Journal of Aquatic Biology & Fisheries, Vol. 2(1) 2014: 81-91

VERNACULAR NAMES OF FRESHWATER FISHES OF KERALA

Biju Kumar. A.,[1] Shaji, C.P.[2*] and Laladhas, K.P.[2]

[1]*Dept. of Aquatic Biology & Fisheries, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala*

[2]*Kerala State Biodiversity Board, Pallimukku, Petta, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala*

**Corresponding author: shajibarb@gmail.com*

Received on: 20.03.2013, accepted on: 21.11.2013

Abstract: Given the vast cross cultural diversity prevailing in India, including in classification of living beings using the observed characters and naming them in vernacular language, preservation of local names of organisms would go a long way in conservation of the rich biodiversity. The Western Ghats region of Kerala, which is also a global freshwater biodiversity hotspot, is rich in endemic freshwater fishes. This paper records the vernacular (Malayalam) names of inland fishes of Kerala, consolidated through a workshop.

Key words: Ethnic name, common name, vernacular name, Kerala, Malayalam

INTRODUCTION

Biological and cultural diversities have become important concepts in the conservation literature (Wilson, 1986; Younes, 1999). While biological diversity is often represented by the richness of species, cultural diversity, on the other hand, has not been given proper attention. As an example, Kada and Yuma (2000) found that in Lake Biwa, Japan, local people used more than 300 local names for about 60 species of local freshwater fish. Lake Malawi/Nyasa in East Africa, one of the ancient lakes harbours a highly diverse fish fauna of around 800 species of cichlid fishes, few bagrids, cyprinids and other taxonomic groups (Jackson *et al.*, 1963; Snoeks, 2000; Turner, 2000). A variety of people, including local lakeshore residents, biologists and aquarium fish traders, have been interested in fishes of this lake and each category of these people have their own unique criteria for categorizing and naming the fishes of the lake. Thus a single fish may have many names, including some or the entire *viz* local name, scientific name and international trade name (Konings, 1990; Lourdes *et al.*, 1999).

Berlin *et al.* (1973) observed that people who have close links with their natural habitat follow, when naming species, a system of nomenclature. The (i) commonness; (ii) striking appearance; (iii) ease of observation, and (iv) large size relative to humans as the attributes which make the organisms likely to be named. The call for the conservation of biodiversity unequivocally demands the preservation of cultural diversity also (Smith, 2001). Efforts to restore vernacular names of species will help linguistics and simultaneously enable the common folk to proactively participate in the conservation of biodiversity. One of the observations by Eric Smith (2001) from North America is that the loss of biodiversity results in the deterioration of language.

Since 1950's a number of anthropologists have discussed differences and similarities between scientific and folk classifications. For example, Berlin *et al*. (1973) tried to apply scientific classification structure to folk taxonomy. Shigeta (1991) and Matsui (1991) pointed out a cognitive difference in these two classifications; folk classification stresses the usage and meaning in the people's life, while the scientific fish names have duly been described and discussed in the scientific literature with a set of requisite nomenclature rules. International trade names

appear regularly in aquarium trade publications, and their relation to scientific names was shown in Konings (1990) and Breene (2003).

In Kerala common names of plants with ethano botanical interests were indexed by several botanists. The butterflies, none of them had a vernacular name till recently were baptized by naturalists and lepidopterists under the auspices of the Malabar Natural History Society, Kozhikode, Kerala.

This objective of this paper is not to assign a single name to a fish but rather to the collect all the available folk names in use currently for the benefit of future generations. This article does not in any way dishonour scientific naming and its procedures, but on the other hand is an earnest effort to protect the names in our own languages, inherited through generations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A list of the freshwater fishes of Kerala and their common names were prepared based on available literature and in consultation with the local fishermen. All species name adhere to Catalogue of Fishes (Eschemeyer, 2012). A workshop was jointly organized by Kerala State Biodiversity Board and Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala on 30th September 2011 at Thiruvananthapuram to collate and develop a list of common names for the freshwater fishes of Kerala. Several researchers, students, fish traders and fishers participated in the workshop.

In the case of fishes with common names, it was decided to maintain a widely used common name as the most appropriate one for further scientific usage and others as synonyms. Where the fishes have no common names, the experts were requested to suggest the names and most appropriate name has been assigned to them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 177 fishes including exotic (ornamental exotic excluded) species were subjected for the procedures of restoration of vernacular names (Table 1).

