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RESEARCH PAPER

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Icthyofauna of River Chenab at Head Trimmu, District Jhang,

Pakistan

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Abstract

River Chenab is an important wetland in Pakistan supporting diverse fauna and flora. Present study deals with the icthyodiversity of river Chenab at Trimmu Headwork and reports 43 species belonging to six orders, 13 families and 34 genera. On the basis of number and percentage contribution of families to their orders, order Siluriformes was found dominant represented with five families (38.5%) followed by Perciformes (30.7%). Fish species belonging to family Cyprinidae were found dominant (44.2%) in the present collection. *Systomus sarana* has shown highest value of relative abundance followed by *Puntius sophore* and *Barilius modestus*. Population of commercially important fish species has declined in this river due to the various anthropogenic pressures. The values for species diversity, richness and evenness from the study area were 3.56, 13.98 and 0.95 respectively. Conservation measures are strongly recommended for protecting this diverse fish fauna.

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Introduction

Pakistan is bestowed with many inland water resources such as rivers and their tributaries, network of interlinked irrigation canals, streams, earth-filled dams, lakes and waterlogged areas. Freshwater icthyofauna of Pakistan is very rich and diverse represented with a minimum of 193 species out of which 31 species are considered as economically high valued species (Rafique and Khan, 2012). River Chenab is an important wetland in Pakistan supporting diverse fauna and flora. Extensive work on freshwater fish fauna of Chenab river has been done by many researchers in Pakistan (Shaheen, 1976; Khan et al., 1991; Afzal et al., 1995; Mirza, 1997; Mirza and Javed, 2003; Altaf et al., 2011a,b; Altaf et al., 2015; Latif et al., 2016a-c). Fishes belonging to family Cyprinidae superseded rest of the families regarding to their number of genera and species in Pakistan (Mirza, 2003). Fishes are highly sensitive to water quality changes and respond to both direct and indirect changes in the aquatic ecosystem (Borkovic et al., 2008). Globally fish and fisheries are in severe decline due to the rapid economic and population growth (Limburg et al., 2011). Climatic changes are adversely affecting freshwater biodiversity (Heino et al., 2009). Lentic and lotic ecosystems are considered to be the most sensitive ecosystems to climate change, invasion of exotic species and land use changes (Sala et al., 2000). Pakistan has introduced several alien fish species into its rivers for various purposes such as fish yield enhancement; sport fishing, aquatic weeds and mosquito's control (Khan et al., 2011). These introductions have resulted in severe decline of native species. Aquatic pollution is another major threat to the fish fauna of Pakistan. The highly polluted water from river Tawi enters into Pakistan and joins with river Chenab resulting in the degradation of water quality of Chenab River (Elahi and Sikder, 2010). Fishes of head Trimmu have shown skin and fins infections indicating water pollution in this river (Iqbal et al., 2013). Annual fish catches are significantly decreasing in Pakistan as a result of abrupt climatic changes and aquatic pollution (Allison et al., 2009). The present study was aimed to assess fish species composition and their relative abundance at Trimmu headwork by using various diversity indices.

Materials and methods

Study area

Punjab is the land of five rivers namely; Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi, Sutlej and Bias Rivers. Among these five rivers, river Chenab is a life line for the Punjab, Pakistan. It originates from India and passes through Jammu and Kashmir State and then finally enters into Pakistan near Diawara village, district Sialkot. In Pakistan, catchment area of river Chenab is about 13469 square miles. Annual water flow is 26.44 billion cubic meters. Marala, Khanki, Qadirabad and Trimmu Headworks are important water reservoirs situated on the river Chenab (Siddiqui and Tahir-Kheli, 2004). Head Trimmu was constructed between 1937 and 1939 primarily as flood control mechanism. It is situated at the confluence of Jhelum and Chenab rivers and is about 25 Km away from the district Jhang, near Atharan Hazari village. Head Trimmu feeds three major canals, two from the left bank (Trimmu-Sidhnai link canal and Haveli Link) and one from the right bank (Rangpur canal). Head Trimmu supports diverse fauna and flora of both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Head Trimmu is located at 31°8'41.71" N, 72°8'45.7" E and elevation of 150m (Fig. 1).

Sampling

Fish sampling was done on monthly basis from September 2015 to July 2016 mainly from upstream and downstream of Trimmu headwork. Both direct (Total count) and indirect (meetings with local fishermen, surveying nearby fish markets and remains of fishes) methods were applied to find out fish diversity from the study area. Collected samples were preserved in 10% formalin and then brought to the Fish Museum, Fisheries Research & Training Institute, Lahore. Preserved specimens were identified up to the species level on the basis of their meristics and morphological characteristics. Standard taxonomic used for taxonomic keys were classification (Mirza and Sharif, 1996; Mirza and Sandhu, 2007). Identified specimens were shifted into 70% alcohol and displayed in glass jars at Fish Museum, FR&TI, Lahore, Pakistan.



