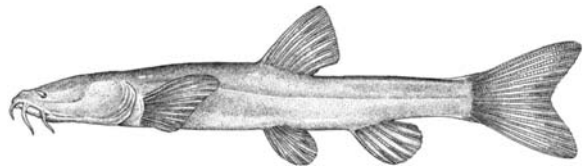


Threatened fishes of the world: *Paracobitis smithi* (Greenwood, 1976) (Balitoridae)

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Common name: Sagmahi-ye gharzi (Farsi); blind loach (E). **Conservation status:** IUCN Red List (2007) as vulnerable (VU D2). **Identification:** Originally described as *Noemacheilus smithi* by Greenwood (1976) and transferred to the genus *Paracobitis* by Nalbant and Bianco (1998). The only eyeless, depigmented balitorid in Iran. The caudal fin is unusual in having only 14 branched rays. There are no scales. The lateral line is interrupted irregularly and there are more pores on the posterior half of the body. A long adipose fin is present dorsally, most obvious in young, and a weaker ventral adipose fin is present. Maximum length 64.5 mm. **Distribution:** Found only at “Kaaje-ru” above the garden Bagh-e Loven at 33°04'38.6"N, 48°35'33.1"E, Dez River basin, Lorestan Province, Iran, a well-like natural outlet of a subterranean system (Coad 1996). **Habitat and ecology:** The outlet is about 5 m by 3 m at the



surface and at least 23 m deep. Water level decreases as the year progresses. Ecology unknown. Much rarer than the co-occurring cyprinid *Iranocypris typhlops* by at least an order of magnitude. **Reproduction:** Unknown. **Threats:** Collapse of the cave system, reduced water recharge through human interference, and over collecting. **Conservation actions:** A fine of 100,000 rials is imposed for illegal fishing. **Conservation recommendations:** Captive breeding of the fish and education of local people should be initiated. Access to the site should be strictly controlled as at least 5–6 parties visit the remote site each year.

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