The species such as *Cyrprinus carpio*, *Catla catla* (Hamilton), *Labeo rohita* (Hamilton), *Cirrhinus mrigala* (Hamilton), *Ctenopharyngodon idella* (Val.), *Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* (Val.), *Labeo calbasu* (Ham.), *Labeo rohita* (Ham.) and *Oreochromis mossambicus* are exotic to our systems. These were transplanted to Kerala to augment the fishery production and soon became an integral part of our inland fishery. These fishes are known to the fisher folks by their English common names or the name in their natural homelands (Table 1). However, there has been some change in the syllable while pronouncing the anglicised names and some names got a Malayalam accent (eg. Tilapia has changed to Silopi; Mrigal to Mrigala).

Of the total 177 species, 40 species have one vernacular name and another 40 species have two common names, Forty eight fishes have three names (Table 2) with more less same meaning. Significantly, for 38 species, there have been no common names in use. The discussion resulted in the naming of 30 species based on their uniqueness, distribution and on the habitat.

Of the total fishes, 76 species are known by a clan name. The small sized carps under the genera *Dawkinsia, Dravidia, Pethia*, and *Puntius* are known by the clan name *Paral* and the different species of these genera were named by the indigenous communities by adding a prefix to the clan name. The prefixes are, according to our observation, are good in explaining the uniqueness of the species. Thus the *Puntius mahecola* is called as 'Urulan paral' due to its more or less rounded body, *Puntius dorsalis* as 'Mookkan paral' indicating the long snout, *Dawkinsia filamentous* as 'Valekkodiyan paral', explaining the unique pigmentation on the caudal lobes. The species known by the clan name is given in the Table 3.

Several species, especially those sharing the same niches requires meticulous observations even for the scientific naming because of the subtle difference in their morphological characters. It is apparent that the folk too faced the same crises in segregating the species from its immediate

congeners. Table 4, provides the list of species having more ore less same common name for several taxa. However, as an exception, the Ambassids (*Chanda nama* (Ham.), *C. ranga* (Ham.) *Parambassis dayi* (Bleeker), *P. thomassi* (Day) were suffixed or prefixed by words denoting their habit, habitat, shape, etc was noticed from some parts of northern Kerala.

Out of the total species selected for naming, 38 did not have any known local names. This could be due to various reasons. Some species are confined to the remote forests and their size is too small to get the attention of the people.

Table 1. Common freshwater fishes of Kerala and their vernacular names

Sl. No.	Species name	Common names*	Named through the workshop
1	*Anguilla bengalensis* (Gray)	**Pulli malinjeel**, Malinjeel, Veluthamalinjeel	
2	*Anguilla bicolor* McClelland	**Karutha malinjeel**, Vlanjil,	
3	*Amblypharyngodon melettinus* (Val.)	Vayambu	
4	*Amblypharyngodon microlepis* (Bleeker)	**Peruvayambu**, Vayambu	
5	*Acanthocobitis moreh* (Sykes)	**Chathuravalan koyma**, Koyma, Koytha	
6	*Anabas testudineus* (Bloch)	**Kaithakkora**, Karakarappu, Kallada, Karippidi	
7	*Aplocheilus lineatus* (Val.)	**Manathukanni**, Neittiyeponnan, Pethramkanni, Nettiyepottan, Poonjan	
8	*Awaous gutum* (Ham.-Buch.)	Cherupoolan	
9	*Balitora mysorensis* Hora	Muthuchuttan	
10	*Barbodes wynaadensis (Day)*	**Wayanandan kuruva**, Manjakadanna, Kadanna	
11	*Barbodes carnaticus* (Jerdon)	Pachilavetti	
12	*Barilius bendelisis* (Ham.)	**Pavvayipparal**, Pavukan, Pullipavukan	
13	*Barilius canarensis* (Jerdon)	**Irunirappavukan**, Pavukan, Pavvayyipparal	
14	*Barilius gatensis* (Val.)	**Varayan pavukan**, Pavukan paral	
15	*Batasio travancoria* Hora and Law	**Meesayillakkoori**, Neelakkoori, Urulankoori	
16	*Bhavania australis* (Jerdon)	**Kalppopolon** Kalnakki,	
17	*Carinotetraodon imitator*	Aattunda, Pootham, Thavalappottan, Ponthan, Vattithuntha	
18	*Carinotetraodon travancoricus*	**Aattunda**, Pootham, Thavalappottan, Ponthan, Vattithuntha	
19	*Catla catla* (Ham.)	Ctala	
20	*Chanda nama* (Ham.)	**Arinjil**, Nandan,	
21	*Channa gachua* Ham.	**Vatton**, Vattudi	

