteocarus* in 1951.

***Corydoras boehlkei* n. sp., Figs. 1–4**

MATERIAL EXAMINED. HOLOTYPE: ANSP 148097, sl 24.1 mm, Venezuela, Edo Bolivar, Río Cuchime (Cusime), about 20 miles upstream from junction of Río Caura–Río Erebató (Entre Ríos) at 05°45’N, 64°24’W (Fig. 3), J. E. Böhlke & W. G. Saul, 7 II 1977. PARATYPES (2): ANSP 149257, sl 25.7 and ZMA 119.406, sl 23.8 mm, same data as the holotype.

DESCRIPTION. Holotype and paratypes immature: dorsolateral body scutes not entirely meeting between dorsal and adipose fin.

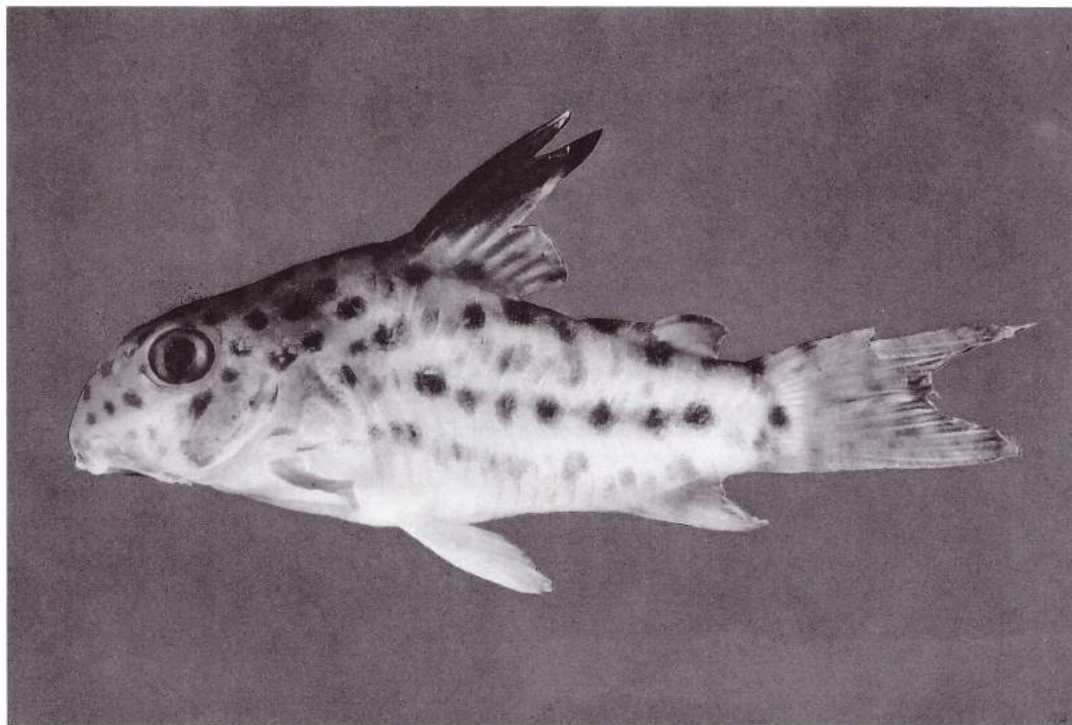


FIG. 1. *Corydoras boehlkei* n. sp., Holotype, ANSP 148097, 24.1 mm sl (photo by L. A. van der Laan, ZMA).

Morphometric data for holotype given in millimeters, followed by proportions of holotype and paratypes in parentheses. Measurements taken as defined in Nijssen and Isbrücker (1980: 193).

Body depth 9.2 mm (sl/bd 2.6, paratypes 2.6); body width 6.9 mm (sl/bw 3.5, paratypes 3.5–3.7); length of dorsal-fin spine 8.2 mm (sl/l_{ds} 2.9, paratypes 2.8–3.0); length of pectoral-fin spine 7.4 mm (sl/l_{ps} 3.3, paratypes 3.2–3.4); head length 8.2 mm (sl/hl 2.9, paratypes 2.9); snout length 3.9 mm (hl/sn 2.1, paratypes 2.1); length of bony orbit 2.7 mm (hl/l_{bo} 3.0, paratypes 2.9–3.0); least width of interorbital 3.3 mm (hl/wi 2.5, paratypes 2.6–2.8); width of coracoid area 2.9 mm (hl/ca 2.8, paratypes 2.6–2.7); least depth of caudal peduncle 3.9 mm (hl/dcp 2.1, paratypes 2.1).

Dorsal fin I, 7; pelvic fins i, 5; anal fin i, 6; pectoral fins I, 8; caudal fin 7/7. Dorso-

lateral body scutes 23 (paratypes 22–23), ventrolateral body scutes 21 (paratypes 20), preadipose scutes 4 (paratypes 3–4). Two



FIG. 2. Map of Venezuela showing the type locality of *Corydoras boehlkei* n. sp.

