A new species of the genus *Leporinus* is described from the rio Araguaia, in Mato Grosso and Goiás states, Brazil. The new species has the dental formula 4/3, a unique feature within the genus; all other species of *Leporinus* have dental formulae 3/3, 3/4 or 4/4. In addition, the new species can also be distinguished by the following combination of characters: 36 to 37 scales in the lateral line, 4/4.5 or 4/5 series of scales in the transversal line, 16 circumpeduncular scale series, anal fin surpassing base of lower caudal-fin rays and three blotches along the lateral line. The new species shares with *L. parae* and *L. lacustris* a rather deep body, terminal mouth, long anal fin, three small dark blotches on the lateral line, the latter two, particularly the last one, usually fading, and preference for lentic habitats. Comments on the taxonomy and distribution of the species *L. parae* and *L. lacustris* are provided.

**Key words**: *Leporinus venerei*, Tocantins, Anostomoidea, Ostariophysi.

**Introduction**

In 1995, Paulo Cesar Venere sent to Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo (MZUSP) a collection of fishes made by himself in the rio Araguaia, eastern region of Mato Grosso, central Brazil, including different species of the genus *Leporinus*. This collection included three specimens of an undescribed species with a unique number of teeth in the jaws; however, considering the small number of specimens available, this species was not described at that time. In the year of 2005, another lot of this new species was deposited at MZUSP, with three specimens collected in the same area by members of the Central Brazilian Expedition (CBE). Since the new species was rediscovered, we contacted Paulo Cesar Venere who recently collected a few more specimens. On the basis of this material now in hands the new species can now be appropriately described.

The first paper on *Leporinus* from the rio Tocantins basin (including the rio Araguaia drainage) comes from Valenciennes (1850) who, based on material collected by Castelnau, described *L. pachyurus* and mentioned *L. obtusidens* and *L. maculatus*. Other papers by Castelnau (1855), Borodin (1929), Garavello (1979), Santos et al. (1984), Santos & Jégu (1989), Britski (1997), Garavello & Britski (2003), and Santos et al. (2004), reported a total of 18 species of *Leporinus* for the rio Tocantins basin, including two new species currently under description by Garavello & Santos (Garavello, pers. com.). This makes the rio Tocantins one of the richest in species of the genus *Leporinus* among all South American river basins.

**Material and Methods**

Counts and measurements follow Britski & Garavello (1978), and Britski & Garavello (2005). The number of teeth is ex-
pressed as a dental formula and represents the premaxillary number over the dentary counts in each half of the jaw. Counts of vertebrae were taken from radiographed specimens. Vertebral counts included the four vertebrae of the Weberian apparatus and the fused PU1+U1 of the caudal region (counted as a single vertebra). Lateral-line scale counts included the pored scales extending onto the base of the median caudal-fin rays. Upper scale counts of transversal series represents the number of scale rows between the median dorsal row and the lateral line (i.e., the count starts at a point just in front of the dorsal-fin origin, and not at the dorsal-fin base, and does not include the median dorsal row); this procedure always eliminates the very confusing count of a half scale in this series. A half scale between the lateral line and the pelvic fin is only counted when the base of the pelvic-fin first ray faces the middle of the scale immediately in front of it. Meristic data of the holotype are indicated in the text by an asterisk. Institutional abbreviations includes: ANSP, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia; MZUSP, Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo and USNM, United States National Museum, Smithsonian Institute.

Results

Leporinus venerei, new species

Fig. 1

Holotype: MZUSP 93124 (113.3 mm SL), Mato Grosso, São Felix, Lake in Fazenda Entre-Rios (approx.11°35’S 50°40’W), 24 Oct 2006; P. C. Venere & C. E. de Melo.

