A new catfish, *Hara koladynensis* from northeastern India (Siluriformes: Erethistidae)

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**Author Details:** N. ANGANTHOIBI is a Project Fellow under a project funded by the National Bureau of Fish Genetic resources, Lucknow. He is working on the inventory of the catfishes of North East India and their phylogenetic analysis. She is undergoing PhD on a relevant topic in the Department of Life Sciences, Manipur University. W. VISHWANATH is a Professor in the Department of Life Sciences, Manipur University. His field of specialization is fish and fisheries. He is presently engaged in taxonomy and systematics of freshwater fishes of northeastern India.

**Author Contribution:** The study: NA — survey, collection, morphometric and anatomic study of catfishes of northeastern India and their phylogenetics; WV — supervision of taxonomy and phylogeny of freshwater fishes of northeastern India. Current paper: NA — detailed examination of the erethistid catfishes of northeastern India and comparison with specimens in ZSI, Kolkata and data of the related species of neighbouring countries, establish identity of new species; WV — supervision in establishing new species and discuss taxonomic status.

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**Abstract:** A new Erethistid catfish species, *Hara koladynensis* is described from Koladyne River, Mizoram, India. It is distinguished from its congeners in having rough (vs. smooth or serrated) anterior margin of dorsal spine; shorter pre-anal length (58.5-60.9% SL vs. 63.2-75.2), longer head (36.0-38.3% SL vs. 24.8-34.2%), longer post-adipose distance (18.6-21.9% SL vs. 12.3-18.3), and deeper body (21.9-25.2% SL vs. 11.5-20.9).

**Keywords:** New species, Erethistidae, catfish, Mizoram, India

**INTRODUCTION**

Fishes of the genus *Hara* Blyth of the family Erethistidae are characteristic in having a stumpy body, unidirectional denticles along the outer margin of pectoral fin, externally smooth and internally serrated dorsal fin and a thorax with no adhesive apparatus (Hora 1950). It is also characterized in having coracid with ventral anterior process, pectoral spine with serrated anterior margin, antero-ventral flange on the ventral surface of the complex centrum and the parapophysis of the fifth vertebra with a vertical lamina (de Pinna 1996). The genus includes small to medium sized catfishes having brown cryptic colouration and heavily tuberculate skin inhabiting hill streams in the subhimalayan region and western Indochina (Ng & Kottelat 2007).

Hamilton (1822) described *Pimelodus harena* from Hooghly River, India. Hora (1950) considered the species as a representative of the genus *Hara*. *Hara buchanani* Blyth (1860) and *Pimelodus asperus* McClelland (1844) are now considered junior synonyms of *H. harena* (Ng & Kottelat 2005; Ferraris 2007).

Day (1870) described *Hara jerdoni* from Sylhet district, Bangladesh. Misra (1976) described *H. horai* from Terai and Duars, West Bengal. Ng & Kottelat (2007) described *H. longissima*, *H. minuscula* and *H. spinulus* from Myanmar and *H. mesembrina*, *H. filamentosus* from Thailand. They also treated *H. saharsai* Munshi & Srivastava (1988) and *H. serrata* Vishwanath & Kosygin (2000) as junior synonyms of *H. harena*. Thus eight species of *Hara* are known so far.

A recent collection of fishes from Koladyne River, Mizoram, India included a new *Hara* species which is herein described as *H. koladynensis*.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**

Measurements were made on the left side of specimens with dial calipers to the nearest 0.1mm following Ng & Kottelat (2007). Head length (HL) and measurements of body parts are presented as proportions of standard length (SL) and subunits of head as of head length (HL). Numbers in parentheses following meristic data denote number of specimens examined with that count. Osteological structures were observed in cleared and alizarin stained specimens. Vertebral counts followed Roberts (1989). Two paratypes of *H. koladynensis* (SL = 56.4 & 58.0 mm) were dissected for osteology. Fin rays were counted under a stereo-zoom light microscope. Type specimens are deposited in the Manipur University Museum of Fishes (MUMF).

