

**CATFISHES OF THE *OMPOK LEIACANTHUS* (BLEEKER, 1853)
SPECIES GROUP (TELEOSTEI: SILURIDAE) FROM
SOUTHEAST ASIA, WITH DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES**

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ABSTRACT. - The taxonomy of the silurid catfish *Ompok leiacanthus* (Bleeker, 1853) is clarified. *Ompok jaynei* Fowler, 1905, previously synonymised under *O. leiacanthus*, is recognised as a valid species. Specimens from Peninsular Malaysia, southern Thailand and Riau Archipelago, as well as some from parts of Sumatra and Borneo, previously identified as *O. leiacanthus*, are referred to a new species, *O. fumidus*. *Ompok leiacanthus* s. str. and *O. jaynei* are known only from Sumatra and northern and central Borneo respectively. The three species are separated by differences in the dorsolateral profile, proportions of the head and body, relative lengths of their mental barbels, vertebrae number and colour in life.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, the authors and their colleagues have collected numerous specimens of a blackwater species of *Ompok* Lacépède (Siluridae) from Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, Sarawak, Riau Archipelago and Sumatra, as well as examined a good series of *Ompok* from Bornean blackwaters. Most of these specimens were originally identified as *Ompok leiacanthus* (Bleeker, 1853) (e.g. Mizuno & Furtado, 1982; Roberts, 1989; Kottelat, 1991; Kottelat et al., 1993; Ng et al., 1992, 1994). *Ompok leiacanthus* (Bleeker, 1853) (type locality Banka: Sumatra) is characterised by its small eyes (11.9-13.7% HL) and by having the lowest number of gill rakers (1-2+7-9) known for any member in the genus (Roberts, 1989). The anal fin is also connected to the base of the caudal fin (Weber & de Beaufort, 1913). Few specimens of this species have been reported, however, and the taxon is not well known. Weber & de Beaufort (1913) synonymised *Ompok jaynei* Fowler, 1905 (type locality Baram River, Borneo) with *O. leiacanthus* without comment, and this synonymy has since been followed by all subsequent workers (e.g. Haig, 1950; Roberts, 1989; Kottelat et al., 1993).

The present study shows that *Ompok leiacanthus* and *O. jaynei* are distinct species, distinguishable by live colour patterns and morphological characters. A new species, *Ompok fumidus*, is also described. Diagnoses and ecological notes are also provided for *O. leiacanthus*

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s. str., *O. jaynei* and *O. fumidus*, new species, which are here referred to as the *Ompok leiacanthus* species group, distinguished by the small eyes and low gill raker counts.

Specimens examined are deposited in the Zoological Reference Collection (ZRC), School of Biological Sciences, National University of Singapore; Zoologische Staatssammlung, München (ZSM); Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie (RMNH), Leiden; Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia (ANSP); Muzium Brunei (MB); and the collection of Maurice Kottelat (CMK). The abbreviations SL and TL are used for standard and total length respectively.

TAXONOMY

Ompok leiacanthus (Bleeker, 1853)

(Fig. 1)

Wallago leiacanthus Bleeker, 1853: 189 (Marawang: Banka).

Pseudosilurus leiacanthus - Bleeker, 1858: 281 (Bencoolen: Sumatra; Banka).

Callichrous leiacanthus - Bleeker, 1862: 85, pl. 89 fig. 2 (Bencoolen: Sumatra; Banka).

Callichrous liacanthus [sic] - Günther, 1864: 47 (list); ? Popta, 1906: 227 (list).

Callichrous liacanthus [sic] - Volz, 1904: 465 (Sumatra)

Ompok leiacanthus - Weber & de Beaufort, 1913: 208 (part) (Benkulen, Taluk, Laut Tador, Kwantan River, Indragiri, upper Langkat, Djambi: Sumatra; Banka); Haig, 1950: 85 (part) (list).

Material examined. - Neotype - ZRC 38538 (72.0 mm SL), SUMATRA: Jambi, east end of Danau Arang Arang, coll. M. Kottelat & H. H. Tan, 29 May.1994.

Others - SUMATRA: Banka, BMNH 1863.12.4:85 (120.0 mm SL), Bleeker specimen, no other data. — ZRC, 3 ex. (91.0-111.2 mm SL), Pijoan area, Jambi, Sumatra, coll. aquarium fish collectors, obtained by H. H. Tan, May.1996.

Description (based on 5 specimens). - Body slender (depth 19.6-22.5% SL). Lateral line median, beginning just above operculum, ending at base of caudal fin. Head width 15.4-18.5% SL, head length 17.8-18.5% SL. Two pairs of barbels present; maxillary barbels with thick, fleshy base, gradually tapering toward tips; mental barbels slender, tapering toward tips. Four sensory pores between anterior and posterior nostrils; 2 sensory pores on top of head, 3-5 sensory pores on operculum. Eyes small, not subcutaneous, eye diameter 12.2-14.8% HL. Nostril tubes short. Pectoral spines slender, covered with skin, smooth. Fin-ray counts: dorsal 4; pectoral 12-14; pelvic 6-7; anal 52-60; caudal 13-14. Vertebrae: 9-12+34-38. Gill rakers: 1+8.

