

**ORL-EB&C-02****Feeding Biology of The Torrent Catfish *Parachiloganis hodgarti* (Siluriformes: Sisoridae) in Nepal**

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Feeding biology can further understanding of the behavior and biological role of a species within an ecosystem, help to infer trophic level within the food web and aspects of energy flow, analyze relationships between predators and prey and indicate habitat quality and status. It is crucial for developing conservation and management strategies, especially in the face of depleting fishery stocks. A poorly studied fish species, *Parachiloganis hodgarti*, which is habitat specific and existing in isolated geographical locations in Nepal is indispensable for feeding biology studies.

We analyzed trophic anatomy, stomach contents, feeding intensity, trophic level, mouth-total length relationship, diet breadth and caudal fin aspect ratio of 60 specimens of the sisorid catfish *Parachiloganis hodgarti* from three locations in Nepal to research the species' feeding biology.

Aspects of trophic anatomy suggest that *P. hodgarti* depends more on taste than vision to search for prey on the stream bottom. A low caudal fin aspect ratio (1.58) corresponds to a low swimming speed, which may be advantageous for a benthic mode of feeding. Stomach content analysis revealed insect larvae Ephemeroptera, Plecoptera, Trichoptera and Diptera as the only items consumed. The genera *Baetis*, *Hydropsyche* and *Neoperla* had the highest index of relative importance. A low value of diet breadth (2.97) combined with a short alimentary canal (intestinal coefficient of 0.76) and the presence of protein digesting bacteria (*Citrobacter* and *Serratia*) in the gut indicate that *P. hodgarti* is a stenophagous carnivore, that specializes on insect larvae.



Figure: *Parachiloganis hodgarti* ('Telchapre' in Nepali) captured from Pharping, Nepal