*Hara koladynensis* sp. nov.  
(Image 1a,b & c)

**Type material**


*Paratypes:* 5 exs., 54.1−65.8 mm SL; data as for holotype, MUMF 10002.
Image 1. *Hara koladynensis* sp. nov., MUMF 10001, holotype, 54.5mm SL
a - dorsal; b - lateral; c - ventral views
Table 1. Morphometric data for Hara koladynensis sp. nov. (n=6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%SL</th>
<th>Holotype MUMF 10001</th>
<th>Range (paratypes)</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Predorsal length</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>39.1-44.0</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preanal length</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>58.5-60.9</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepelvic length</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>51.6-55.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoral length</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>20.4-27.5</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of dorsal fin base</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>17.5-20.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorsal spine length</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>16.1-20.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anal fin length</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.9-13.9</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pelvic fin length</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>16.5-18.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>30.3</td>
<td>25.2-31.3</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pectoral spine length</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>28.9-31.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caudal fin length</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>30.2-32.3</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of adipose fin base</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>14.5-17.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorsal to adipose distance</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.0-15.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-adipose distance</td>
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<td>18.6-21.9</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>Caudal peduncle length</td>
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<td>18.8-21.8</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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<td>Caudal peduncle depth</td>
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<td>8.5-9.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>Body depth at anus</td>
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<td>21.9-25.2</td>
<td>23.5</td>
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<td>Head length</td>
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<td>36.0-38.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head width</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>27.7-32.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head depth</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>26.3-30.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of posterior process on coracoid</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>23.4-27.0</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>%HL</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Snout length</td>
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<td>35.2-44.2</td>
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<td>30.0-33.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eye diameter</td>
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<td>11.5-17.5</td>
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<td>Nasal barbel length</td>
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<td>13.8-22.7</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
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<td>Maxillary barbel length</td>
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<td>55.7-69.5</td>
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<td>Inner mandibular barbel length</td>
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<td>30.6-35.5</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outer mandibular barbel length</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>37.6-45.0</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagnosis

Hara koladynensis is distinguished from its congeners by the following combination of characters: rough (vs. smooth or serrated) anterior margin of dorsal spine; longer head (36.0-38.3% SL vs. 24.5-34.2) and post-adipose distance (18.6-21.9% SL vs. 12.3-18.3); deeper body (21.9-25.2% SL vs. 11.5-20.9) and shorter preanal length (58.5-60.9% SL vs. 63.2-75.2).

Description

Morphometric data are shown in Table 1. Body robust, moderately compressed laterally. Dorsal profile gently curved from tip of snout to level of nares, then sloping steeply to the origin of dorsal fin and evenly sloping ventrally to the end of caudal peduncle. Ventral profile roughly straight and flat up to origin of pelvic fin, then gently sloping dorsally to the end of caudal peduncle. Head ventrally compressed and longer than width. Supraoccipital process long reaching anterior tip of nuchal plate. Eyes moderate, superior in position.

Snout narrow, profile dorsally curved and rounded when viewed laterally and acutely triangular when viewed from above. Snout with pronounced steepening of curvature anteriorly at level of posterior nares when viewed laterally. Anterior and posterior opening of nares large and separated by flap of skin comprising base of nasal barbel. Gill opening narrow, extending ventrally up to the level of base of coracoid process. Bony elements of dorsal surface of head very prominent and covered with thin translucent skin.

Barbels in four pairs. Maxillary barbel when adpressed extend beyond the base of the pectoral spine. Nasal barbel short, subtending by a flap of skin at base and extending to midway between posterior edge of posterior nares and anterior margin of orbit. Anterior mandibular barbel when adpressed reaching the anterior base of pectoral spine; posterior mandibular, when adpressed reaching the gill opening.

Mouth inferior, premaxillary tooth band not exposed when mouth is closed. Upper lip with indistinct plicae. Oral teeth small and villiform, in irregular rows on all tooth-bearing surfaces. Premaxillary teeth in single crescentic band across midline. Palate edentulous. Dentary teeth in two narrow crescentic bands separated at midline. Anus and urogenital openings located straight through posterior three quarters of adpressed pelvic fin. Skin tuberculated, distributed evenly throughout head and body. Lateral line complete and mid lateral. Vertebrae 15+17=32(2). Dorsal fin located above anterior third of body, with 1,5,i (6) rays. Dorsal spine moderately long and gently curved backward with rough anterior margin, posterior margin with 5-6 serrae. Adipose fin with anterior margin straight and posterior margin angular. Caudal fin with i,7,7,i (5) or i,6,7,i (1) principal rays. Lower lobe of caudal fin slightly longer than the upper lobe. Anal-fin base approximately in line with adipose-fin base. Anal fin with iii,7 (6) rays. Pelvic fin with i,i,i (1) or i,5 (5) rays. Pectoral fin with I,6,i rays; anterior margin with 15-25 small distally directed serrations, posterior margin with 7-12 large medially directed serrations. Coracoid with well developed posterior processes, extending to two thirds distance between base of posteriormost pectoral-fin ray and pelvic-fin origin.