Fig. 1. Map showing study area (Head Trimmu), Punjab, Pakistan.

Statistical analysis

For estimating fish species diversity, abundance and evenness from the study area diversity indices were used (Shannon and Weaver, 1963; Margelf, 1958; Hill, 1973).

Results

A total of 43 species belonging to 34 genera, 13 families and six orders were recorded from head Trimmu (Table. 1). Among the collected fishes major portion consisted of indigenous species along with single endemic (*Salmophasia punjabensis*) and five

exotic species namely; Cyprinus carpio, Ctenopharyngodon idella, Hypophthalmicthyus molitrix, Oreochromis mossambicus and Oreochromis niloticus (Rafique and Khan, 2012). Order Siluriformes was found dominant contributing five families (38.5%) followed by Perciformes contributing four families (30.7%) to the present collection (Fig. 2). Four orders namely Osteoglossiformes, Cypriniformes, Channiformes and Mastacembeliformes each contributed only a single family (7.69%) to this collection.

Table 1. List of recorded fish species from Trimmu headwork, Chenab, Pakistan.

Sr. No	Order/Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	R.A	PilnPi
Ι	Osteoglossiformes				
I-1	Notopteridae	Chitala chitala	Chital Pari	0.008	-0.039
2		Notopterus notopterus	But Pari	0.016	-0.066
II	Cypriniformes				
II-3	Cyprinidae	Labeo rohita	Rohu	0.023	-0.087
4		Labeo boga	Bhangan	0.014	-0.059
5		Labeo calbasu	Kalbans	0.006	-0.031
6	_	Labeo gonius	Sariha	0.019	-0.075
7		Cirrhinus mrigala	Mori	0.036	-0.119
8	_	Cirrhinus reba	Reba	0.013	-0.056
9		Gibelion catla	Thaila	0.009	-0.042
10		Puntius sophore	Sphor Popra	0.062	-0.172
11		Puntius chola	Chola popra	0.042	-0.133
12		Systomus sarana	Khirni	0.078	-0.199
13		Salmophasia punjabensis	Punjabi Chal	0.049	-0.148
14	_	Securicula gora	Bari Chal	0.023	-0.087
15		Esomus danricus	Somara	0.019	-0.075
16		Osteobrama cotio	Pali-ro	0.021	-0.081
17		Barilius modestus	Lhori Chlwa	0.062	-0.172
18		Chela cachius	Budha	0.011	-0.049
19		Cyprinus carpio*	Gulfam	0.013	-0.056
20		Ctenopharyngodon idella*	Grass Carp	0.011	-0.049
21		Hypophthalmicthyus molitrix*	Silver Carp	0.009	-0.042
III	Siluriformes				
III-22	Bagridae	Sperata sarwari	Singhari	0.016	-0.066
23	_	Rita rita	Desi Khaga	0.029	-0.103

Sr. No	Order/Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	R.A	PilnPi
Ι	Osteoglossiformes				
24	_	Mystus cavasius	Kanghar	0.032	-0.11
25	-	Mystus bleekeri	Kanghar	0.016	-0.066
IV-26	Siluridae	Wallago attu	Malli	0.021	-0.081
27	-	Ompok pabda	Pafta	0.016	-0.066
V-28	Schilbeidae	Eutropiichtys vacha	Jhalli	0.042	-0.133
29	-	Clupiosoma garua	Bachwa	0.018	-0.072
VI-30	Sisoridae	Bagarius bagarius	Fauji Khaga	0.011	-0.049
31	-	Gagata cenia	Gagata cenia	0.009	-0.042
VII-32	Heteropneustidae	Heteropneustes fossilis	Sanghi	0.026	-0.095
IV	Channiformes				
VIII-33	Channidae	Channa marulius	Saul	0.013	-0.056
34	_	Channa punctata	Daula	0.029	-0.103
35		Channa gachua	Dauli	0.006	-0.031
V	Mastacembeliformes				
IX-36	Mastacembelidae	Mastacembelus armatus	Baam	0.017	-0.069
37	-	Macrognathus pancalus	Garoj	0.004	-0.022
VI	Perciformes				
X-38	Chandidae	Chanda nama	Sheesha	0.036	-0.119
39	-	Parambassis ranga	Ranga Shsha	0.019	-0.075
XI-40	Gobiidae	Glossogobius giuris	Golu	0.019	-0.075
XII-41	Belontidae	Colisa fasciata	Bari Kanghi	0.018	-0.072
XIII-42	Cichlidae	Oreochromis niloticus*	Chirra	0.033	-0.112
43		Oreochromis mossambicus*	Chirra	0.029	-0.103

*Indicates exotic species; R.A: Relative abundance; Com. Value: Commercial value (Rafique & Khan, 2012; Hussain et al., 2016).