Colour. - Live and freshly preserved specimens uniformly grey, without markings (Fig. 2). According to Bleeker (1862: 85, pl. 89 fig. 2), the species is a uniform dark grey.

Size. - Weber & de Beaufort (1913) reported that the largest specimen, purportedly of *O. leiacanthus*, they had was 190 mm TL. The largest male reported by Bleeker (1858, 1862) was 189 mm TL and 158.0 mm SL.

Remarks. - Bleeker (1853) described this species from a 107 mm TL specimen from Banka. He subsequently reported it without indicating the number of specimens, from Bencoolen in Sumatra (Bleeker, 1858). Weber & de Beaufort (1913: 209) reported *O. leiacanthus* from several localities in Sumatra in addition to those by Bleeker, viz. Taluk,

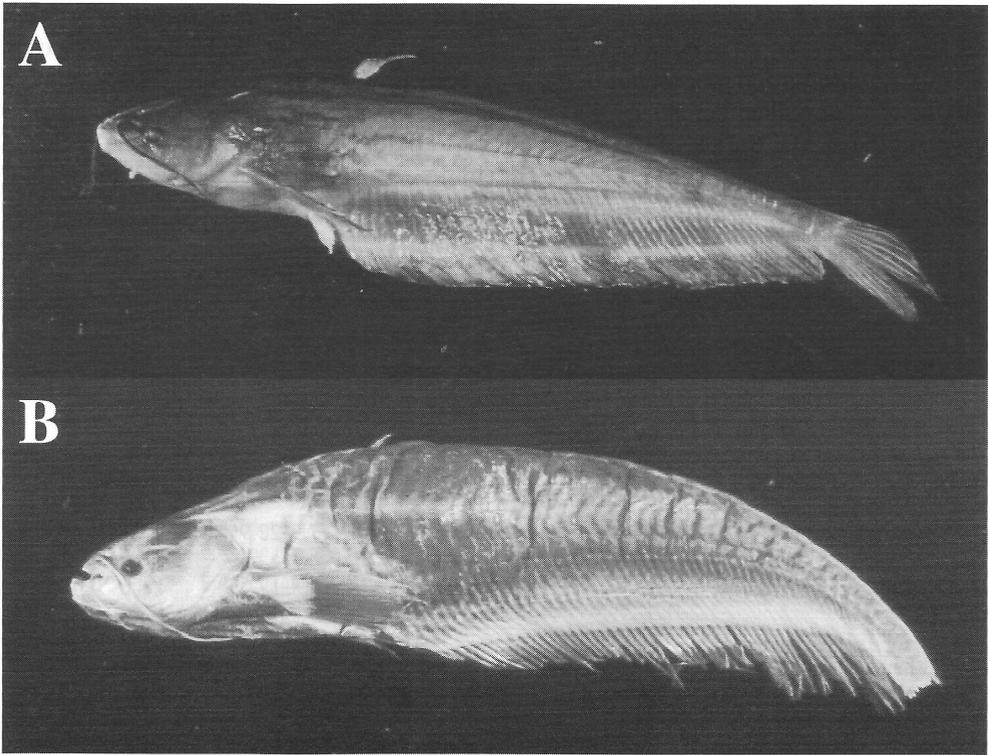


Fig. 1. A. *Ompok leiacanthus* (Bleeker, 1853), Neotype, ZRC 38538 (72.0 mm SL) (Sumatra); B. *O. leiacanthus*, BMNH1863.12.4:85 (Photo by H. K. Yip).

Laut Tador, Indragiri, upper Langkat and Djambi, but also did not indicate how many specimens he had from each locality. Herre (1940) and Mizuno & Furtado (1982) subsequently reported the species from Singapore and Peninsular Malaysia respectively. From Indonesia, the species was reported from the Kapuas (Kalimantan Barat) by Kottelat (1991) and the Riau Archipelago by Tan & Tan (1995).

Fowler (1905) described *Ompok jaynei* on the basis of one specimen collected from the Baram River in northern Sarawak, Borneo. Weber & de Beaufort (1913) synonymised *O. jaynei* under *O. leiacanthus* with a question mark and no other comments, with Haig (1950) later noting the difference in colouration between the species was "... a character of doubtful value".

Several visits to the RMNH by the second author and his colleagues have failed to locate Bleeker's specimen(s) of *O. leiacanthus*. The bottle labelled as supposedly containing the specimen(s) was found but there were no specimens in it, and the entry of *O. leiacanthus* in the master catalogue book had been cancelled. There are only two specimens in the RMNH labelled as *O. leiacanthus*, but these were collected recently from southern Thailand. The specimen figured by Bleeker (1862: Fig. 2), is not the holotype, measuring 189 mm TL and 158 mm SL. The BMNH has only one of Bleeker's specimens of *Ompok leiacanthus* (reported by Günther, 1864) which, according to him and the label, is supposed to be a type. We have examined this specimen (BMNH 1863.12.4:85) and it is not the holotype as it measures 120 mm SL (caudal fin damaged and TL not ascertainable). It agrees well however, with the figure provided by Bleeker (1862).