22	*Channa diplogramma* (Day)	**Vakavaral** Pulivaka, , Manalvaka, Manalvaka, Karivaka	
23	*Channa marulius* (Ham.)	**Cheeran**, Pullivaka, Cheruvmeen, Urul	
24	*Channa striata* (Bloch)	**Varayan varal**, Bral	
25	*Cirrhinus mrigala* (Hamilton)	Mrigala, Mrigal	
26	*Cirrhinus reba* (Ham.)	**Kaverykkanni**, Kavericarp	
27	*Clarias dayi* Hora		Wayandan
28	*Clarias dussumieri* Val.	**Nadan mussi**, Mushi	
29	*Crossocheilus periyarensis* Menon & Jacob	Karimbbachi	
30	*Ctenopharyngodon idella* (Val.)	**Pulmeen**, Grasscarp	
31	*Cyrprinus carpio* (Linnaeus)	**Cyprinus**, Common carp	
32	*Devario malabaricus* Jerdon	**Ozhukkilatti**, Thuppalamkothi	
33	*Danio rerio* (Hamilton)		Varayan danio
34	*Dawkinsia arulius* (Jerdon)	**Aroolipparal**, Paral	
35	*Dawkinsia assimilis* (Jerdon)	**Kalakkodiyanparal**, Paral	
36	*Dawkinsia exclamatio* Peth & Kott		Ascharyapparal
37	*Dawkinsia filamentosus* (Val.)	**Poovalipparal**, Valekkodiyanparal, Kalakkodiyan	
38	*Devario aequipinnatus* (McClelland)	**Ozhukkilatti**, Thuppalamkothi	
39	*Dravidia fasciata* (Day)	Vazhakkavarayan	
40	*Eechathalakenda ophicephala* (Raj)	Eettilakanda	
41	*Esomus barbatus* (Jerdon)	**Vellimeesapparava**, Paranparal, Chuttipparavaparl	
42	*Esomus danricus* Ham.	**Meesapparava**	
43	*Esomus malabaricus* Day	Malabar meesapparava	
44	*Esomus thermoicos* (Val.)	Varayan meesapparava	
45	*Etroplus canarensis* Day	Cherukarimeen	
46	*Etroplus maculatus* (Bloh)	**Pallathi**, Pootta, Chouttachi, Perna	
47	*Etroplus suratensis* (Bloch)	Karimmen	
48	*G, davissinghi* Mani & Das		**Irulan parakkoori** Chalakalkkari
49	*Garra gotyla stenorhynchus* (Jerdon)	**Thadiyan kallotti**, Choottan, Kallotti,	
50	*Garra hughi* Silas	Vennakkallotti	
51	*Garra mcClellandi* (Jerdon)	**Neelakkallotti**, Aattuveeran, Veerankkalolotti	
52	*Garra menoni* Devi and Indra		Kullan kallotti
53	*Garra mullya* (Sykes)	**Kallotti**, Kallemkkari, Kallunthi, Njezhu	
54	*Garra periyarensis* Gopi		Periyar Kallotti
55	*Garra surendranathanii* Shaji *et al*	**Karimkallotti**, Karumban kallotti	
56	*Glossogobius giuris* (Ham.)	**Poozhan**, Poolon, Poossan, Payatti,	
57	*Glyptothorax anamalaiensis* Silas		Veliikkattan kalkari, Chellakalkkari
58	*Glyptothorax annandalei* Hora	Naduvarayn parakkoori	

