

Schistura densiclava

May 26, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



Schistura densiclava Latest News

A new species of cave-dwelling loach, named *Schistura densiclava*, has been discovered from the Krem Mawjymbuin cave in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

About *Schistura densiclava*

- *Schistura densiclava* belongs to the **family Nemacheilidae**, a group of **bottom-dwelling freshwater fishes** known for adapting to **benthic stream habitats**.
- It is classified as a **troglophile species**, meaning it is **adapted to live in cave environments** but can also **survive in surface (epigean) waters**.
- Unlike most cave-dwelling species that **lose pigmentation and eyesight**, *S. densiclava* **retains both pigment and functional eyes**, allowing it to **adapt across environments**.

Habitat Characteristics

- The fish was found in a **cool, fast-flowing stream** about **60 meters inside** the **Krem Mawjymbuin cave**, where the **temperature was 18°C** and **oxygen levels were low**.
- The **cave's total surveyed length** is approximately **1.6 km**, and it is located at an altitude of **206 meters**.
- The fish's **habitat is subterranean**, indicating **specialized adaptations** to **low-light and low-oxygen** environments.

Morphological Features

- The body is **pale yellow-green** with **14-20 greyish black or faint black vertical bars**.
- A **thick dark stripe near the dorsal fin** inspired the name "***densiclava***", which translates to "**thick stripe**" in Latin.
- **Sexual dimorphism** is noted:
 - **Males** are **slimmer**, with **irregular patterns** and **puffier cheeks**.
 - **Females** are **sturdier**, with **more consistent markings**.

Endemism and Conservation Insight

- **Genetic testing** confirmed that *Schistura densiclava* is a **distinct, previously unrecorded species**.
- Its **distribution is restricted to a single cave**, indicating a high degree of **endemism**.
- It becomes Meghalaya's sixth known cave-dwelling fish species, highlighting the state's **rich subterranean biodiversity**.

Schistura densiclava FAQs

Q1: What is *Schistura densiclava*?

Ans: *Schistura densiclava* is a newly recorded species of freshwater stone loach fish found in the rivers of Meghalaya.

Q2: Where was *Schistura densiclava* recently identified?

Ans: It was recently recorded in the Mawjymbuin cave in the East Khasi Hills district in Meghalaya.

Q3: Which family does *Schistura densiclava* belong to?

Ans: It belongs to the family Nemacheilidae, commonly known as stone loaches.

Source: **TH**

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/schistura-densiclava/>

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