contour of the fin (cf. Briggs, *loc. cit.*).—VLADIMIR WALTERS, *The American Museum of Natural History, New York 24, N. Y.*

NORTHERN RECORD OF THE SNAKE EEL *OPHICHTHUS GOMESI* (CASTELNAU). —Shortly after sunset on July 16, 1954 the R/V ATLANTIS was hove to in 40 fathoms at 40°32'N, 70°54'W (50 miles S of Gay Head, Mass.) when 3 eels were seen swimming at the surface close by the vessel's hull. They were separated from one another by distances less than their length. Two of the eels had disappeared when the writer returned with a dipnet but the remaining one was caught. About one-half hour later, a blue shark (*Prionace glauca*), which had been in the vicinity of the vessel for several hours was caught and a second eel was removed from its stomach. It was obvious from the latter eel's condition that it had been very recently swallowed and may have been one of the uncaught two earlier seen. The eels prove to be specimens of *Ophichthus gomesi* (Castelnau), 472 mm. and 374 mm. in total length respectively. Both are females and appear to have recently spawned. A few ripe eggs about 1 mm. in diameter and pale yellow in color had been retained.

This eel is easily separated from its congeners by the long tail (61 and 60 hundredths of the total length in the present specimens) and by the characteristic dentition and coloration (see Ginsburg, 1951, Tex. Jour. Sci., 3(3) : 466–67 and 478). According to Ginsburg there is not much good information on the habitat of this species, but it appears to be known mainly from shallow coastal waters. It occurs most commonly from Florida to Brazil, although there is a record for Charleston, S. C., the northernmost heretofore. Thus this species should be added to the lengthy list of weak-swimming tropical and subtropical animals which appear during the summer in Atlantic shelf and coastal waters off northern United States and southern Canada. The means by which these animals are transported thither is as yet little understood since the popular supposition that they are carried north by the Gulf Stream, although perhaps correct, is insufficient to explain their presence in waters many miles inshore of the Stream's direct effect.—RICHARD H. BACKUS, *Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.*

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THE CEYLONESE CYPRINID GENUS *EUSTIRA* GÜNTHER CONSIDERED A SYNONYM OF *DANIO* HAMILTON.—In discussing the classification of the danios, Myers (1953, Aquarium Jour., 24: 235–38) drew attention to numerous gaps that still remain to be filled before final word can be said as to their classification. Recently, while studying the nomenclatorial status of certain genera of Indian fishes, it was found that one of the Ceylonese genera ascribed to different positions in the system by various ichthyologists needed more scrutiny. The genus referred to is *Eustira*, described by Günther (1868, Cat. Fishes British Mus., 7: 331), to include a new cyprinid fish from Ceylon named by him *Eustira ceylonensis*. Günther placed *Eustira* under the group "Abramidina" of the family Cyprinidae and described it briefly as follows: Body oblong, much compressed, the entire abdominal edge being trenchent, scales of moderate size; lateral line abruptly bent downwards behind the pectoral fin; mouth obliquely directed upwards; barbels none. Dorsal fin of moderate length, without spines, opposite the anal; anal fin long, many rayed, caudal fin forked, pectorals elongate; ventrals well developed. Pseudobranchiae; gillrakers fine, lanceolate, rather widely set. Pharyngeal teeth 5.3.2–2.3.5, uncinate, not denticulated.

The fin rays and scale counts of *E. ceylonensis* were given by Günther as "D. 12. A. 17. V. 7. L. lat. 35. L. transv. 7–1/2/2," and the origin of the dorsal fin was noted as being slightly in advance of that of the anal fin. The species was also characterized as having pectoral fins shorter than the head, reaching only as far back as the pelvics.

Because of the slightly inadequate descriptions of the genus and the species, *Eustira* has been confused with *Chela* Hamilton, *Laubuca* Bleeker, and *Perilampus* Day (*nec* McClelland), by Day (1875–78, Fishes of India), Weber and de Beaufort (1916, Fishes of the Indo-Australian Archipelago, 3), Deraniyagala (1930, Eventognathi of Ceylon, and 1952, Coloured Atlas of Some Vertebrates from Ceylon, 1), Smith (1945, Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., 188), and others. In fact, while recognizing *Eustira* as a subgenus of *Laubuca*, Weber and de Beaufort (1916, *op. cit.*, 48) remarked: "We do not think that the genus *Eustira* is generically distinct from *Laubuca*; we therefore give it only the value of a subgenus, containing *Eustira ceylonensis* Gthr. and our *Eustira maassi*." They distinguished the subgenus *Eustira* from *Laubuca s. str.*, by the downward curvature of the lateral line behind the pectorals, abrupt in *Eustira*, gentle in *Laubuca*.