59	*Glyptothorax malabarensis* Gopi		Malabar parakkoori, Kalkkari
60	*Glyptothorax. madraspatanus* (Day)	**Manjavarayan parakkoori**	
		Manjavalayan kalkkari	
61	*Horabagrus brachysoma* (Gue)	**Manjakkoori**, Majetta, Manjaletta	
62	*Horabagrus nigricollaris* Peth & Kott	**Karimkzhuthan manjetta**, Cherumanjaletta	
63	*Hemibagrus punctatus* (Jerdon)	**Eettakkoori**, Eetta	
64	*Heteropneustes fossilis* (Bloch)	**Kaari**, Kadu	
65	*Homaloptera menoni* Shaji & Easa		**Kalnakki**, Kalppoolon
66	*Homaloptera montana* Herre		**Pachakalnakki**, Velumban kalnakki
67	*Homaloptera pillaii* Indra & Devi		**Karimkalnakki**, Karumban kalnakki, Thavidan kalppoolon
68	*Homaloptera santhamparaiensis*		Kalppoolon
69	*Homaloptera silasi*		Velumban Kalppoolon
70	*Horadandia atukorali* Deraniyagala	**Aattukananjon**, Attukuruva	
71	*Horaglanis alikunhii* Babu & Nayar		Kurudan mushi
72	*Horaglanis krishnai* Menon		Kurudan mushi
73	*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* (Val.)	Silver carp	
74	*Hyporhamphus limbatus* (Val)	**Arachundan**, Arassu, Murichundan	
75	*Hypselobarbus curmuca (Ham.)*	Kooral	
76	*Hypselobarbus dobsoni* (Day)	Kooral	
77	*Hypselobarbus dubius* (Day)		
78	*Hypselobarbus jerdoni* (Day)	Thenkooral	
79	*Hypselobarbus kolus* (Sykes)		Kooral, Karimkooral
80	*Hypselobarbus kurali,* Menon & Devi	Karivalan kooral	
81	*Hypselobarbus micropogon* (Val.)	Kozhimeen	
82	*Hypselobarbus musullah* (Sykes)	Chenkkuyi, Chemkatti	
83	*Hypselobarbus periyarensis* (Raj)	Kariyan	
84	*Hypselobarbus pulchellus* (Day)	Eettapachila	
85	*Hypselobarbus thomassi* (Day)	**Chemban kooral**, Chemchirakan kooral	
86	*Kryptoglanis shajii* Moncy & Thomas	Midu	
87	*Labeo ariza* (Ham.)	Chemban labeo	
88	*Labeo calbasu* (Ham.)	**Kakkameen**, Njorimeen, Kakkachekidan	
89	*Labeo dussumieri* (Val.)	**Thooli**, Pullan	
90	*Labeo kontius* (Jerdon)	Neela labeo	

91	*Labeo potail* (Sykes)	Labeo	
92	*Labeo rohita* (Ham.)	**Rohu**, Rohita	
93	*Laubuca laubuca* (Ham.)		Mathicheelan
94	*Laubuca dadiburjori* (Menon)		Pullicheeelan
95	*Laubuca fasciata* Silas		Varayancheeelan
96	*Lepidocephalichthys thermalis* (Val.)	**Manalayira**, **Poontharakan**, **Manalaron**	
97	*Lepidopygopsis typus* Raj	Brahmanakanda	
98	*Longischistura striata* (Day)	**Olivarayankoyma**, Neelan koytha	
99	*Macrognathus malabaricus* (Jerdon)	**Puzhukkarakan**, Panayarakan, Mullarakan	
100	*Mastacembelus armatus* (Lacepede)	**Kallarakan**, Malayarakan, Aarakan	
101	*Monopterus digressus* Gopi		
102	*Monopterus eapeni* Talwar		
103	*Monopterus fossorius* (Nair)	Kuzhippulavan	
104	*Monopterus roseni* Bailey & Gans		
105	*Mystus armatus* (Day)	Kullankkoori	
106	*Mystus gulio* (Ham.)	**Puzhakkoori**, Aaattukoori	
107	*Mystus keletius* (Val.)	Chillankoori	
108	*Mystus malabaricus* (Jerdon)	Malabar koori	
109	*Mystus montanus* (Jerdon)	**Malayan koori**, Chillankkoor	
110	*Mystus oculatus* (Val.)	**Chuttikkoori**, Chillankoori, Puzhukkoori	
111	*Mystus seengtee* (Sykes)	**Chakkamullan**, Koori, Kotti	
112	*Mystus vittatus* (Bloch)	**Manjavarayan koori**, Chillankoori, Varayankoori	
113	*Nandus nandus* (Ham.)	**Muthukkila**, Moothadi, Kariyyilameen	
114	*Nemacheilus keralensis* Rita & Nal.		**Kerala koytha** Kunjan koytha
115	*Nemacheilus denisoni* Day	**Varaynkoyma**, Varayann koytha, Varayan ayara	
116	*Nemacheilus guentheri* Day	**Pachakoyma**, Koytha	
117	*Nemacheilus herrei* Nalbant & Banarescu		Anamala koytha
118	*Nemacheilus menoni* Zacharias & Minimol		
119	*Nemacheilus monilis* Hora	Pullikoyma	
120	*Nemacheilus nilgiriensis* Menon	**Neelagiri koyma**, Chemban koytha	
121	*Nemacheilus pambarensis*		Pambar koyma
122	*Nemacheilus periyarensis* (Kurup & Radhakrishnan)		
123	*Nemacheilus pulchellus* Day		Sundari koyma
124	*Nemacheilus remadevii* Shaji		Kunthi koyma
125	*Nemacheilus semiarmatus* Day	**Cherupullikoyma**, Pullannkoytha	
126	*Nemacheilus triangularis* Day	**Thavittupandan koyma**, Pandan koytha	
127	*Nemacheilus petrubanarescui* Menon	**Pachapandan koytha**, Koyma	

