

Threatened fishes of the world: *Trichomycterus chungaraensis* Arratia 1983 (Trichomycteridae)

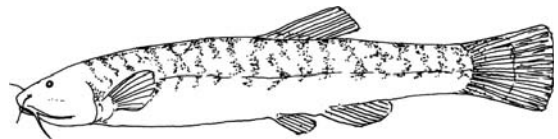
Rodrigo Pardo · Irma Vila

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Abstract *Trichomycterus chungaraensis* is an endemic and endangered fish from the south high Andean plateau; mainly due to its habitat total extension thus has been calculated to be 2,910 m² and inhabiting solely in Mal Paso stream, at the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and Lauca National Park.

Keywords Catfish · Altiplano · Endangered species · Lauca National Park

Common name: “bagre” (spanish); “suche” (aymara). **Conservation status:** *Trichomycterus chungaraensis* is considered endangered (CONAF 1993) and listed as Vulnerable (IUCN 1994). **Identification:** *Trichomycterus chungaraensis* (Figure: Cecilia Fernandez) is a small catfish, maximum length 120 mm, with caudal peduncle laterally compressed (Arratia 1983). **Distribution:** Endemic to Mal Paso stream, small affluent of Chungará lake (18°15.49' S; 69°11.35' W) above 4,500 m of altitude at the Altiplanic region, the habitat total extension is 2,910 m². A highway divides this stream; in the lower part *T. chungaraensis* is disappearing. Samples from the lake and other systems do not show *T. chungaraensis*.



Abundance: It shows a gradient of abundance from the higher rithral zone (3 ind. m⁻²) to their absence near the lake. **Habitat and ecology:** *Trichomycterus chungaraensis* is benthonic, inhabiting one shallow sandy bottom, small stream, with scarce vegetation. It feeds on larvae and adults of aquatic insects, amphipods and mollusks. Growth and reproduction are unknown. **Threats:** Its habitat belongs to a protected National Park, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, nevertheless tourism increment, associated to habitat perturbations, and Lake Chungará rainbow trout introductions are threatening this species. **Conservation actions:** Control of tourism in Mal Paso Stream, eradication of trout from the lake, and barriers to avoid salmonids upstream movements should be developed. **Remarks:** *Trichomycterus chungaraensis* is highly endemic with restricted distribution.

R. Pardo (✉) · I. Vila
Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad de Chile,
Las Palmeras 3425, Santiago, Chile
e-mail: rodrigo@abulafia.ciencias.uchile.cl

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