Threatened fishes of the world: *Sinocyclocheilus anophthalmus* (Chen and Chu, 1988) (Cyprinidae)

Yahui Zhao · Chunguang Zhang

Received: 17 July 2007 / Accepted: 22 April 2008 / Published online: 23 May 2008
© Springer Science + Business Media B.V. 2008

Common name: Blind golden-line barbel. **Conservation status:** Rare—China Red Data Book of Endangered Animals, Pisces (Yue and Chen 1998); Vulnerable—China Species Red List (Wang and Xie 2004). **Identification:** D iii, 7; A iii, 5; P i, 15–18; V ii, 8–9. Body almost naked, lateral line scales 46–59. Blind, either eyeless or with small eye dots. Snout blunt, duck-billed. Pectoral fin long, reaching pelvic fin insertion. Living fish generally semi-transparent. Adults reach 113 mm standard length. **Distribution:** The fish is only found in Xiaogou Cave in Jiuxiang Town, Yiliang County, Yunnan Province, China, connected to the Xijiang River system. **Abundance:** Population a few hundred at most (Yue and Chen 1998). **Habitat and ecology:** The Karst limestone cave is located in altitude 1,638 m above sea level. Cave water is shallow, around 1 m deep. Some insects and bats also inhabit the cave. Pieces of insect body parts were detected in stomach contents of fishes. **Reproduction:** Estimated spawning season is late May or early June. Ripe eggs are about 2 mm (Chen et al. 1988). **Threats:** Over-capture was considered to be one of threats (Yue and Chen 1998). Habitat degradation and environmental changes are even more serious, especially from a nearby hydropower station. The very limited distribution puts it at risk for rapid or sudden extinction due to any changes in the

cave. **Conservation recommendations:** Capture for *Sinocyclocheilus anophthalmus* should be strictly prohibited except for scientific research. The border of Jiuxiang National Park, currently only a few kilometers away from the cave *S. anophthalmus* inhabits, should be extended to encompass the cave. Effective habitat protection and public awareness programs will be crucial for the survival of this species. **Remarks:** The conservation status of *S. anophthalmus* was previously underestimated, should be “endangered (EN)”. A detailed study of the population dynamics is urgently needed.

References

- Chen YR, Chu XL, Luo ZY, Wu JY (1988) A new blind cyprinid fish from Yunnan, China with reference to the evolution of its characters. *Acta Zool Sinica* 34:64–70
- Wang S, Xie Y (2004) China species red list, vol. 1. Red list. Higher Education Press, Beijing, p 160
- Yue PQ, Chen YY (1998) China red data book of endangered animals, Pisces. Science Press, Beijing, pp 107–109

Y. Zhao (✉) · C. Zhang
Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences,
Beijing 100101, People's Republic of China
e-mail: zhaoyh@ioz.ac.cn