While considering *E. ceylonensis* as a synonym of *Chela laubuca* Hamilton, Deraniyagala (1930, *op. cit.*) in a footnote commented on its doubtful similarity to species of *Danio*; but in his latest work on Ceylon fishes (Deraniyagala, 1952, *op. cit.*), he once again treated *E. ceylonensis* as a synonym of *Chela laubuca*.

In view of these conflicting views on the systematic position of *Eustira* and due to the fact that no additional material of the orthotype has been recognized from Ceylon since it was first described, a reexamination of the type material in the British Museum (Natural History) seemed desirable. Fur-

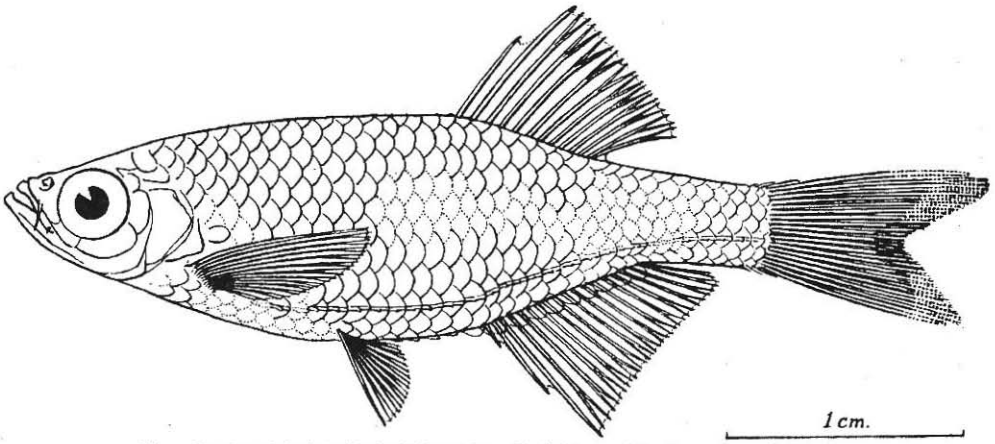

Fig. 1. *Danio malabaricus* (Jerdon) drawn from the holotype of *Eustira ceylonensis* Günther

thermore it was felt that this would help in clarifying certain discrepancies in the descriptions of the genus and species by Günther. The type series consists of six specimens cited as purchased from Mr. Cumming, from Ceylon.

While on a visit to England, the late Dr. S. L. Hora kindly examined for me the types of *E. ceylonensis* in the British Museum. In a letter dated September 23, 1953 he informed me that in "Günther's specimens the origin of D. is slightly in advance of A.; number of branched anal rays 15; scales transversely 8/1/2." No figure of *E. ceylonensis* has been published. This deficiency has now been remedied by an excellent figure of the type specimen (Fig. 1), sent to me by Dr. Ethelwynn Trewavas of the British Museum. The two pairs of rudimentary barbels, present in the specimens and shown in the drawing, escaped Günther's attention, for he characterized *Eustira* as being devoid of barbels. During my visit to the British Museum in July, 1955, I was able to reexamine once again the type material and to verify the points mentioned above. I now find that in the following important characters *Eustira* differs from *Chela* as the latter genus is defined at present (Silas, MS).

1. The dorsal fin originates ahead of the anal fin, rather than behind the front of that fin.

2. There are two pairs of barbels (none in *Chela*).

3. The pectoral fins are shorter than the head, instead of being elongate and much longer than the head.

4. The abdominal margin is rounded, rather than being keeled.

Eustira is obviously distinct from *Chela*, and its rounded abdominal margin separates it from all other cultrate genera of the subfamily Abramidinae. The combination of characters mentioned above places *Eustira* in the Rasborinae. In fact, *Eustira* fully agrees with the description of one of the well-known genera in this subfamily, namely *Danio* Hamilton. There is not a single character by which the two nominal genera can be said to differ. Hence I propose that *Eustira* be considered a synonym of *Danio*.

Only one species of *Danio*, namely *D. malabaricus* (Jerdon) is known at present from Ceylon, although the exact status of the Ceylonese form in relation to the typical form of the Cauvery drainage in southern India needs elucidation. The type specimen of *E. ceylonensis*, figured here, shows in addition to the two pairs of barbels, the following characters not noted by the original author: the pelvic fin has 8 rays (i, 7); the anal fin has 18 rays (iii, 15), the last ray divided to the base; the caudal fin has 19 rays. Taking all these data into consideration, there is not a single character by which *E. ceylonensis* can be separated from the Ceylonese form, or representative, of *Danio malabaricus*, to the synonymy of which it is here relegated.

The subgenus of *Laubuca* to which Weber and de Beaufort misadvisedly assigned the name *Eustira* is thus left without a valid name. The problem is under further study.

I wish to thank Dr. Carl L. Hubbs for going through the manuscript and Drs. Sunder Lal Hora and Ethelwynn Trewavas for the help rendered.—
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