

Submission date. 13/02/2026

Associate editor's decision after peer review (04/05/2026).

Dear Dr. Calegari:

Manuscript ID NI-2026-0022 entitled "A new species of spiny miniature driftwood catfish *Spinipterus* (Siluriformes: Auchenipteridae) from the Madeira River system, Amazon basin, Brazil" which you submitted to the Neotropical Ichthyology, has been reviewed. The comments of the reviewer(s) are included at the bottom of this letter.

The reviewer(s) have recommended publication, but also suggest some minor revisions to your manuscript. Therefore, I invite you to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise your manuscript.

To revise your manuscript, log into <https://mc04.manuscriptcentral.com/ni-scielo> and enter your Author Center, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

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You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Please also highlight the changes to your manuscript within the document by using the track changes mode in MS Word or by using bold or colored text.

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When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to respond to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript. In order to expedite the processing of the revised manuscript, please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s). IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to the Neotropical Ichthyology, your revised manuscript should be submitted before 04-Jun-2026. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision by this date, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to the Neotropical Ichthyology and I look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,

Marcelo Britto

Associate Editor, Neotropical Ichthyology
mrbritto2002@yahoo.com.br

Anonymous reviewer #1

Recommendation. Major Revision

Comments. O manuscrito "A new species of spiny miniature driftwood catfish..." é uma excelente peça de trabalho taxonômico, bem escrito e bem apresentado, e praticamente todas as minhas correções são de forma ou de linguagem. Revisei uma cópia impressa do manuscrito, que segue escaneado. As principais sugestões estão abaixo, por número de página/linha.

2/22 e 48: Palavras-chave em ordem alfabética

3/3: atualizar Fricke et al. para 2026

3/26 e muitos outros lugares. Os autores usam Madeira River (em inglês) e Rio Guaporé (em português) de forma misturada ao longo do manuscrito. Escolher uma forma e usar sempre. Se for inglês deve ser Madeira River (River com inicial maiúscula); se for português, deve ser rio Madeira (rio com minúscula).

5/24: Porque os peixes da UFRO não são parátipos? Há dúvida sobre a conspecificidade? Explicar em Remarks, conforme recomendação do ICZN.

8/15: Fish have no thorax... abdomen begins after the head.

9/30: Acho que o substantivo latino é cuniculum, e a forma a adjetivada fica cuniculus... se a espécie for transferida para um gênero feminino, deverá ficar cunicula...

11/ 33-38: Comparar o colorido de *Spinipterus moijiri* com *Liosomadoras oncinus*, dessa forma, é irrelevante, pois eles pertencem a gêneros diferentes e não são diretamente relacionados. Ou seja, é bastante óbvio que a semelhança é devida a homoplasia...

Fig. 1. Não são necessárias letras para distinguir as vistas dorsal, lateral e ventral...

Fig. 1 e 2: Adicionar a localidade abreviada nas legendas.

Fig. 4. Tem certeza que ocorrem duas espécies juntas no Ucayali próximo a Iquitos? Vocês examinaram os dois bichos? Além disso, há pontos no mapa sem material comparativo examinado correspondente... de onde saíram as localidades?

Tabela 2: Não repetir a distância genética acima da diagonal... Se preferir, pode colocar ali o desvio padrão.

Parabéns aos autores! Roberto Reis

Anonymous reviewer #2

Recommendation. Major Revision

Comments. This is a nice manuscript describing a nice tiny new catfish of the family Auchenipteridae. I only have relatively minor comments, all relating to issues with written version of the English language. Should be easy to fix. These are listed below.

The only major comment that I provide here, and it is really more of a suggestion for improvement. The authors describe a number of osteological characters in the text (e.g., shape and extent of cranial fontanelle, pectoral-fin spine ornamentation) but they make no attempt to illustrate any of these characters. Perhaps they have been illustrated before in the literature, and if so at the very least the authors could point the reader to these papers (e.g., see figure ? in _____, ???).

Minor comments.

Title: the authors use the term "miniature" in the title but I recommend to replace with another term that means small, e.g., diminutive or even small-bodied. I suggest this because use of miniature in ichthyology is frequently linked to Weitzman & Vari's strict definition. Of course the new species would not meet this definition, so would not be considered miniature according to Weitzman and Vari. Not a big deal, but I instantly thought that this would be a micro-catfish (<26 mm SL) based on the title. Perhaps others will think the same. Just a suggestion.