Our studies of “*O. leiacanthus*” from Southeast Asia show that the specimens on hand can actually be referred to three separate species. The three species can be distinguished by dorsolateral profile and proportions of the head, body proportions, vertebral counts, relative lengths of their mental barbels as well as both live and preserved colours (Table 1). The length of the mental barbels of *O. leiacanthus* s. str. figured by Bleeker (1862: pl. 89 fig. 2) seems to be too long measuring 115.2% HL. In the five specimens examined, the mental barbels are shorter, measuring 68.1-91.6% HL.

Table 1. Differences between *Ompok leiacanthus*, *O. jaynei* and *O. fumidus*

		<i>O. leiacanthus</i>		<i>O. jaynei</i>	<i>O. fumidus</i>
	BMNH 1895.7.2.51 (120 mm SL)	Bleeker’s (1862:85, pl. 89 fig. 2)	ZRC 38538 (72.0 mm SL)		
Body	slender	slender	slender	slender	stocky
Height (% SL)	19.6%	22.4%	19.6%	17.9-22.9%	21.0-25.6%
Head width (% SL)	15.4%	15.8%	15.8%	14.4-17.5%	17.1-20.6%
Dorsal head profile	convex	convex	convex	convex	flat
Colour	uniform light grey	uniform dark grey	uniform dark grey	light to dark grey, with black spots, appears marmorated	uniform grey to black
Mental barbel (% HL)	relatively short, 68.1%	* 115.2%	relatively short, 91.6%	relatively short, 70.1-90.2%	relatively long, 83.5-115.8%

We have been able to examine only five specimens of *O. leiacanthus* s. str., one of which is a Bleeker specimen (BMNH 1863.12.4:85). The other specimens (ZRC 38538 & ZRC uncat.) were collected recently from Jambi in Sumatra. All the specimens agree well with Bleeker’s (1862) description and excellent figure (including head and body shape as well as colouration), although the figure of the head of the specimen seems to be schematic, the head appearing more flattened than it really is (see Ng & Lim, 1993: 27). Weber & de Beaufort’s (1913: Fig. 82) figure of the species (from an unspecified locality in Sumatra) also agrees with the present specimens in all aspects.

With its slender body and head, *O. leiacanthus* is closest to *O. jaynei* Fowler, 1905. Fowler (1905) described *O. jaynei* on the basis of only one specimen collected from the Baram River, Sarawak. Through the courtesy of ANSP, we examined a radiograph of the type specimen, which agrees well with the figure provided by Fowler (1905). We have examined a large number of specimens (including recently collected material) from Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei Darussalam which agree well with the holotype, and we have little doubt of their conspecificity. These specimens also confirm that the colour characters observed by Fowler (1905) are valid, being apparent even in much of the old material. In addition, there are several morphological differences as shown in Table 1. Notable is the number of vertebrae, being distinctly lower in *O. leiacanthus* (8+34-35 vs 10+33-36).

All the specimens from Peninsular Malaysia, southern Thailand and Riau Archipelago are markedly and consistently different from *O. leiacanthus* and *O. jaynei* in their proportionately stouter bodies and broader heads. These specimens have been referred to a new species, *O. fumidus*. Several specimens from eastern Sumatra, as well as western and southern Borneo are also referred to *O. fumidus*. *Ompok fumidus* thus has an interesting distribution in that it is also found in Sumatra (sympatric with *O. leiacanthus*) and Borneo (where *O. jaynei* occurs). *Ompok leiacanthus* has been found only from Sumatra while *O. jaynei* is known only from Borneo. No specimens attributable to *O. leiacanthus* and *O. jaynei* are known from Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand or Riau Archipelago.

In view of the fact that *O. jaynei* Fowler, 1905, is here recognised as a valid species, and a new species, *O. fumidus*, is described, it is in the interests of nomenclatural stability that a neotype be designated for *Wallago leiacanthus* Bleeker, 1853. As noted earlier, the type of the species is almost certainly lost. We have been unable to collect this species from the type locality, Banka, during our collection trip there and as far as we know, there are no recent specimens of the species from there or adjacent areas. The present specimen from Jambi in Sumatra, however, agrees very well with Bleeker's (1853, 1862) descriptions, figures, as well as with his BMNH specimen. As such, we hereby designate the specimen measuring 72.0 mm SL (ZRC 38538) as the neotype of *Wallago leiacanthus* Bleeker, 1853. We have not chosen the BMNH specimen (even though it was examined by Bleeker) as it is not accompanied by any locality data, and as such could be from either Banka or Bencoolen. In addition, its preserved condition is relatively poor.

Other than Bleeker's (1862) and Günther's (1864) records, the rest of the synonymy of *O. leiacanthus* listed above is provisional. This is in view of the fact that *O. fumidus* also occurs in Sumatra with *O. leiacanthus*, and it is not inconceivable that the two species have been collected together in the past. They, however, have yet to be collected syntopically.