128	*Neolissochilus bovanicus* (Day)		Bhavanipparal, paral
129	*Notopterus notopterus* (Pallas)	**Ambattanvala**, Ambattan kathi	
130	*Ompok bimaculatus* (Bloch)	**Thonnanvala**, Thoniivala, Manglachi	
131	*Ompok malabaricus* (Val.)	**Pulluvala**, Kathithooli	
132	*Ophisternon bengalense McClelland*	**Kuruttuvilangu**, Madhuran, Thondi	
133	*Oreochromis mossambicus*	**Thilappia**, Silopi	
134	*Osteobrama bakeri* (Day)	**Chemmullanpaval**, Mullanparal	
135	*Osteochilichthys brevidorsalis* (Day)	Machalu	
136	*Osteochilichthys longidorsalis*	**Modon**, Aameen	
137	*Osteochilichthys nashii* (Day)	**Kadanna**, Mamalu, Marameen	
138	*Osteochilichthys thomassi* (Day)	Mamalu	
139	*Pangio goaensis* (Tilak)		Cherupoontha rakn
140	*Parambassis dayi* (Bleeker)	**Kurunandan**, Arininjil	
141	*Parambassis ranga* (Ham.)	**Cherunandan**, Kunjarinijl	
142	*Parambassis thomassi* (Day)	**Aattunandan**, Poonandan, Perunandan, Puzhayarinjil	
143	*Pethia conchonius* (Ham.)	**Chorachekidan**, Paisapparal, Valeppottan	
144	*Pethia pookodensis* Mercy & Jacob		
145	*Pethia punctatus* (Day)	**Kadumkalipparal**, Swarnavalan	
146	*Pethia ticto* (Ham.)	**Pattaruparal**, Paral	
147	*Pethia. muvattupuzhaensis* Beevi *et al*		**Neduvalan chuttipparal**, Vavalnchutti, Chuttiparal
148	*Pristolepis marginatus* Jerdon	**Aattuchemballi**, Andikalli, Pannakrimeen	
149	*Pristolepis rubripinnis* Kumar *et al*	**Aattuchemballi**, Andikalli, Pannakrimeen	
150	*Pseudeutropius mitchelli* (Guenther)	Vellivala	
151	*Pseudosphromenus cupanus* (Cuvier)	**Karimkalan**, Karikkanni, Katharatti, Karivannan, Karati	
152	*Pseudosphromenus dayi* Engman	**Karimkalan**, Karikkanni, Katharatti, Karivannan, Karati	
153	*Pterocryptis wynaadensis* (Day)	**Wayanadan vala**, Thalumban vala	
154	*Puntius bimaculatus* (Bleeker)		Irupottan paral, Paral
155	*Puntius chalakkudiensis* Menon *et. al.*	**Chorakkaniyan**, Paral	
156	*Puntius chola* (Ham.)	Paral	
157	*Puntius denisonii* (Day)	**Chemkaniyyan**, Chemkananjon	
158	*Puntius dorsalis* (Jerdon)	**Cherukkookanalal**, Muthukkipparal, Mookkanparal	
159	*Puntius mahecola* (Val.)	**Urulan paral**, Oolipparal	
160	*Puntius parrah* Day	**Parappparal**, Parepparal	
161	*Puntius rubrotinctus* Knight *et al*		Muppulilparal
162	*Puntius sophore* (Ham.)	Paral	