Coloration: Head and body dark chestnut to dark chocolate brown. Belly and ventral surface of head light brown, that of head lighter and creamish. Two thin irregular light brown bars on body; first chevron-shaped and located between dorsal and adipose-fin bases, second thinner than first located on caudal peduncle. Dorsal fin dark brown except for thin hyaline distal margin. Pectoral fin brown with thin hyaline distal margin and either a small ovoid hyaline spot or a crescentic median hyaline band on middle third of fin. Pelvic and anal fins
New catfish from Mizoram N. Anganthoibi & W. Vishwanath

Figure 1. Map of Mizoram showing type locality (star) of *Hara koladynensis* sp. nov.

hyaline, with dark brown bases and subdistal stripes. Adipose fin brown as in body, with lighter coloured distal margin. Caudal fin hyaline, with irregular W-shaped band subdistally and with small dark brown flecks randomly distributed throughout fin. Maxillary and mandibular barbel light brown, with dark brown annuli.

**Etymology**

The species is named after Koladyne River, Mizoram, India, its type locality.

**Distribution**

Presently known from Koladyne River at Mizoram, India (Fig. 1).

**Discussion**

*Hara koladynensis* is easily distinguished from its congeners by the combination of characters mentioned in diagnosis. The new species also differs from *H. jerdonii* in having longer caudal peduncle (18.8–21.8% SL vs. 14.9–15.4) and shorter pectoral spine (28.9–31.0% SL vs. 42.2–51.7); from *H. harai* in having wider eye diameter (11.5–17.5% HL vs. 8.0–9.0) and from both the species in having longer caudal fin (30.2–32.4% SL vs.20.5–27.9).

*Hara koladynensis* further differs from *H. harai* in having rough (vs. serrated) anterior margin of dorsal spine; shorter maxillary barbel (55.7–69.5% HL vs. 80.8–108.2) and dorsal spine (16.1–20.0% SL vs. 22.7–27.4); from *H. minuscula* in having shorter posterior process on coracoid (23.4–27.0% SL vs. 29.5–32.3) and inner mandibular barbel (30.6–35.6% HL vs. 40.0–57.1); from *H. spinulus* in having shorter inner mandibular barbel (30.6–45.5% HL vs. 43.1–53.7), longer caudal peduncle (18.6–21.8% SL vs. 11.8–15.0) and post-adipose distance (16.6–21.9% SL vs. 12.4–17.7) and from all of them in having shorter outer mandibular barbel (37.6–45.0% SL vs. 52.1–73.8). The new species can also be distinguished from both *H. mesembria* and *H. longissima* in having absence (vs. presence) of a filamentous extension of the first principal ray of upper caudal fin lobe, from *H. longissima* in having shorter inner mandibular barbel (30.6–35.5% HL vs. 40.7–50.3), outer mandibular barbel (37.6–45.0% HL vs. 53.5–72.3) and dorsal spine (16.1–20.0% SL vs. 22.6–26.7) and from *H. filamentos* in having longer posterior coracoid process (23.4–27.0% SL vs. 19.9–22.8).

Most of the highly specialized rheophilic fish species in Southeast Asia have restricted distribution ranges (Kottelat 2001). *Hara koladynensis* is found in the Koladyne River (also known as Kaladan or Chintuipui) which originates from the western face of Chin Hills in Myanmar bordering Mizoram and Manipur states of India. At Kolchaw, the river bottom is rocky and the water current is very fast. The river is not connected with Ganga-Brahmaputra and Chindwin-Innrawaddy drainages as it is respectively separated by the Chittagong hill tract and the Arakan Yoma hill range. The isolated habitat is expected to support many endemic species including the new species.

**Comparative material**

*Hara filamentos*: Data from Ng & Kottelat (2007).

*Hara harai*: MUF 2508, 2509, 7054, 7055, 48–60 mm SL, Jiri R., tributary of Barak R., Manipur, India; MUF 2507, 58.3 mm SL, Barak R., Manipur, India. Additional data from Ng & Kottelat (2007).

*Hara harai*: ZSI - FF955 (neotype), 56.1 mm SL; Terai & Duars, N. Bengal. Additional data from Ng & Kottelat (2007).

*Hara jerdonii*: Data from Ng & Kottelat (2007).

*Hara longissima*: Data from Ng & Kottelat (2007).

*Hara mesembria*: Data from Ng & Kottelat (2007).

*Hara minuscula*: Data from Ng & Kottelat (2007).

*Hara spinulus*: Data from Ng & Kottelat (2007).

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New catfish from Mizoram


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