Pg. 3, L39: "...likely a result of the species' cryptic behavior..." Species should always be treated in the singular. Avoid use of plural possessive.

Pg 7, L38: "Pelvic fin inserted short before vertical through approximately middle of SL." Might need some rewording here. E.G., "Pelvic fin insertion located slightly anterior to vertical through midpoint of body" or similar. The issue here is the current use of the word "short" I think.

Pg 7, L53-58: "Total vertebrae 42 to 43 (2) (compound centrum including 8 vertebra + 33 to 34 free vertebra + compound caudal complex), compound centrum including up to eighth vertebra, pleural ribs 7, first pleural rib on seventh vertebrae." Inconsistencies in sentence. First it is stated that there are 8 in the CC then up to 8. Is it 8 or fewer? Please clarify? Why not just use "ribs" instead of "pleural ribs"?

Pg 8, L 59-60: "attached along the entire length anteriorly to the first anal fin ray", suggest to reword "anteriorly to" is slightly awkward.

Pg 11, L9-10: "...hindered a better understanding of the genus' diversity and distribution." Pleural possessive here. Genus is singular. Genera is plural. The authors need to reword this sentence to correct the grammar, e.g., ".....hindered understanding of the species diversity and distribution of the genus."

PG 11, L20-21: "Their use of narrow deep tunnels within the substrate for shelter and the

possible benthic insectivory habit points...." Suggest to reword here. e.g., "Their use of narrow deep tunnels within the substrate for shelter and possible insectivorous diet points...."

Pg 11, L43: "...within Auchenipterinae with its origin dating from Miocene about 20 mya." Suggest slight rewording here to "...within Auchenipterinae with its origin dating to the Miocene, approx. 20 mya."

Pg. 11, L46-48: "and needs additional surveys with particular sampling methods aiming for additional unknown species of the genus." suggest rewrite to: "and additional surveys using specialized sampling methods are likely to result in the discovery of additional species." I think this is what the authors mean here.

Pg 12, L 36: "may constitute a key factor in the species' " - another pleural possessive here. Species is always singular and can not be modified to pleural. If they mean more than one species then write species of this genus of species of Spinipterus. Reword (but avoid using "Spinipterus species").

Figure 1 caption reads "mature male" but Figure 2 caption reads only "male". Are the males in figure 2 immature? Perhaps slight modification of caption is needed to clarify this.

Author's Rebuttal Letter (01/06/2026).

Caro Marcelo,

Segue abaixo as sugestões dos referees, e em escrita azul, a forma como tratamos cada uma.

Esperamos que após estas correções o manuscrito esteja adequado para a NI.

Um abraço,

Abraço,

Bárbara, Jansen, William e Akama

Reviewer: 1

Recommendation: Minor Revision

Comments:

O manuscrito "A new species of spiny miniature driftwood catfish..." é uma excelente peça de trabalho taxonômico, bem escrito e bem apresentado, e praticamente todas as minhas correções são de forma ou de linguagem. Revisei uma cópia impressa do manuscrito, que segue escaneado. As principais sugestões estão abaixo, por número de página/linha.

2/22 e 48: Palavras-chave em ordem alfabética

Organizado em ordem alfabética, obrigado!

3/3: atualizar Fricke et al. para 2026

Atualizado.

3/26 e muitos outros lugares. Os autores usam Madeira River (em inglês) e Rio Guaporé (em português) de forma misturada ao longo do manuscrito. Escolher uma forma e usar sempre. Se for inglês deve ser Madeira River (River com inicial maiúscula); se for português, deve ser rio Madeira (rio com minúscula).

O manuscrito foi revisado e as menções a nomes de rios foram padronizados para “River”, uma vez que estava mais consistente o uso do mesmo ao longo do texto.

5/24: Porque os peixes da UFRO não são parátipos? Há dúvida sobre a conspecificidade? Explicar em Remarks, conforme recomendação do ICZN.

Adicionado remarks e os exemplares foram listados como “affinis” em material comparativo.

8/15: Fish have no thorax... abdomen begins after the head.

Verdade! Descuido. Corrigido no texto.

9/30: Acho que o substantivo latino é cuniculum, e a forma a adjetivada fica cuniculus... se a espécie for transferida para um gênero feminino, deverá ficar cunicula...

