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## FIRST RECORD OF *ERETHISTES HARA* (HAMILTON, 1822) (SILURIFORMES : ERETHISTIDAE) FROM MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA

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### INTRODUCTION

Siluriformes is an important order of Pisces, comprising of approximately 2,000 species pertaining to 30 families. They are mostly confined to freshwater, but some are marine. Siluroid fishes are devoid of scales and are popularly termed as Cat-fishes, due to the presence of feelers or long barbels arranged around the mouth. These fishes appear to use their feelers in moving about in muddy places, and consequently have less use for their eyes than forms that reside in clear water. In some freshwater as well as marine forms, the males appear to carry the ova in their mouths perhaps until the young are produced. These fishes are credited with causing poisonous wounds. They are capable of atmospheric respiration also (Day, 1889).

The family Erethistidae are commonly known as the 'Moth Cats' because of their colour pattern of the fins

as being very like moth's wings. Head is osseous above, somewhat depressed. Mouth small, gill opening narrow, eyes small. Nostrils close together, separated by a small barbel. Barbels eight. First dorsal fin arising slightly in front of the ventrals, having a serrated spine and five or six branched rays. Adipose dorsal present. Ventral with six rays. Pectoral with a serrated spine.

While working on the Pisces of Madhya Pradesh, the authors came across two interesting specimens of 'Moth Cats' identified as *Erethistes hara* (Hamilton, 1822) belonging to family Erethistidae. Globally, this family is represented by 6 genera and about 25 species (De Pinna, 1996). However, only 9 species are reported from India (Jayaram, 2006). *Erethistes hara* (Hamilton) is so far reported by Jayaram (1981, 2006); Lipton (1985); Aatur Rahman (1989) and Mamnur Rashid, *et.al.* (1997).



*Erethistes hara* (Hamilton, 1822)



Head of *Erethistes hara* (Hamilton, 1822)

***Erethistes hara*** (Hamilton, 1822)

*Material examined* : Madhya Pradesh, Kuanri river, Morena Distt., 05. I. 1995, (1ex.) Coll. H.S.Sharma; Reg, no.V-4446; Mahanadi River, VijayRaghavgarh, Katni Distt., 17. I. 2009, (1ex.), Coll. J.Thilak. Reg, no.V-4771.

*Diagnostic Features / Description* : The body length of the specimen was measured 2.5 cm and 2.8 cm. Blunt spiny ossicles present in the skin. Pectoral spine shorter (0.5cm.) than head length. Occipital process, cleithral process, scapular process all prominent and naked. Humeral process prominent on ventral side. 4 pairs of barbels. Rayed dorsal fin with 5 rays and a spine. A

combination of brown and cream vertical bands after the posterior dorsal fin. Maxillary and mandibular barbels with alternate black and brown bands.

*Distribution* : Ganges, Brahmaputra & Irrawaddy drainages in northeast India, Bihar, North Bengal, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar.

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