Notes on ecology. - Little is known about the habitat of *O. leiacanthus* s. str. The neotype from Sumatra was collected in a shallow, clear stream adjacent to a disturbed peat swamp. From a nearby peat swamp (with blackwater), a specimen of *O. fumidus* was obtained.

Distribution. - Known only from Sumatra (including Banka).

***Ompok jaynei* (Fowler, 1905)**

(Figs. 2, 4B)

Ompok jaynei Fowler, 1905: 455, fig. 3 (type locality Baram River: Borneo).

Ompok jaynei - Popta, 1906: 227 (list).

Ompok leiacanthus - Weber & de Beaufort, 1913: 208 (part) (Sarawak); Vinciguerra, 1880: 169 (Sarawak); Tweedie, 1936: 18 (Sarawak); Haig, 1950: 85, 92 (part) (list); Roberts, 1989: Table 11 (Sarawak).

Material examined. Holotype - ANSP 114890 (86.7 mm SL) (radiograph examined), Baram River, Sarawak, Borneo, coll. W. H. Furness, 1898.

Others - BORNEO - ZRC 38354-38355, 2 ex. (68.9 mm, 77.7 mm SL), Sarawak, Sungei Tebu, 8 km on Daro-Matu Road, coll. M. Kottelat & T. Tan, 14 Jun.1994. — CMK, 1 ex., Sarawak, northern extremity of Sibul Airport, outskirts of Sibul, Sungei Teku, coll. P.K.L. Ng & M. Kottelat, Jun.1994. — ZRC 2966, 2 ex. (larger 88.7 mm SL), Sarawak, Kuching, coll. Sarawak Museum, Feb.1900. — ZRC 2968, 14 ex. (72.6-128.4 mm SL), Sarawak, near Sibul, coll. J. Seal, Sep.1955. — ZRC 30411,

1 ex. (57.0 mm SL), Sabah, 10-12 km on Beaufort to Kota Kinabalu Road, coll. P.K.L. Ng & R. Stuebing, 29 Dec.1992. — ZRC 38353, 1 ex. (57.3 mm SL), Sabah, Kampong Selagan, Beaufort, coll. R. Stuebing, 13 Jan.1993. — CMK 7808, 1 ex. (44.3 mm SL), Kalimantan Barat, Mahakam River Basin, swift black water stream entering Mahakam River downriver of Muarapahn at 0°14'S 116°07'E, coll. M. Kottelat, 5 Aug.1991. — ZRC 40268, 3 ex. (61.4-89.3 mm SL), Sg. Sepan drains into Sg. Ingei, in Kerangas forest, Belait District, Brunei Darussalam, coll. H. H. Tan et al., 11 May.1996. — MB , 2 ex. (59.5-85.0 mm SL), Sg. Sepan drains into Sg. Ingei, in Kerangas forest, Belait District, Brunei Darussalam, coll. H. H. Tan et al., 11 May.1996. — ZRC 40375, 1 ex. (75.2 mm SL), Sg. Pelok, near to Sg. Sepan, drains into Sg. Ingei, Belait District, Brunei Darussalam, coll. H. H. Tan et al., 11 May.1996. — ZRC 40376, 10 ex. (43.9-70.3 mm SL), two streams near old padi fields ca. 200m downstream of Kg. Melilas, Belait District, Brunei Darussalam, coll. H. H. Tan et al., 12 May.1996. — ZRC 40377, 8 ex. (35.0-71.7 mm SL) Sg. Mau tributary, blackwater stream draining out of peat swamp, Belait District, Brunei Darussalam, 4°33'41.5"N 114°29' 41.7"E, coll. H. H. Tan et al., 19 May.1996. — ZRC, 1 ex. (104.8 mm SL), Sg. Meluncur in front of basecamp at Tasik Merimbun, Tutong District, Brunei Darussalam, 4°34'52.9"N 114°41'24.4"E, coll. H. H. Tan et al., 15-16 May.1996. — ZRC 40378, 1 ex. (151.7 mm SL), Tasik Merimbun, Tutong District, Brunei Darussalam, 4°35'22.4"N 114°40'21.6"E, coll. H. H. Tan et al., 15-17 May.1996. — ZRC 40379, 1 ex. (78.2 mm SL), Sg. Bang Balat draining into Sg Melilas, Kg Melilas, Belait District, Brunei Darussalam, 4°15'24.3"N 114°39'40.2"E, coll. H. H. Tan et al., 8 May.1996.