Paratypes: MZUSP 93123 (8, 82.5-105.8 mm SL), collected with holotype. MZUSP 92027 (3, 103.1-114.3 mm SL), Goiás, Aruanã, Fazenda Sobrado, pool at margin of road between Aruanã and Cocalinho (14°45’30’S 50°37’50”W), 25 Jul 2005; C. Chamon, L. Sousa, M. Melo & L. Souza. MZUSP 93125 (3, 92.2-106.4 mm SL), Mato Grosso, Araguaiana, Córrego e Cacimbas (borrow pits) at Fazenda do Italiano (approx. 15°43’S 50°51’W), 06 Jul 1995; P. C. Venere & C. E. de Melo. MZUSP 93122 (6, 98.1-135.5 mm SL), Mato Grosso, Araguaiana, Ribeirão Dois de Agosto, tributary of rio Pindaiba, rio das Mortes drainage (approx. 15°15’S 50°40’W), 30 Jun 1992; P. C. Venere & C. E. Melo.

Diagnosis. Leporinus venerei is distinguished from its congeners by having 4 teeth on the premaxilla and 3 teeth on the dentary yielding the dental formula 4/3 (vs. 3/3, 3/4 or 4/4 in all other species of Leporinus). Leporinus venerei is also diagnosed by the following combination of non-unique characteristics: presence of 36-37 pored scales in the lateral line, 4 scales in transversal series from origin of dorsal fin to lateral line and 4.5 to 5 scales from lateral line to base of pelvic fin; 16 series of scales around caudal peduncle; three round dark blotches on lateral line, the first at vertical through dorsal fin, the second at vertical through adipose-fin origin and the third at base of caudal peduncle (the latter two blotches, particularly the last one, usually small or inconspicuous).

Comparisons. Leporinus parae Eigenmann, 1907, and L. lacustris Campos, 1945, are most similar in overall appearance (body shape and coloration) to L. venerei, but both species have dental formula 4/4 (vs. 4/3 in L. venerei). In addition L. parae has 38 to 41 and L. lacustris 33 to 35 lateral-line scales (vs. 36-37 in L. venerei) and L. parae has 5 scales in transverse series from lateral line to dorsal-fin origin (vs. 4 in L. venerei).

Description. See Table 1 for morphometric data of 21 examined specimens and Fig. 1 for lateral view of holotype. Small sized species for genus Leporinus, largest examined specimen 135.5 mm SL. Body rather elevated and compressed. Dorsal profile straight from anterodorsal portion of snout to posterior tip of supraoccpital; straight or very slightly convex from that point to dorsal-fin origin; straight along dorsal-fin base; slightly convex or straight from dorsal-fin base to adipose fin and slightly concave from adipose fin to caudal-fin origin. Ventral profile slightly convex from tip of lower jaw to pelvic-fin insertion, (convexity less pronounced below branchial region in some specimens); straight from pelvic-fin base to anal-fin origin; straight at anal-fin base and concave from anal fin to caudal fin. Greatest body depth at origin of dorsal fin. Head somewhat compressed; mouth terminal, anterior opening of mouth positioned at horizontal bisecting eye.

Premaxillary with four teeth diminishing in size laterally from the symphysial tooth. Dentary with three teeth also decreasing in size laterally. Teeth on both jaws of stai-step type. Dorsal-fin rays ii+i+11* or iii+i+11; dorsal-fin origin slightly in front of vertical through pelvic-fin origin; dorsal-fin base extending through seven or eight scales. Pectoral-fin rays i+13, 14* or 15; pectoral fin extending to third or fourth scale anterior to pelvic-fin base. Pelvic-fin rays i+8; pelvic fin extending to four or five scale posterior to fin base. Anal-fin rays ii-9 or iii+i+9*; anal fin clearly surpassing base of lower caudal-fin rays; distal margin of anal fin slightly or straight convex. Length of last anal fin ray 26 to 47% (mean 36%) length of first branched anal-fin ray. Caudal-fin rays i+17+1; caudal fin forked, upper lobe slightly more developed than lower lobe. Vertebræ 34 (n=4) to 35 (3).