163	*Puntius vittatus* (Day)	**Kaypapparal**, Kayppa, Vattakkali	
164	*Rasbora dandia* (Val.)	**Kananjon**, Thuppalkkudiyan	
165	*Salmophasia acinaces* (Val.)	**Mathipparal**, Kathipparal, Valiyamatthipparal	
166	*Salmophasia balookee* (Sykes)	**Cheppukaili**, Perumathipparal	
167	*Salmophasia boopis* (Day)	**Vallimathopparal**, Mathipparal, Chalapparal	
168	*Schismatogobius deraniyagalai*		Cylon poolan
169	*Sicyopterus griseus* (Day)	Puzhappoolan	
170	*Systomus sarana (Val.)*	Kuruvapparal, Kuruva	
171	*Tor khudree* (Sykes)	Kuyil	
172	*Tor malabaricus* (Jerdon)	Kuyil	
173	*Tor remadevii*	Kuyil	
174	*Travancoria elongata* Peth & Kot	**Nedumkalnakki**	
		Nedumkalkkari	
175	*Travancoria jonesi* Hora	Kalppoolon	
176	*Wallago attu* (Bloch & Schn)	**Aattuvala**, Vala, Thooli	
177	*Xenentodon cancila* (Ham.)	**Kolan**, Koyala	

Table 2. Categorization fishes based on the number of common names

No	Fished with vernacular Names	No
1	Fishes with no name	38
2	Fishes with one name	40
3	Fishes with two names	48
4	Fishes with thee names	30
5	Fishes with four names	8
6	Fishes with five names	5
7	Exotic fishes	8
	Total	177

Table 3. Fishes and their clan names

Genus	Clan name	No. Species
Anguilla spp.	Malijeel	2
Amblypharyngodon spp.	Vayambu	2
Barilius spp.	Pavukan	3
Batasio travancoria, Mystus spp., *Hemibagrus punctatus* and *Horabagrus* spp.	Koori	11
Bhavania australis, Balitora mysorensis, *Travancoria*, *Homaloptera*,	Kalnakki	8
Dawkinsia sp., *Dravidia* sp., *Pethia* sp. and *Puntius* sp.	Paral	14
Esomus sp.	Meesaparava	4
Garra spp.	Kallotti	5
Glyptothorax spp.	Kalkkari	2
Hypselobarbus spp.	Kooral	5
Lepidocephalichthys thermalis and *Pangio goaensis*	Manalayira	2
Macrognathus guentheri and *Mastacembelus armatus*	Aarakan	2
Nemacheilus spp., *Longishistura, Acanthocobitis*	Koyma	7
Ompok spp., *Pterocryptis wynaadensis* and *Wallago attu*	Vaala	2
Salmophasia spp.	Mathipparal	3

Table 4. Fish species have same common names

No.	Fish species	Common name
1	*D. aequipinnatus*, *Devario malabaricus*	Ozhukkilatti, Thuppalamkothi
2	*Tor khudree*, *T. malabaricus*, *T. musullah*, *T. Remadevii*	Kuyil, Katti, Aattuchoora
3	*Chanda nama*, *C. ranga*, *Parambassis dayi*, and *P. thomassi*	Nandan, Arinjil
4	*Carinotetraodon travancoricus*, *C. imitator*	Aattunda, Pootham, Thavalappottan, Ponthan, Vattithuntha

