



## A short note on dace (*Leuciscus leuciscus*) in Someș River, Romania

<sup>1,2</sup> Tudor Păpuc

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Animal Sciences and Biotechnologies, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca, Romania; <sup>2</sup> Bioflux SRL, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Corresponding author: T. Păpuc, ptudor2008@yahoo.com

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**The Distribution and Taxonomy of the Common Dace.** The common dace (*Leuciscus leuciscus*) (Figure 1) is a member of the family Cyprinidae, sub-family Leuciscinae, genus *Leuciscus*. Its habitat spreads throughout Europe, having the IUCN Red List status of "least concern" (iucnredlist.org). However, in Romania, it is found only localized in some areas of the Danube (Kottelat & Freyhof 2007). However, there are some communications that small populations of dace do exist in tributaries. In Romania, the reporting of its presence is scarce. According to Bănărescu (1964), the common dace has been reported, though rarely, in Tisza, Someșul Mic (a tributary of Someș River) near Juc and Gherla, Mureș, Crișul Repede, Bega, Olt, Siret, Prut,, Beretău and Ialomița, all relatively large rivers of Romania (Bănărescu 1964; Cocan & Mireșan 2018).



Figure 1. The common dace (*Leuciscus leuciscus*). Source: Martin Chytrý, <https://www.biolib.cz/en/image/id151968/>.

**The Biology and Ecology of the Common Dace.** The dace is a small fish, inhabiting large rivers, with moderate to fast currents (fishbase.se). It prefers gravel substrates, where it also spawns in early spring, after performing migrations (Kottelat & Freyhof 2007). It usually reaches an average length of 15 cm. Its color is silver-gray, whitish

ventrally. Its upper jaw is slightly longer than the lower jaw. It reproduces once or twice during its lifetime, usually spanning around 10 years. It is a gregarious fish, preferring the company of fish of the same species, but also of nase (*Chondrostoma nasus*) or of chub (*Squalius cephalus*) (Bănărescu 1964). It is omnivorous.

**The Common Dace in the Someș River.** Sporadic catches of common dace have been reported in Someș River. However, the identification proves to be difficult, especially as anglers usually incorrectly identify the dace as chub, bleak (*Alburnus alburnus*), or even vimba bream (*Vimba vimba*) or nase, mainly because of its scarcity. Between 2015-2023, a number of 4 common dace were identified in Someș River, between the localities of Răstoci and Ciocmani (personal observations). The fish did not exceed 13 cm total length, and they were captured accidentally, while angling for other target species, using housefly maggots or sweetcorn as hook bait. All specimens were safely released. The presence in the Someș River may be due to prior existing small populations, surviving habitat changes (especially from substrate changing from gravel to clay or mud due to quarry activities, or repeated pollutions in the last decades). Another hypothesis is the migration from the Hungarian sector of Someș River (Szamos), as the common dace is known to perform migrations (Kottelat & Freyhof 2007). Before 2000, the common dace was reported in the Hungarian sector of Someș River; however, after a pollution event, the population disappeared (Bănărescu et al 1999; Antal et al 2013). The river Tisza still has stable populations of common dace, from where it can migrate (Hamar & Sárkány-Kiss 1999).

**The Importance of the Common Dace.** Due its small size and rarity in Romania, the common dace has no economic importance. However, it has ecological importance, and in other places, such as UK, it has a great value for anglers, being a course fishing target.

**Conclusions.** The common dace, although rare, can still be found in Romania. Its presence in Someș River has been confirmed through personal observations. The species faced periodic pollution, and still faces changes of habitat. It is usually mistakenly identified as other species of cyprinids, more common in the catch area.

**Conflict of Interest.** The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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Author:

Tudor Păpuc, Faculty of Animal Science and Biotechnologies, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, 3-5 Calea Mănăştur Street, 400372 Cluj-Napoca, Cluj County, Romania, European Union, e-mail: ptudor2008@yahoo.com

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