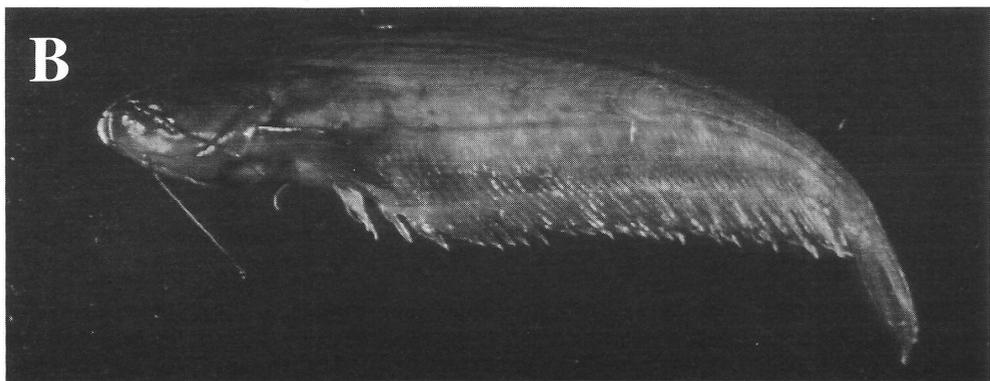
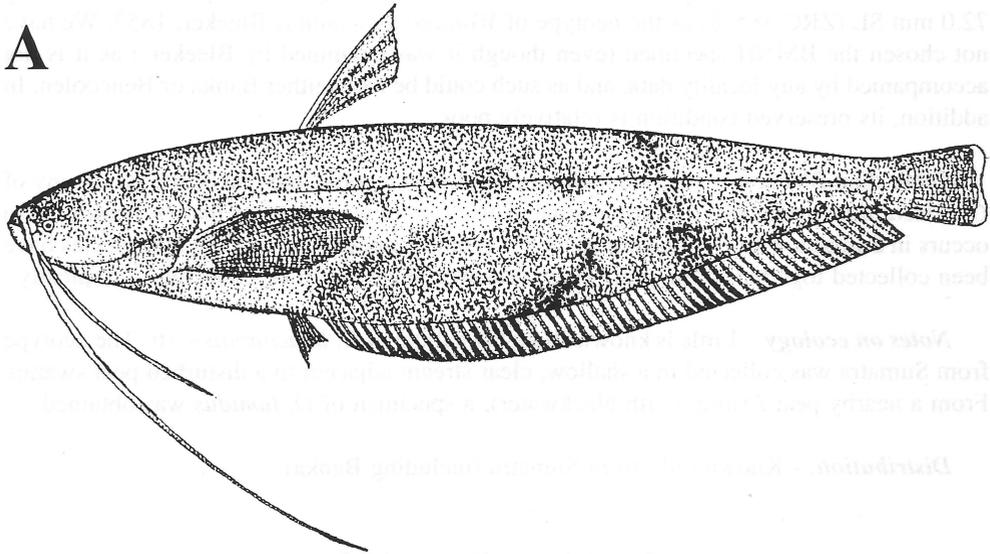


Fig. 2. A. After Fowler, 1905; Fig. 3A; B. *Ompok jaynei* (Fowler, 1905), ZRC 38354, (77.7 mm SL) (Sarawak).

Description. - Body slender (depth 17.9-22.9% SL). Lateral line median, beginning just above operculum, ending at base of caudal fin. Head width 14.4-17.5% SL (mean 15.9 ± 0.9), head length 16.8-20.2% SL (mean 19.1 ± 1.0). Two pairs of barbels; maxillary barbels with thick fleshy base, gradually tapering toward tips; mental barbels slender, tapering toward tips. Four sensory pores between anterior and posterior nostrils; 2 sensory pores on top of head, with 3-5 sensory pores on operculum. Eyes small, not subcutaneous, eye diameter 9.6-16.7% HL (mean 11.7 ± 2.3). Nostril tubes short. Pectoral spines slender, covered with skin, smooth. Fin-ray counts: dorsal 4; pectoral 11-13; pelvic 7; anal 50-58; caudal 14-16. Vertebrae: 11-12+33-35 (N = 23). Gill rakers: 1-2+8-10 (N = 17, with 3 specimens: ZRC 2968, having 1 or 2 branched gill rakers each).

Colour. - Live and freshly preserved specimens pale to dark grey, with patches of darker spots or blotches (Fig. 6), appearing marmorated or marbled; markings on smaller specimens less distinct; older preserved material greyish-white, almost always with dark patches and spots.

Size. - The largest specimen measures 151.7 mm SL (ZRC 40378).

Remarks. - The taxonomic problems and differences between *O. jaynei* and *O. leiacanthus* have already been discussed under *O. leiacanthus*.

Both *O. jaynei* and *O. fumidus* occur in Borneo, but they have never been found in the same area as yet. *Ompok fumidus* is known thus far only from Kalimantan Barat and Kalimantan Tengah whilst *O. jaynei* is known only from Sarawak, Sabah, Brunei Darussalam and Kalimantan Timur. As such, it seems reasonable to refer the records of Vinciguerra (1880), Tweedie (1936) and Roberts (1989) of "*O. leiacanthus*" from Sarawak to *O. jaynei*. Tweedie's (1936) Sarawak specimens (ZRC 2966) are clearly *O. jaynei*. Roberts' (1989) specimens are from the Baram River, the type locality of *O. jaynei*. The precise locality of collection cannot be ascertained for the two specimens (ZRC 2966) collected from Kuching in 1900 by the Sarawak Museum.