Scales with few radii (5-7). Lateral line complete with 36 (5) to 37* (13) perforated scales; transversal series with 4 (21)

Table 1. Morphometric data of Leporinus venerei.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Holotype</th>
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<td>102.5</td>
<td>82.5 - 135.5</td>
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<td>22.7</td>
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</table>
scales from dorsal-fin origin to lateral line and 4.5 (6) to 5* (15) scales from lateral line to pelvic-fin base; 9, 10* or 11 pre dorsal scales; 10 to 12* scales in median dorsal row between dorsal fin and adipose fin; 7* or 8 scales in median dorsal row between adipose fin and caudal fin; 14 to 18* prepelvic scales; 9, 10* or 11 scales in median ventral row

Fig. 1. Photograph in lateral view of (a) *Leporinus venerei* (holotype, MZUSP 93124, 113.3 mm SL), (b) *Leporinus parae* (MZUSP 48445, 111.9 mm SL), and (c) *Leporinus lacustris* (MZUSP 48414, 95.0 mm SL).
between pelvic fin and anus; 1, 2* or 3 scales in median ventral row between anus and anal fin; 6 to 7* scales in median ventral row between anal fin and caudal fin; 16 horizontal scale rows around caudal peduncle.

Coloration in alcohol. Overall ground color tan. Dorsal surface of head with small, dark-brown chromatophores uniformly scattered or concentrated in some areas, forming faint transverse bars: one at level of nares, another at level of interorbital space and sometimes a, barely visible pair of bars, each one starting on the lateral portion of posterior bar and extending anteriorly into interorbital area. Lateral and ventral surfaces of head pale, without chromatophores, except the bright silver opercular series; sometimes with a black blotch on its ventral portion. Body gradually darker from lateral line dorsally. Three dark blotches on lateral line: first blotch at vertical through posterior half of dorsal-fin base; second at level of the fifth or sixth scale anterior to adipose fin base and third at base of caudal peduncle; only first blotch usually conspicuous; second and third blotches generally reduced in size, faded or, occasionally, completely absent. Brown chromatophores bordering posterior edge of each scale giving a relatively gray reticulated aspect to body ground coloration. Some individuals with faint transverse bars on dorsum occasionally extended onto ventral portion of body. With exception of anal and adipose, remaining fins nearly hyaline with few chromatophores along margins of rays; anal fin dark brown, sometimes with whitish areas along its posterior margin; adipose fin usually whitish near base and dark brown distally.

Distribution. The new species is only known from the rio Araguaia basin in Mato Grosso and Goiás states in central Brazil (see Fig. 2).

Ecological note. Leporinus venerei is found in lentic environments such as lagoons or borrow pits.

Etymology. The name venerei is given in honor to Paulo Cesar Venere who collected the first known specimens of this new species.

Discussion

The number of teeth in species of the genus Leporinus as discussed by Britski (1997), is a very important feature for the species diagnoses. The species of Leporinus are characterized by having three or four teeth on each premaxilla and dentary and, with the exception of the new species all of them can be placed into three artificial groups according to dental formula (i.e., species with 3/3, 3/4 or 4/4 dental formulae). We have been working exhaustively on Leporinus, examining hundreds of specimens of different species and we have found that variation in dental formula among co-specific individuals is exceptional. In most cases, discrepant individuals were considered anomalous because their teeth were asymmetric (i.e., having either one more or one less tooth on only one side of upper or lower jaw); discrepancy involving both sides of jaws was found only in few examined specimens of L. taeniatus from the rio São Francisco basin. This consistency in number of teeth in species of Leporinus strengthens the reliance of this character in species diagnoses. In addition, we consider it important to provide a list of known species of Leporinus grouped by dental formula:


![Fig. 2. Map of South America, showing the distribution of Leporinus venerei (dots), Leporinus parae (triangles) and Leporinus lacustris (squares); open symbols indicates type-localities.](image-url)
The following species have a doubtful number of teeth or the number of teeth is unknown: *L. baduellii, L. bleheri, L. jamesi,* and *L. latifasciatus.*

We note that collectors must preserve specimens of *Leporinus* with mouth open, as they tend to close them very strongly when fixed in formaldehyde. Attempts at opening the mouth of fishes when so fixed usually lead to the breakage of the jaws, particularly the lower jaw, causing loss of the small lateral teeth and therefore making teeth counts unreliable.

