

RESEARCH NOTE

SYSTEMATIC STATUS OF *RHABDOCHONA LEUCASPII* KRITSCHER, 1979
(NEMATODA: RHABDOCHONIDAE)

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Abstract. Reexamination of the male holotype of the rhabdochonid nematode *Rhabdochona leucaspis* Kritscher, 1979, originally described from the intestine of the cyprinid fish *Leucaspis prosperi* [= *Ladigesocypris ghigii* (Gianferrari)] from Rhodes Island, Greece, confirmed its morphological and biometrical identity with *Rhabdochona denudata* (Dujardin, 1845), a common and widespread parasite of cyprinids and some other fishes in palaearctic Eurasia. Consequently, *R. leucaspis* is considered a junior synonym of *R. denudata*.

Kritscher (1979) inadequately described a new nematode, *Rhabdochona leucaspis* (family Rhabdochonidae), based on a single male specimen from the intestine of the cyprinid fish reported as *Leucaspis prosperi* [sic] [= *Ladigesocypris ghigii* (Gianferrari)] from Rhodes Island, Greece, which is the eighth species of *Rhabdochona* Railliet, 1916 reported from European fishes (Moravec 1975, 1994). He distinguished *R. leucaspis* from *R. denudata* (Dujardin, 1845) by an allegedly different shape of the short spicule (incorrectly reported as a gubernaculum), the long spicule not being S-shaped but only slightly curved, and by fewer pairs (7 vs. 8) of preanal papillae. However, in this case, such features cannot be used for the species distinction, because they are subject to a considerable intraspecific variability in *Rhabdochona* spp. (Moravec 1972).

A recent reexamination of the holotype of *R. leucaspis*, deposited in Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Cat. No. 15791), confirmed its conspecificity with *R. denudata* (Dujardin, 1845), a common parasite of many species of cyprinids and some other fishes in Europe and palaearctic Asia, as it was redescribed by Moravec (1994). Although the distribution of the cyprinid *L. ghigii* is restricted to mainland Greece, Rhodes Island and southern Anatolia, Turkey (Froese and Pauly

2006), *R. denudata* is well known to utilize different host species in different parts of its extensive distribution area (Moravec 1975, Moravec and Nagasawa 1989). Consequently, *R. leucaspis* Kritscher, 1979 is considered a junior synonym of *R. denudata* (Dujardin, 1845).

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