Notes on ecology. - One of the recently collected specimens of *Ompok jaynei* (Sabah, ZRC 30411) was taken from shallow (less than 0.5 m depth) blackwaters in a peat swamp heavily disturbed by logging activities. Two other specimens are from blackwater streams in Sarawak, one from a ditch near a degraded peat swamp (CMK); whereas two others are from a blackwater stream (about one metre depth) in a sago plantation (ZRC 38354-5).

Distribution. - Known from Sarawak, northern Sabah and Kalimantan Timur.

Ompok fumidus, new species

(Figs. 3, 4C)

Ompok leiacanthus - Weber & de Beaufort, 1913: 208-209 (part) (list); Herre, 1940: 35 (Mandai: Singapore); Haig, 1950: 85 (part) (list); Alfred, 1966: 33 (Mandai: Singapore); Mizuno & Furtado, 1982: 322 (Tasek Bera: Peninsular Malaysia); Mohsin & Ambak, 1983: 204, 248 (list); Kottelat, 1989: 14 (list); Kottelat, 1991: 276 (Kapuas: Kalimantan); Ng et al., 1992: 21, fig. 74 (Selangor, Perak: Peninsular Malaysia); Kottelat et al., 1992: 10 (Trengganu: Peninsular Malaysia); Ng, 1993: 115, 116 (Selangor: Peninsular Malaysia); Lim et al., 1993: 7 (list); Kottelat et al., 1993: 70, pl. 34 (Kalimantan); Ng et al., 1994: 209 (Selangor: Peninsular Malaysia); Tan & Tan, 1995: 354 (Pulau Bintan: Riau Archipelago).

Material examined. - Holotype - ZRC 15049 (116.2 mm SL), Selangor, Peninsular Malaysia, north Selangor peat swamp forest, 43 km from Tanjong Malim; coll. P. Ng & NUS Zoology Honours Class, 19 Jun.1991.

Paratypes - ZRC 15050-15052, 3 ex. (107.9-119.7 mm SL); same data as holotype.

Others - **PENINSULAR MALAYSIA** - ZRC 15048, 1 ex. (123.8 mm SL), Selangor, north Selangor peat swamp forest, 41.7 km to Tanjong Malim, coll. P. Ng & NUS Zoology Honours Class, 19 Jun.1991. — ZRC 15047, 1 ex. (19.9 mm SL), Selangor, north Selangor peat swamp forest, 47 km mark on road to Tanjong Malim, coll. P. Ng & NUS Zoology Honours Class, 19 Jun.1991. — ZRC 38386, 1 ex.; Selangor, north Selangor peat swamp forest, 41.7 km to Tanjong Malim, coll. P.K.L. Ng, Sep.1993. — ZRC 23976-23978, 3 ex. (44.6-61.8 mm SL); Trengganu, Rantau Abang, 56 km Kuantan to Kuala Trengganu Road; coll. P.K.L. Ng et al., 18 Mar.1992. — ZRC 27688-27692, 5 ex. (95.5-119.2 mm SL); Perak, north bank of Sungei Bernam, Ulu Basir; coll. P.K.L. Ng et al, 19 Sep.1992. — ZRC 25112, 1 ex. (115.4 mm SL); Pahang, 16 km mark on Kuantan to Mersing road; coll. P.K.L. Ng et al., 9 Mar.1992. — ZRC 2967, 1 ex. (144.8 mm SL); Pahang, Tasek Bera; coll. M.W.F. Tweedie, Oct.1949. **THAILAND** - RMNH 30352, 2 ex. (84.2 mm, 87.0 mm SL), Narathiwat Province, Sungai Golok Basin, peat swamp, 12 km southwest of Tak Isai, coll. T. R. Roberts, 9 Mar.1984. **BORNEO** - CMK 6786, 1 ex. (107.0 mm SL); Kapuas, Kalimantan Barat, 34 km SW of Sintang on the road to Sanggau (Sintang 0°05'N 111°29'E), ditch along road; coll. M. Kottelat et al., 23 Apr.1990. ZSM 26713, 1 ex. (87.7 mm SL); Kalimantan Tengah, Nataik Sedawak, 30 km south of Sukamara (Sukamara 2°41'S 111°13'E), basin of Sungei Jelai Bila; coll. H. Stroh, Oct.1987. **RIAU ARCHIPELAGO** - ZRC 37517, 1 ex. (42.6 mm SL), Tanjung Bintan, Pulau Bintan; coll. H. H. Tan et al., 26 Apr.1994. **SUMATRA** CMK 11083, 1 ex. (98.6 mm SL), Jambi, Sungai Kembang, joining Danau Arang Arang and Sungai Kumpeh Hulu in Arang Arang, coll. M. Kottelat & H. H. Tan, 29 May.1994.