Here the notion to have a common name is unjustified (for example. *Mesonemacheilus remadevii*, *Garra periyarensis*. *P. pookodensis*, *Garra menoni*, *G. periyarensis*, *Homaloptera pillaii*, *H. menoni, H. santhamparaiensis*, *Travancoria elongata*, *Mesonemacheilus menoni* , *M. remadevii*, *M. Pambarensis,* M. *periyarensis, G. Malabarensis*). *Horaglanis alikunhi*, *Kryptoglanis shajii, Monopterus digressus*, *M.roseni* are new species described from Kerala recently (Bailey and Gans, 1998; Gopi, 2002). Their protologues provided no common names and on further enquiries confirmed that no common names was in use for these species (*Kryptoglanis shajii* has been assigned a common name 'Midu' by the authors combing two Malayalam name, Mushi (*Clarias*) and Kadu (*Heteropneustes*) assuming its systematic position between the two genus) (Vincent and Thomas, 2011; Babu and Nair, 2004). The species mentioned above are economically not so important and could be a reason for the lack of common names. Due to small size and subterranean mode of life, species like *Horaglanis alikunhii, Monopterus digressus* and *M. roseni* are rarely encountered by the common folk. This is could be a reason for the lack of vernacular name to these endemic fishes.

Dawkinsia assimilis and *Dawkinsia rubrotinctus* were described by Jerdon (1849) and subsequently Day (1865; 1875-1878) retained them under the synonymy of closely related species which was followed by others (Talwar and Jhingran, 1991). Pethiyagoda and Kottelat (2005a) after an extensive collection from south India stabilized the nomenclatural status of *Dawkinsia assimilis* and Knight *et al* (2011) revalidated the species status of *Dawkinsia rubrotinctus*. These species do not have any common names as we understood from the perusal of literatura as well as the interaction with the fisher folk. The nomenclatural status of *Puntius mahecola* was resolved by Pethiyagoda and Kottelat (2005b) which until then was considered as a female of *Puntius filamentous* by ichthyolgists. Due to the taxonomic uncertainity of *Puntius amphibius*, *Amblypharyngodon chakaiensis*, *Tor putitiora, Puntius melanostigma*, and *Puntius sophore* were left unnamed.

The voluminous vernacular names of the fishes prove well the cultural linkage of the people with the fish. The pioneering naturalists were very careful while naming the species and due reverence to the vernacular names were given them. Buchanan (1807), Hamilton (1822), Sykes (1839) and Jerdon (1849) had adopted the common folk names as generic and specific epithets. The exponential relationship of the culture with conservation is conspicuous from the sacred groves that were preserved and revered by the pious Hindus of Kerala. We do feel that it is the names that protects the species from endangerment and makes a sense in the civil society on conservation. The common names descended to us thorough generations are very valuable as the species itself and it enunciates some sort of precious nature-man relationship. Once the pet names vanished, the local community, the custodian of the biodiversity will lose their linkage to the species leading several biodiversity crises at least at the local level.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to Kerala State Biodiversity Board and University of Kerala for financial assistance for the workshop conducted to gather the vernacular names of the fishes. We

are also thankful to Dr. Rajeev Raghavan, Conservation Research Group (CRG), Kochi for the critical evaluation of the manuscript and for constructive suggestions.

REFERENCES

Babu, S. and Nayar, C.K.G. 2004. A new species of the blind catfish Horaglanis, Menon (Siluroidea : Clariidae) from Parappkura, Trichus District and a new report of Horaglanis krishnai, Menon from Ettumanur (Kotayam District) Kerala. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 101: 296–298.

Bailey, R.M. and Gans, C. 1998. Two new synbranchid fishes, Monoppterus roseni from peninsular India and M. desilvai from Sri Lanka. *Occasional Papers of the Museum of Zoology the University of Michigan,* 726: 1-18.

Berlin, B., Breedlove, D. and Raven, P.H. 1973. General principle of classification and nomenclature in folk biology. *American Anthropologist,* 75(1): 214-242.

Breene, 2003. Common Names of Arachnids. The American Arachnological Society.

Buchanan, F. 1807. Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar. Printed for T. Cadel and W. Davies (Booksellers to the Asiatic Society. Black Parry and Kingsbury, Leanernhall Street, London.

Day, F., 1865. *Fishes of Malabar*. London, Quatritch: 293.

Day, F. 1875-78. *Fishes of India; Being a Natural History of the Fishes Known to Inhabit the Seas And Freshwaters of India, Burma, and Ceylon.* Bernard Quaritch, London, 778pp+195pls.

Eschmeyer, W.N. (ed.), 2012. Catalogue of fishes. Updated internet version of 07 June 2012. Catalog databases of CAS cited in Fish Base (website).

Fryer, G. 1959. The trophic interrelationship and ecology of some littoral communities of Lake Nyasa with special reference to the ûshes, and a discussion of the evolution of a group of rock-frequenting Cichlidae. *Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 132(2): 153-281.