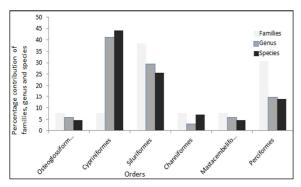


Fig. 2. Number and percentage contribution of families, genus and species under various orders.

On the basis of number and percentage contribution of genus and species to their orders, fishes belonging to order Cypriniformes were found dominant contributing 14 genera (41.2%) and 19 species (44.2%) followed by Siluriformes contributing 10 genera (29.4%) and 11 species (25.6%) to this collection. Order Perciformes contributed five genera (14.7%) and six species (13.9%) to the present collection. Order Channiformes contributed single genera (2.94%) and three species Channa marulius, C. punctata and C. gachua (6.98%) to this collection. Orders Osteoglossiformes and Mastacembeliformes each contributed two genera (5.88%) and two species (4.65%) to the present collection. On the basis of number and percentage contribution of genus and species to their family, fishes belonging to family

Cyprinidae were found dominant contributing 14 genera (41.2%) and 19 species (44.2%) followed by Bagridae contributing three genera (8.82%) and four species (9.30%) to this collection. Families Notopteridae, Siluridae, Schilbeidae, Sisoridae, Mastacembelidae and Chandidae each contributed two genera (5.88%) to present collection. Fishes belonging to families Hetropneustidae, Channidae, Gobiidae, Belontidae and Cichlidae each contributed only a single genus (2.94%) to this collection (Fig 3A).

Major portion of the present collection comprised of the fish species belonging to family Cyprinidae (44.2%), among these fishes most are commercially high valued species (Labeo rohita, Cirrhinus mrigala, Gibelion catla, Labeo gonius, Cyprinus Ctenopharyngodon idella carpio, and Hypophthalmicthyus molitrix in Pakistan (Rafique and Khan, 2012; Hussain et al., 2016) Families Notopteridae, Siluridae, Schilbeidae, Sisoridae, Mastacembelidae, Chandidae and Cichlidae each contributed two species (4.65%) to this collection. Three families namely Hetropneustidae, Gobiidae and Belontidae each contributed only a single species (Heteropneustes fossilis, Glossogobius giuris and Colisa fasciata respectively) contributing 2.32% to the present collection (Fig 3B).

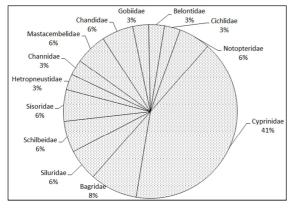


Fig. 3A. Percentage contribution of each genus to their families.

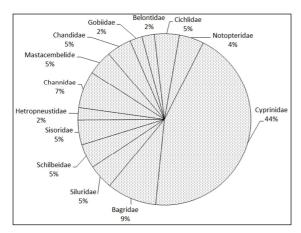


Fig. 3B. Percentage contribution of each species to their families.

Major portion of the present collection comprised of commercially low valued species showing high values for their relative abundance such as Systemus sarana has shown highest value for its relative abundance (0.199) followed by Puntius sophore and Barilius modestus (0.172). Commercially high valued species Gibelion catla, Chitala chitala, Channa marulius and Channa gachua has shown low values for their relative abundance due to their indiscriminate fishing. Commercially and economically high valued fish species are declining in the river Chenab due to various anthropogenic the stresses such as overfishing, pouching, pollution and introduction of alien species (Latif et al., 2016a-c). Oreochromis niloticus and Cyprinus carpio, an exotic fish species in this river has shown comparatively high values for their relative abundance (Fig. 4). Many researchers have reported exotic fish species are becoming invasive in the rivers of Pakistan (Khan et al, 2011; Iqbal et al., 2013). Their results support our findings.

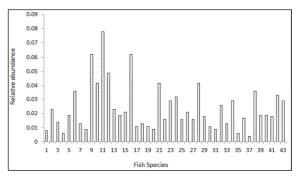


Fig. 4. Fish species and their relative abundance recorded from head Trimmu, river Chenab.

