

Russian common names of fishes

by Natalia Chaikina

Having Russian as my mother tongue, I was not surprised, when I asked Dr Pauly for a suitable Honours thesis topic, that he suggested that I develop a model for an ecosystem documented mainly in the Russian literature. Thus, I spent the summer assembling a model of the Sea of Okhotsk, West of the Kamchatka Peninsula.

While it took me a long time to get in contact with Russian scientists, it took me even longer to read over and translate all of the information they sent me. A specialized dictionary was required for this work, and Dr Pauly pointed out to me the existence of the excellent volume compiled by Ricker (1973). This very much helped me progress, and my model of the Sea of Okhotsk is now near completion. Moreover, it turned out that Ricker's dictionary included over 4400 Russian common names of fish, which I needed to access the information in FishBase (see www.fishbase.org). So, I ended my summer extracting and checking these names, which are now all in FishBase (properly linked to the current scientific names), and which will thus enable Russian scientists to access more easily and straightforwardly the information therein. As well, Ricker's English definition of Russian terms pertinent to fisheries and aquatic biology were added to the multilingual FishBase Glossary - another tool that Russian and other researchers will find useful. Quite a productive summer!

References

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Documenting the common names of Indonesian fishes

by Eny A. Buchary, Dewi S. Wahyuningsih and Daniel Pauly

Spanning the equator as the world's largest archipelago, Indonesia is a diverse country, both geographically and culturally. Its diversity is manifested both in its flora and fauna, and in the cultures of its people. Grimes (1996a, 1996b) and Grimes and Grimes (1996) in their *Ethnologue* (the most complete and accurate large scale database on languages of the world) listed 717 languages spoken in Indonesia, of which five have recently become extinct.

One result of this is that there is an enormous diversity of common names for the organisms with which people interact, which are expressed in a multitude of languages. This is especially so for fishes - a most speciose group.

With over 2,000 species of fish (Froese *et al.* 1996), the diversity of Indonesian fish species and common names is both a blessing and a curse. One attempt to confront the corresponding diversity of fish common names, and to make common names available to field workers, professionals and other 'users,' is the remarkable compilation by Schuster and Djajadiredja (1952), which includes 4,501 common names (plus a large number of spelling variants) and covers 845 species of fish, both marine and freshwater. Based as it is on the taxonomic work of M. Weber and L.F. de Beaufort (1911-1962), who described the bulk of the ichthyofauna of Southeast Asia, and numerous interviews throughout much of the Indonesian archipelago, the work of Schuster and Djajadiredja must remain the basis of any attempt to document the common names of Indonesian fishes. However, this work

is dated, and making it available to contemporary users is not a matter of distributing photocopies of the rare originals still available.

We report here on work we initiated several years ago to use FishBase (Froese and Pauly 2003) to update and disseminate the compilation of Schuster and Djajadiredja. This work included: (1) updating the old spelling of all common names, based on the orthography of modern Indonesian; (2) distinguishing spelling variants of a species within a given language and between languages; (3) identifying the language, as defined in Ruhlen 1991; Grimes 1996a, 1996b; and Grimes and Grimes 1996, based on the localities listed for that name, and (4) adding literal translation of fish common names, based on the first two authors' knowledge of, and/or familiarity with several local languages of the Indonesian archipelago, and local dictionaries.

The translation and verification component of the work was a Herculean task. Overall, we were able to acquire around 50 dictionaries of various Indonesian languages from UBC and other libraries, allowing checking and translation of about two thirds of the names in Schuster and Djajadiredja's list. Of these, half were incorporated in FishBase, while the other half will soon follow. We hope that the remaining one-third of the list, and other names, will become available through the initiative of FC Research Fellow Dr Tonny Wagey, who intends to work toward an 'official' list of common names of Indonesian

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fishes, similar to the North American list. This will require collaboration with Indonesian government institutions and universities, who, in return, will benefit from being able to use local names to access the rich information on Indonesian fishes in FishBase.

References

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