Description. - Body stocky (depth 21.0-25.6% SL). Lateral line median, beginning just above operculum, ending at base of caudal fin. Head width 17.1-19.5% SL (mean 18.4 ± 1.0), head length 17.9-20.6% SL (mean 19.2 ± 0.9). Two pairs of barbels; maxillary barbels with thick fleshy base, gradually tapering toward tips; mental barbels slender, tapering toward tips. Four sensory pores between anterior and posterior nostrils; 2 sensory pores on top of head, with 3-5 sensory pores on operculum. Eyes small, not subcutaneous, eye diameter 11.9-13.7% HL (mean 12.7 ± 0.7). Nostril tubes short. Pectoral spines slender, covered with skin, smooth. Fin-ray counts: dorsal 4; pectoral 12-14; pelvic 7-8; anal 53-60; caudal 14-16. Vertebrae: 11-12+32-36 (N = 20). Gill rakers: 1-2+7-9. (N = 20)

Etymology. - From the Latin “fumidus” for smoky-coloured, alluding to the uniform grey to black colour of the species.

Colour. - Live and freshly preserved specimens a uniform dark grey, purplish-black to blackish (Fig. 5).

Size. - The largest specimen measures 144.8 mm SL (Peninsular Malaysia, ZRC 2967).

Remarks. - The confusion and taxonomic problems between *O. fumidus*, new species, and *O. leiacanthus* s. str. have been discussed under *O. leiacanthus* (see also Table 1). The present large series of *O. fumidus* contains specimens ranging from juveniles (smallest 19.9 mm SL, ZRC 15047) to adults (largest 144.8 mm SL, ZRC 2967), and the diagnostic characters are consistent.

Herre (1940) reported *O. fumidus* (as *O. leiacanthus*) from Singapore, but if his record is correct, the species is almost certainly extinct (see Alfred, 1966; Lim & Ng, 1990). Tweedie apparently was the first to make a scientific collection of the species from Peninsular Malaysia (Tasek Bera, ZRC 2967) in 1949, although he did not report it. Mizuno & Furtado (1982)

subsequently recorded *O. fumidus* (as *O. leiacanthus*) from Tasek Bera. Mohsin & Ambak (1983: 248) reported that *O. fumidus* (as *O. leiacanthus*) was "rare or extinct" in Peninsular Malaysia, but this is not true. The species is restricted to peat swamps, a poorly sampled habitat (see Ng et al., 1992, 1994).

Notes on ecology. - Peninsular Malaysian specimens of *O. fumidus* were collected from shallow (less than 0.5 m depth) blackwaters in disturbed peat swamp affected by logging activities (see Ng et al., 1992). They appear to be seasonal in the swamps sampled. Smaller specimens of *O. fumidus* in Peninsular Malaysia feed mainly on insect larvae, with adults eating fish instead (H. H. Ng, unpublished data).