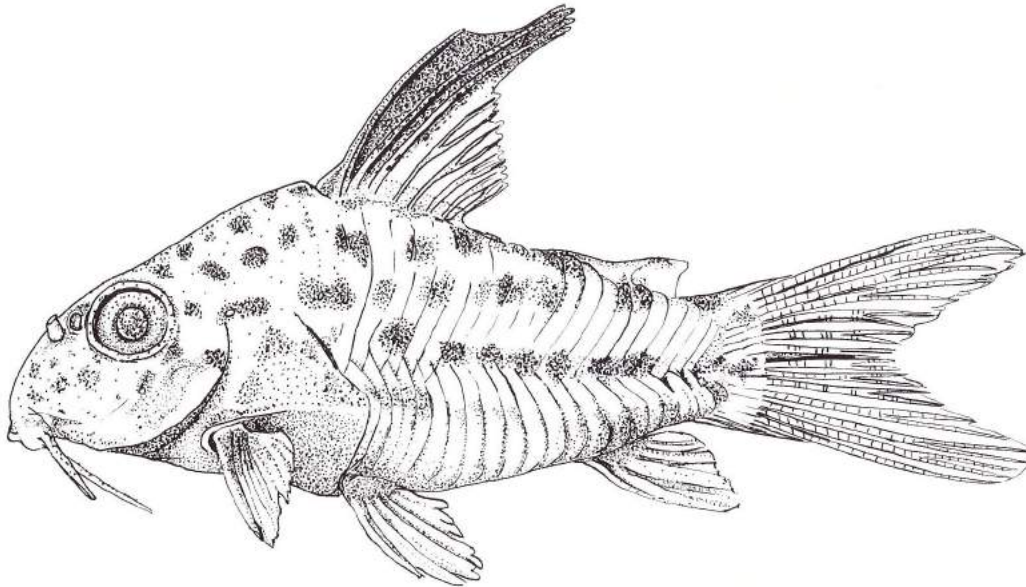


FIG. 3. *Corydoras boehlkei* n. sp., Paratype ANSP 149257, 25.7 mm sl (drawing by Mary H. Fuges, ANSP).

pairs of rictal barbels and one pair of mental barbels. Inner edge of pectoral-fin spine as shown in Fig. 4. Skin of intercoracoid area naked. Fontanel length of the holotype 3.0 mm.

COLOR IN ALCOHOL. Ground color tan. Snout, head and body with dark spots of various size and intensity (see Böhlke's description in the introduction, and Figs. 1 and 3).

Dorsal-fin spine and two adjacent branched rays, including the fin membrane with black pigment, forming a wedge-like blotch along anterior part of this fin; thin end of wedge-like blotch near base of the

dorsal-fin spine. First two dorsal-fin rays distinctly longer than spine. Caudal fin with faint brownish gray pigment, without pattern. Anal fin with very faint brownish pigment. Pectoral fin with faint greyish pigment on spine and first few branched rays. Pelvic fin tan.

COMPARISON. *Corydoras boehlkei* belongs to the *C. punctatus*-group (Nijssen and Isbrücker 1980: 193–202). It differs from the numerous (31) species of this group particularly by its color pattern, which is reminiscent of that of *Corydoras leucomelas* Eigenmann & Allen 1942, of which *Corydoras caquetae* Fowler 1943 is a synonym (cf. Nijssen and Isbrücker 1980: 198). *Corydoras boehlkei* lacks a mask across the eyes, and lacks irregular vertical bars in the caudal fin, both characters being present in *C. leucomelas*. In addition, the pigmentation in the dorsal fin and on the body differs in both species in many details. Compared to the holotype of *Corydoras leucomelas* (SL 26.7 mm, an immature specimen as are the specimens of *C. boehlkei*) from Peru, Yarina Cocha, Río Ucayali, the least width of

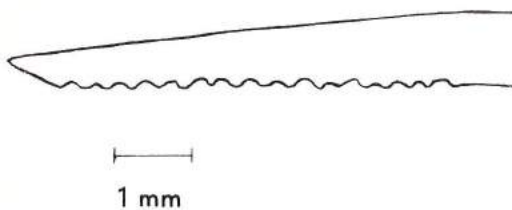


FIG. 4. Right pectoral spine of *Corydoras boehlkei* n. sp., holotype.

the interorbital in *C. boehlkei* is much narrower (hl/wi 2.5–2.8) than in *C. leucomelas* (hl/wi 2.2).

The color pattern of *Corydoras boehlkei* also resembles that of *C. acrensis* Nijssen 1972 from Brazil, Est. Acre, Furo do Lago São Francisco, tributary of Río Juruá. *C. boehlkei* differs from the single holotype of *C. acrensis* (SL 30.0 mm) mainly in color pattern. *C. acrensis* has, among other color pattern characteristics, dark brown stripes on the dorsum of the head that are absent in *C. boehlkei*, a thin midlateral stripe on

the posterior half of the body (large roundish spots in *C. boehlkei*), and five vertical bars in the caudal fin (absent in *C. boehlkei*). The least width of the interorbital in *C. acrensis* is 2.1 (hl/wi 2.5–2.8 in *C. boehlkei*).

LITERATURE CITED

- NIJSSEN, HAN AND ISAÄC J. H. ISBRÜCKER. 1980. A review of the genus *Corydoras* Lacépède, 1803 (Pisces, Siluriformes, Callichthyidae). *Bijdr. Dierk.* 50(1): 190–220.