

Present and Historical Occurrence of Metazoan Parasites in *Neogobius kessleri* (Pisces: Gobiidae) in the Bulgarian Section of the Danube River

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Abstract: Metazoan parasites of bighead goby *Neogobius kessleri* (Gobiidae, Teleostei) collected from the Bulgarian section of the River Danube were investigated during 2005-2006. Seventeen parasite species were identified: *Triaenophorus crassus*, *Proteocephalus* sp., *Apophalus donicus*, *Diplostomum* sp., *Apatemon cobitidis proterorhini*, *Holostephanus cobitidis*, *Nicolla skrjabini*, *Pseudochetosoma salmonicola*, *Gyrodactylus proterorhini*, *Pomphorhynchus laevis*, *Pseudocapillaria tomentosa*, *Raphidascaris acus*, *Anguillicola crassus*, *Eustrongylides excisus*, *Streptocara crassicauda*, *Anodonta anatina* and *Pseudoanodonta complanata*. Parasite infection of *N. kessleri* in Bulgaria has previously been recorded only by *N. skrjabini*, *P. laevis* and *Contracoecum bidentatum*. We report fifteen new parasite species for *N. kessleri* in Bulgaria and a new host record for seven parasite species. The parasite community was characterised by the dominance of four species; *P. laevis*, *G. proterorhini*, *N. skrjabini* and *P. complanata* comprised over 97% of all parasites collected. The importance of bighead goby parasite fauna for parasite dispersal is discussed.

Key words: bighead goby, parasite diversity, helminth