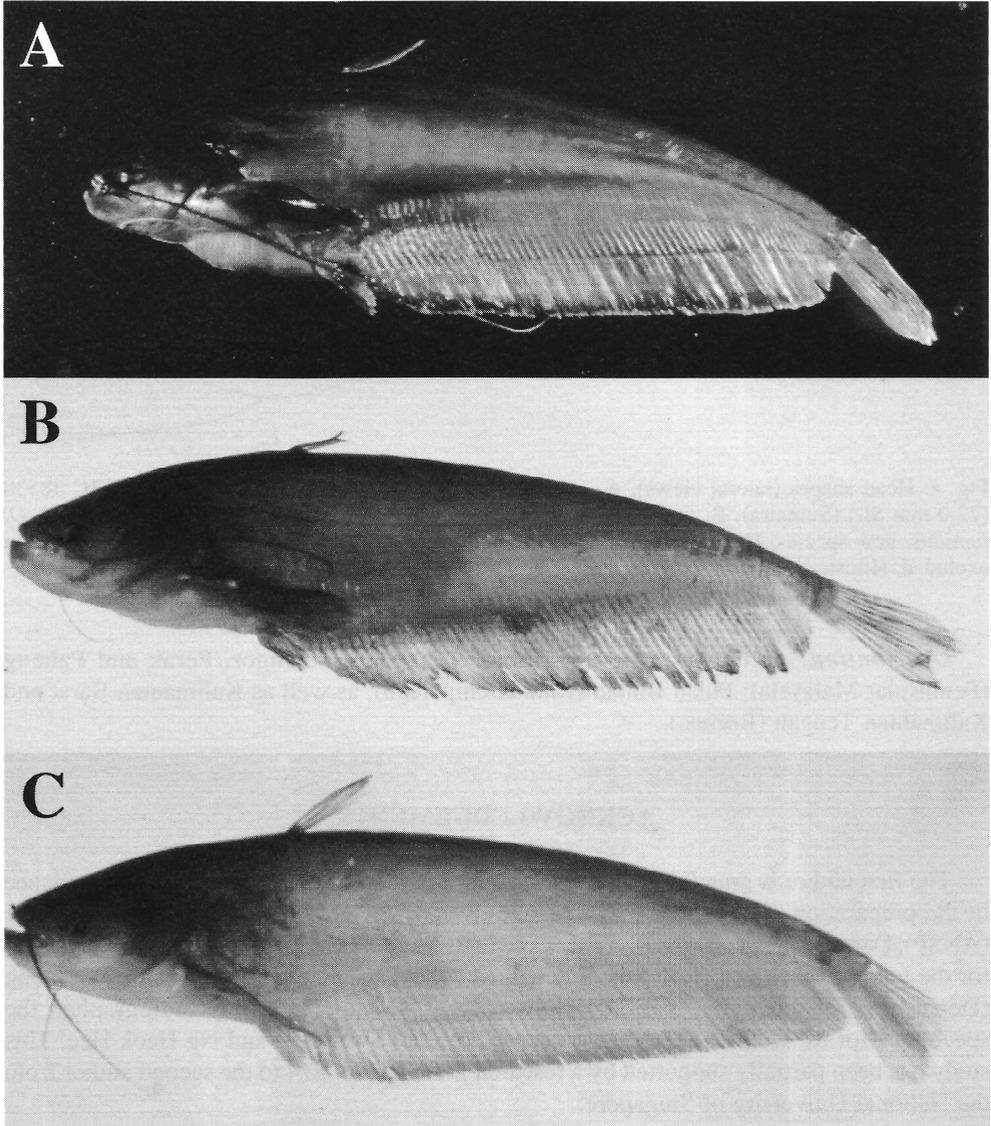


Fig. 3. A, *Ompok fumidus*, new species, Holotype, ZRC 15049 (116.2 mm SL) (Peninsular Malaysia). B. *O. fumidus*, ZSM 26713 (87.7 mm SL) (Kalimantan Tengah); C. *O. fumidus*, CMK 6786 (107.0 mm SL) (Kapuas, Borneo).

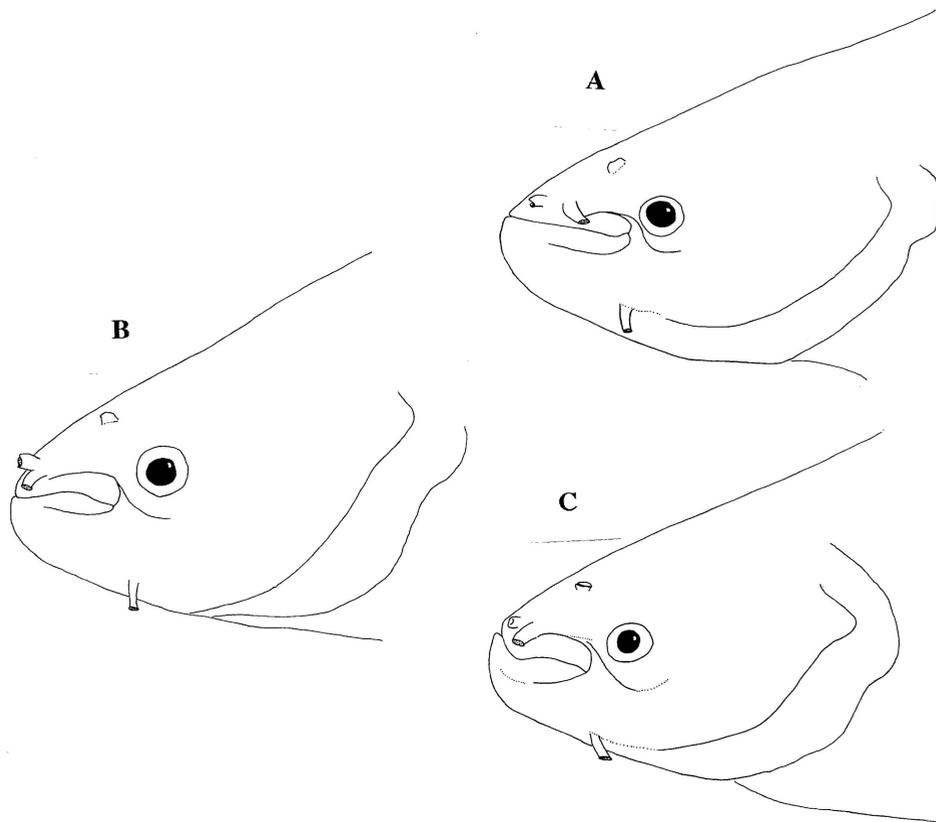


Fig. 4. Head shapes (lateral views). A, *Ompok leiacanthus* (Bleeker, 1853), Neotype, ZRC 38538 (72.0 mm SL) (Sumatra); B, *O. jaynei* (Fowler, 1905), ZRC 40379, (78.2 mm SL) (Brunei); C, *O. fumidus*, new species, Holotype, ZRC 15049 (116.2 mm SL) (Peninsular Malaysia). Pores pattern excluded. (Illustration by H. H. Ng)

Distribution. - Known at present from Terengganu, Selangor, Perak and Pahang (Peninsular Malaysia); Pulau Bintan (Riau Archipelago), as well as Kalimantan Barat and Kalimantan Tengah (Borneo).

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