There is no consistent hypothesis about relationships within species of *Leporinus,* a genus with large number of species presenting a great degree of variation in mouth position, tooth morphology and arrangements. Attempts to split *Leporinus* into subgenera (for example Borodin, 1929) are not presently accepted. Nevertheless, it is necessary to make some comments on similarities between the new species, *Leporinus parae* Eigenmann, and *L. lacustris* Campos. The latter two species share with *L. venerei* a deep body, terminal mouth, anal fin long and dark, and the three blotches on the lateral line small, with the latter two, particularly the last one, usually fading.

*Leporinus parae* Eigenmann, 1907 was described from the lower Amazon basin in Para state, Brazil. Measurements and counts were taken from 73 of the 279 examined specimens of *L. parae* from different localities (see comparative material which includes type material). This species is diagnosed by dental formula 4/4, 38 (n=22, including the type), 39 (52), 40 (9), and 41 (1) scales in the lateral line, 5/5 transversal series of scales, and 16 circumpeduncular series of scales (Fig. 1). These data are in agreement with the original description (Eigenmann & Ogle, 1907: 8); but, one of these characters differs from the text figure presented by those authors, as it shows a specimen with four series of scales between the lateral line and the dorsal fin. This should be interpreted as an inaccuracy of the driver, since the type and all three cytoples have 5 scale series above the lateral line. Specimens of *L. parae* were found to occur throughout the Amazon and Orinoco basins (see comparative material, fig. 2). In some fish collections, specimens from the Orinoco were previously identified as *L. subniger* Fowler, 1943, described from the Colombian Amazon. *Leporinus subniger* resembles *L. parae* in the terminal mouth, dental formula 4/4, and 16 series of scales in the caudal peduncle. Nevertheless, *L. parae* can be differentiated from *L. subniger* by the number of scales in the lateral line, 38 to 41 (vs. 36 to 38 in *L. subniger*), 5/5 scales in transversal line [vs. 4/4; although Fowler (1943) mentioned 5/5 scales in transversal line in *L. subniger,* our examination and that of Garavello (1979), confirmed that there are in fact 4/4 scales series in the transversal line in that species], three dark blotches sometimes fading [vs. three dark blotches always present and supplemented by several smaller blotches over body, see Fowler (1943: figs 10-12 for drawings), or Böhkle (1958: plate 6, fig. 2 for a photographed specimen)], and deep body and short head (vs. body relatively shallower and head relatively larger).

*Leporinus lacustris* Campos, 1945 was described from the upper rio Paraná basin in São Paulo state, Brazil. Measurements and counts were taken from 109 of the 152 examined specimens of *L. lacustris* from the upper rio Paraná and rio Paraguay basins (see comparative material which includes type material, fig. 2). The species is diagnosed by having dental formula 4/4, 33 (n=4), 34 (69, including the type), or 35 (36) scales in the lateral line, 4/4 or 4/5 transversal series of scales, and 16 circumpeduncular series of scales (Fig. 1). When describing *L. lacustris* Campos (1945:155) did not comment on the number of teeth and reported 3.5 scales in transverse series above lateral line and 32 to 34 scales in the lateral line. By our counts, the types have 4 and 33 to 34 scales, respectively. In addition, *L. lacustris* has fewer vertebrae (33, n=6), when compared to *L. venerei* n.sp. (34 to 35, n=7) and *L. parae* (35 to 37, n=6).

It is also worth mentioning that to our knowledge these three species are the only in the genus that show preferences for lentic habitats.

