

New records of fishes from Catamarca, Argentina.

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Abstract

Thirteen species of fishes are recorded from the ríos del Valle, Huacra, and Ovanta and Dique Sumampa, in Catamarca, Argentina. These sites belong to an area with uncertain limits of geographical distribution of fishes. Seven of the species are new for the area.

Resumen

Se registraron trece especies de peces en los ríos del Valle, Huacra and Ovanta and Dique Sumampa, in Catamarca, Argentina. Estos sitios pertenecen a un área donde los límites de la distribución geográfica de los peces es incierta. Siete de las especies son nuevas para el área.

Introduction

The diversity of the freshwaters fishes diminishes from the North to the South of the Neotropical Region and also from the East to the West. The Neotropical Region, usually, has been divided into two large areas or subregions, Brazilian and Austral, which in addition have been subdivided into provinces or "dominios". Different authors (e.g. Ringuélet, 1975; Almirón et al., 1997) considered an area in the North western Argentina where the limits of the geographical distribution of fishes are uncertain. The province of Catamarca is located within this area; it is situated between 25°30' and 30°S - 65° and 69°W. Pampean mountains go across the center and East of the province, enclosing arid valleys with salt pits and several endorrheic basins. In these basins, there are semipermanent rivers and creeks which may be used for irrigation and other human activities. Probably, the fishes of these basins were isolated, but small dams and canals were built. The knowledge about ichthyofauna of those environments is very scarce. Few papers deal with fishes of Catamarca: Ringuélet (1975); Arratia et al. (1983); López et al. (1996), and Butí (1999). In the present contribution, thirteen species are recorded from different sites of endorrheic basins, seven of them mentioned for the first time.



Fig. 1. Collection site at the río Huacra



Fig. 2. Collection site at the río Ovanta

Material and methods

Material was collected by FC from April 2004 to April 2005 and by CMDM during April 2008. The localities were Sumampa dam (28°4'8"S-65°34'22"W), río del Valle river at Ruta Provincial 33 (28°01'20"S-65°50'W), río Huacra at Ruta Nacional 64 (28°4'1"S-65°35'4"W) and río Ovanta (28°5'37"S-65°18'27"W), Departamento Santa Rosa, Catamarca, Argentina (Fig. 3 and 4). Specimens are stored at AI collection, with the numbers 271-277 and CI-FML with numbers 4860-4916.

Results

The following thirteen species were collected:

- Atheriniformes
 - Atherinopsidae
 - Odontesthes bonariensis* (Valenciennes, 1835)

- Cyprinodontiformes
 - Anablepidae
 - Jenynsia multidentata* (Jenyns, 1842)
 - Poeciliidae
 - Cnesterodon decemmaculatus* (Jenyns, 1842)
 - Gambusia affinis* (Baird & Girard, 1853)

- Characiformes
 - Characidae
 - Astyanax asuncionensis* Géry, 1972
 - Astyanax eigenmanniorum* (Cope, 1894)
 - Bryconamericus iheringii* (Boulenger, 1887)
 - Cheirodon interruptus* (Jenyns, 1842)

- Siluriformes
 - Trichomycteridae
 - Trichomycterus borellii* Boulenger, 1897
 - Trichomycterus corduvensis* Weyenbergh, 1877
 - Loricariidae
 - Hypostomus cordovae* (Günther, 1880)
 - Rineloricaria catamarcensis* (Berg, 1895)

- Perciformes
 - Cichlidae
 - Australoheros facetus* (Jenyns, 1842)

The rivers Huacra and Ovanta (Figs. 1, 2) originate in the Sierras de Ancasti, running in north-east direction. They are temporarily endorheic basins because both rivers reach the río Marapa only during periods with maximum current. The río Marapa flows across the province of Tucumán and has connections with the río Salí. Thus, it is not surprising that the fish fauna of the ríos Huacra and Ovanta contains the same species also found in the ríos Salí-Dulce basin, except *Australoheros facetus* and *Trichomycterus borellii* (Butí & Cancino, 2005).

The río del Valle is the principal collector of the endorheic basin located between the sierras del Alto and Ancasti. The first mention of the presence of fishes in this basin was done by Berg (1895) who identified 10 species. Subsequently, Ringuélet commented this findings, adding that most of the species recorded by Berg have disappeared in the area, probably as consequence of an increase of density in human population. Nonetheless, more than one hundred years later, some of the species still live in the basin: *Hypostomus cordovae*, *Rineloricaria catamarcensis*, *Trichomycterus corduvensis*, and *Jenynsia multidentata*.

Arratia et al. (1983) assert that Brazilian and Austral ichthyofaunas are represented in Catamarca, based on previous records. This situation does not change at present because we also found



Fig. 3. Location of province of Catamarca within Argentina.

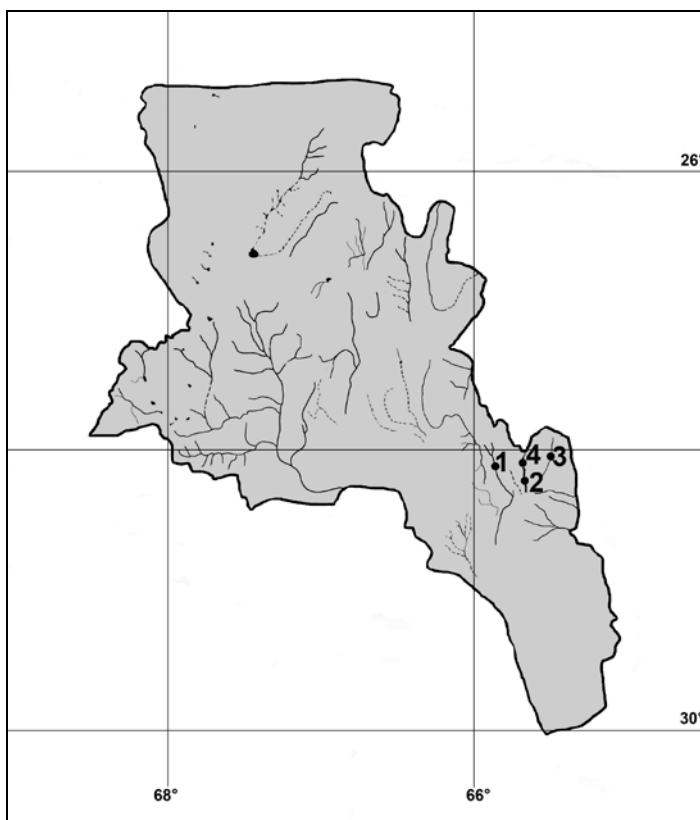


Fig. 4. Map of Catamarca showing collection sites: 1. río del Valle, 2. Sumampa dam, 3. río Huacra, 4. río Ovanta

elements of both ichthyofaunas. The new records are *Cheirodon interruptus*, *Astyanax asuncionensis*, *A. eigenmanniorum*, *Australoheros facetus*, *Odontesthes bonariensis*, *Gambusia affinis* and *Cnesterodon decemmaculatus*. We think that most of the modifications of the ichthyofauna are the results of human activities rather than evidence of global changes in the climate. The presence of *O. bonariensis* in the lake of the dam Sumampa and *G. affinis* in the ríos Huacra and Ovanta are introductions for sports fisheries and mosquito control, respectively.

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