The value for fish species diversity, abundance and evenness from the study area were 3.56, 13.9 and 0.95 respectively (Table. 2). Similar studies were conducted on three other head works (Marala, Qadirabad and Khanki headworks) situated on river Chenab during the period 2015-2016 reported low fish species diversity when compared to the present fish species diversity found at head Trimmu (Latif *et al.*, 2016a-c).

Table 2. Statistical analysis of the fish diversity ofhead Trimmu, river Chenab, Pakistan.

Diversity Indices	Values		
Fish species	43		
Shannon-Weaver diversity (H)	3.56		
Margelf,s richness (R)	13.98		
Hill,s evenness (E)	0.95		

Discussion

A total of 43 fish species were recorded from the study area during this study. 32 fish species were reported from Trimmu Headworks pond area, district Jhang (Iqbal et al., 2013). Seven fish species namely Aspidoparia morar, Salmophasia bacalia, Ompok bimaculatus, Schistura macrolepis, Schistura shadiwaensis, Xenentodon cancila and Botia lohachata were reported in their collection but not found in our collection. 25 fish species in present collection are common to their collection. Chitala chitala, Labeo boga, Labeo calbasu, Labeo gonius, Cirrhinus reba, Systomus sarana, Salmophasia punjabensis, Securicula gora, Esomus danricus, Osteobrama cotio, Cyprinus carpio, Mystus cavasius, Mystus bleekri, Ompok pabda, Macrognathus pancalus, Chanda nama, Parambassis ranga and Glossogobius giuris are exclusively part of present collection not reported in their findings.

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30 fish species were recorded from head Trimmu and threats were reported to economically high valued of this river (Khan et al, 2011). species Amblypharyngodon mola, Aspidoparia morar, Salmophasia bacalia, Mystus vittatus, Ailia punctata, Xenentodon cancila and Sicamugil cascasia were reported in their collection but were not found in present collection. 23 fish species recorded in our collection were also reported in their collection while Chitala chitala, Labeo boga, Labeo gonius, Systomus sarana, Esomus danricus, Barilius modestus, Cyprinus carpio, Hypophthalmicthyus molitrix, Rita rita, Mystus bleekri, Wallago attu, Ompok pabda, Bagarius bagarius, Gagata cenia, Heteropneustes fossilis, Channa marulius, Channa gachua, Parambassis ranga, Colisa fasciata and Oreochromis mossambicus were not reported in their collection. Sisor pakistanicus was reported from river Chenab at head Trimmu (Javed and Mirza, 2011). This species was not found in the present collection.

38 fish species were recorded from Marala headworks situated on river Chenab during the period 2015-16. The values for species diversity and richness were low showing decrease in the populations of commercially important species in this river (Latif et al, 2016a). 43 species were reported from head Qadirabad, river Chenab (Latif et al, 2016b). Major portion of their collection comprised of native species along with five exotic species. They reported that exotic species are becoming invasive in the river. Their findings support our results. 34 fish species from Khanki headwork during September 2015- May 2016. The values for diversity indices were low indicating loss of fish diversity from their study area (Latif et al., 2016c). 34 fish species were reported from river Chenab at Marala, Khanki and Qadirabad headworks (Altaf et al, 2015). The diversity indices values showed higher diversity at head Qadirabad followed by Khanki and Marala headworks. 32 fish species reported from river Jhelum in their study are overlapping with our collected species from head Trimmu. 22 fish species were reported from river Indus at Ghazi Ghat (Hussain et al., 2016). Major portion of their collection comprised of fishes belonging to family Cyprinidae.

Similar results are found in present study. Freshwater icthyofauna at Chashma and Taunsa reservoirs was represented with 20 and 22 species respectively (Khan et al., 2008). Major portion of their collection comprised of native species along with exotic fishes like Ctenopharyngodon idella, Hypopthalmichthys molitrix, Hypopthalmichthys nobilis, Cyprinus carpio, Carassius auratus, Oreochromis aureus, Oreochromis mossambicus and Gambusia affinis. 3 exotic species (*Hypopthalmichthys molitrix*, Cyprinus carpio and Oreochromis mossambicus) reported in their collection were also found in our collection from Trimmu headwork.

Fish fauna found at head Trimmu was found diverse. However, population of commercially high valued species has seemed to be declined. Various anthropogenic stresses are responsible for this decline such as aquatic pollution, introduction of alien species, overharvesting and destruction of feeding and breeding places. For conserving fish fauna at Trimmu headwork, strict controls on overfishing, illegal fishing, elimination of invasive species, regular water quality assessment is highly recommended.

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