Gopi, K. C. 2002 A new synbranchid fish, *Monopterus digressus* from Kerala, Peninsular India. *Rec. Zool. Surv. India*, 100 (1-2): 137-143.

Hamilton, F. 1822. *An account of The Fishes found in the River Ganges and its Branches.* Edinburgh & London.

Jackson, P.B.N., Iles, T.D., Harding, D. and Fryer, G. 1963. Report on the Survey of Northern Lake Nyasa 1954-55 by the Joint Fisheries Research Organization. The Government Printer, Zomba, Nyasaland.

Jerdon, T. C. 1849. On the freshwater fishes of Southern India. Madras. *J. Lit. Sci.,* 15: 302-346.

Kada, Y. & M. Yuma 2000. *Ecology of Childhood Play in Nearby Freshwater around Lake Biwa.* (in Japanese) Nousangyoson Bunka Kyoukai, Tokyo.

Knight, J.D.M., Devi, K.R. and Atkore, V. 2011. Systematic status of *Systomus rubrotinctus* Jerdon (Teleostei: Cyprinidae) with notes on the *Puntius arulius* group of fishes. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 3(4): 1686–16933(4): 1686-1693

Konings, A. 1990. Ad Konings's Book of Cichlids and all Other Fishes of Lake Malawi.Lake Nyasa with special reference to the ûshes, and a discussion of the evolution of a group of rock-frequenting Cichlidae. *Proc. Zool. Soc. London*: 132(2): 153-281.

Lourdes, M., Palomar, D., Garilao, V. and Pauly, D. 1999. On the biological information content of common names: a quantitative case study of Philippine fishes. *In*: Proc. 5th Indo-Pac. Fish Cont. Noumia, 1997. Siret B. & f.-Y. Sire. (eds). *Soc. Fr. Ichtyol*: 861-866

Matsui, T. 1991. *Theory of Cognitive Anthropology* (In Japanese), Shouwadou, Kyoto.

Pethiyagod, R. and Kottelat, M. 2005a. A review of the barbs of the *Puntius filamentosus* group (Teleostei: cyprinidae) of southern India and Sri Lanka. *Raffles Bulletin of Zoology Supplement*, 12: 127–144.

Pethiyagoda, R. and Kottelat, M. 2005b. The identity of the south Indian barb *Puntius mahecola* (Teleostei: Cyprinidae). *Raffles Bulletin of Zoology Supplement,* 12: 145-152.

Shigeta, M. 1991. Species preservation of Ensete in south western Ethiopia. (In Japanese) In (J. Tanaka & M. Kakeya, eds.) *Natural History of Human Beings,* pp. 214-231. Heibonsha, Tokyo.

Smith, E. A. 2001. On the co evolution of cultural, linguistic, and biological diversity. In Maffi, Luisa (ed.). On Biocultural Diversity. Linking Language, Knowledge and the Environment. Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institute Press, pp. 95-117.

Snoeks, J. 2000. How well known is the ichthyodiversity of the large east African lakes? *Advances in Ecological Research,* 31: 17-38.

Stern W. 1959. The background of Linnaeus' contribution to the nomenclature and methods of systematic biology. *Syst.Zoo*., 8: 4-22.

Sykes, W.H. 1839. On the Fishes of the Dukhun. *Transactions of the Zoological Society of London*, 2: 349-378.

Talwar, P. K. and Jhingran, A.G. 1991. *Inland Fishes of India and Adjacent Countries*. Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2 volumes: xix + 1158.

Turner, G.F. 2000. The nature of species in ancient lakes: Perspectives from the fishes of Lake Malawi. *Advances in Ecological Research,* 31: 39-60.

Vincent, M & Thomas, J. 2011. *Kryptoglanis shajii*, an enigmatic subterranean-spring catûsh (Siluriformes, *Incertae sedis*) from Kerala, India. *Ichthyol Res*., 58:161–165.

Wilson, E. O. (ed.) 1986. *Biodiversity*. National Academy Press, Washington D.C.

Younes, T. 1999. Biological and cultural diversities: Challenges and prospects. In (H. Kawanabe, G. Coulter & C. Roosevelt, eds.) *Ancient Lakes: Their Cultural and Biological Diversities*, Kenobi Productions, Ghent pp. 43-58.