**Comparative material examined. Leporinus parae**: Brazil (Amazon drainage): USNM 034613 (holotype: 74.6 mm SL), Pará, J. C. Brevoort. USNM 306340 (paratype: 62.8 mm SL), USNM 34575 (paratypes, 2: 71.8-123.0 mm SL), same data as holotype. ANSP 8222: (1: 73.7 mm SL), Pará, M. Sculte-Buckow. MZUSP 3717: (1: 205.0 mm SL), MZUSP 3732: (5: 91.4-106.0 mm SL), Lago Arari, Pará, Oct 1944, A. A. Campos. MZUSP 5022: (92.0-100.3 mm SL), Cachoeira do Arari, Ilha de Marajó, Pará, 12 Jun 1966, Exp. Depto. Zool. MZUSP 6524: (9: 76.5-124.5 mm SL), Lago Manacapuru, Amazonas, 12-13 Dec 1967, H. A. Britski. MZUSP 31401: (1: 157.8 mm SL), rio Madeira, Calama, Rondônia, Oct 1980, M. Goulding. MZUSP 40850: (4: 78.2-103.0 mm SL), intermittent tributary of rio Bezza, Araias, Tocantins, 10 Jan 1989, J. C. Oliveira & W. J. M. Costa. MZUSP 40925: (2: 116.7-131.3 mm SL), rio Poço Gandaia, marginal lagoon of rio Paranã, Flores de Goiás, Goiás, 21 Jan 1989, J. C. Oliveira & W. J. M. Costa. MZUSP 48444: (2: 136.6-142.3 mm SL), Amazonas and Pará, E. Garbe. MZUSP 48445: (10: 56.7-123.5 mm SL), rio Arari, Cachoeira do Arari, Ilha de Marajó, Pará, Jul 1965, N. A. Menezes. MZUSP 48703: (1: 149.7 mm SL), Creek on the 11th km of road Tucuruí – Mato Grosso, Pará, 22 Sep 1970, Expedição Permanente à Amazônia (EPA). MZUSP 48716: (46: 66.6-174.2 mm SL), Igarapé Orixipucu, tributary of rio Tocantins, Mocajuba, Pará, 08 Sep 1970, EPA. MZUSP 48785: (70: 57.4-105.2 mm SL), Lagoa of rio Tocantins in Canal do Capitariquara, Jatobal, Pará, 18 Sep 1970, EPA. MZUSP 48726: (48: 58.2-116.3 mm SL), Lagoa of rio Tocantins in Canal do Capitariquara, Jatobal, Pará, 16 ep 1970, EPA. MZUSP 48780: (6: 80.4-113.2 mm SL), Igarapé Limão, tributary of rio Tocantins, Baião, Pará, 09 Sep 1970, EPA. MZUSP 52535: (1: 86.6 mm SL), rio Araguaia, at beach between Bandeirantes and Luiz Alves, Goiás, Jul 1997, R. S. A. Matias. MZUSP 53730: (1: 89.3 mm SL), rio Araguaia, Lago das Branquinhas, Mato Grosso, Feb 1998. Venezuela (Orinoco drainage): ANSP 135598: (3: 94.4-126.2 mm SL), rio Cauca (07°07'N 65°00'W), Bolivar, 28 Jan 1977, J. Bohlke et al. ANSP 139897: (8: 95.9-135.7 mm SL), rio Mato (07°08'N 65°10'W), Bolivar, 01 Feb 1977, J. Bohlke et al. ANSP 141581: (11: 87.5-118.0 mm SL), Jabillal (06°57'N 64°50'W), Bolivar, 25 Jan 1977, J. Bohlke et al. ANSP 150430: (3: 74.6-84.6 mm SL), rio Caura (07°07'N 65°00'W), Bolivar, 29 Jan 1977, J. Bohlke et al. ANSP 159332: (13: 82.3-105.0 mm SL), Canó Cuima, Bolivar, 29 Nov 1985, B. Chernoff et al. ANSP 159366: (1: 100.0 mm SL), rio...
Acknowledgments

The new species was discovered by Paulo Cesar Venere, to whom we are grateful for depositing material at MZUSP. We are also in debt to Carine Chamon, Leandro Sousa, Marcelo Melo and Lesley Souza, who collected additional material during the Central Brazil Expedition, founded by All Catfish Species Inventory (NSF DEB-0315963). We are also grateful to Flávio Lima, Mark Sabaj Pérez and two anonymous reviewers for suggestions to the manuscript; and to Mark Sabaj Pérez, Richard Vair and David Santana for assistance during visit of JLOB to ANSP and USMN in Jan 2007. For loan of specimens we thank Mark Sabaj Pérez. The authors were funded by CNPq (HAB) and FAPESP (06/53737-7 - JLOB).

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Accepted January 2008
Published 31 March 2008