O gênero é masculino e mantivemos cuniculus. No entanto corrigimos para “An adjective”. Obrigada

11/ 33–38: Comparar o colorido de *Spinipterus mojiri* com *Liosomadoras oncinus*, dessa forma, é irrelevante, pois eles pertencem a gêneros diferentes e não são diretamente relacionados. Ou seja, é bastante óbvio que a semelhança é devida a homoplasia...

Concordamos. Frase foi removida do texto, não alterando a continuidade.

Fig. 1. Não são necessárias letras para distinguir as vistas dorsal, lateral e ventral...

Letras removidas da legenda e da figura.

Fig. 1 e 2: Adicionar a localidade abreviada nas legendas.

Adicionado em ambas figuras.

Fig. 4. Tem certeza que ocorrem duas espécies juntas no Ucayali próximo a Iquitos?

Vocês examinaram os dois bichos? Além disso, há pontos no mapa sem material comparativo examinado correspondente... de onde saíram as localidades?

O registro da espécie *S. mojiri* no Ucayali vem do artigo original de descrição. Analisamos para este artigo apenas *S. acsi* (todo material existente em coleção) e *S. mojiri* do rio Purus; demais localidades adicionadas no mapa provenientes do artigo de descrição original da espécie. Adicionamos esta informação na legenda do mapa.

Tabela 2: Não repetir a distância genética acima da diagonal... Se preferir, pode colocar ali o desvio padrão.

Corrigido.

Parabéns aos autores! Roberto Reis

Muito obrigada Roberto! Correções importantes para a melhora da qualidade da escrita!

Reviewer: 2

Recommendation: Minor Revision

Comments:

This is a nice manuscript describing a nice tiny new catfish of the family Auchenipteridae. I only have relatively minor comments, all relating to issues with written version of the English language. Should be easy to fix. These are listed below.

Thank you very much for the contributions to improve the language and quality of the manuscript.

The only major comment that I provide here, and it is really more of a suggestion for improvement. The authors describe a number of osteological characters in the text (e.g., shape and extent of cranial fontanelle, pectoral-fin spine ornamentation) but they make no attempt to illustrate any of these characters. Perhaps they have been illustrated before in the literature, and if so at the very least the authors could point the reader to these papers (e.g., see figure ? in _____, ???).

We agree that it is important to illustrate, so a photo of the head was added in the manuscript, Figure 3–New.

Minor comments.

Title: the authors use the term "miniature" in the title but I recommend to replace with another term that means small, e.g., diminutive or even small-bodied. I suggest this because use of miniature in ichthyology is frequently linked to Weitzman & Vari's strict definition. Of course the new species would not meet this definition, so would not be considered miniature according to Weitzman and Vari. Not a big deal, but I instantly thought that this would be a micro-catfish (<26 mm SL) based on the title. Perhaps others will think the same. Just a suggestion.

We understand that there is the concept of "miniaturization" suggested by Weitzman and Vari, however after many years we know based on several new cases that miniaturization is not only related to the body size- which was suggested as hypothesis for the above mentioned authors at this time, but to the overall bone reductions and truncations on the body and head, and additionally the diminutive body size related to the usual body size within the family. So, miniature term does not need necessarily follow Weitzman and Vari definition; adults of the new species has about 1cm more than the proposed definition, however, we are here accepting you suggestion to replace in the title the word miniature for diminutive.

Pg. 3, L39: "....likely a result of the species' cryptic behavior..." Species should always be treated in the singular. Avoid use of plural possessive.

Thank you! We have corrected!

Pg 7, L38: "Pelvic fin inserted short before vertical through approximately middle of SL." Might need some rewording here. E.G., "Pelvic fin insertion located slightly anterior to vertical through midpoint of body" or similar. The issue here is the current use of the word "short" I think.

We adjust the sentence, although we kept "middle of SL" since is more accurate than "midpoint of body". Thanks!

Pg 7, L53-58: "Total vertebrae 42 to 43 (2) (compound centrum including 8 vertebra + 33 to 34 free vertebra + compound caudal complex), compound centrum including up to eighth vertebra, pleural ribs 7, first pleural rib on seventh vertebrae." Inconsistencies in sentence. First it is stated that there are 8 in the CC then up to 8. Is it 8 or fewer? Please clarify? Why not just use "ribs" instead of "pleural ribs"?

We have adjusted the phrase since the information about the CC was described twice, removing "compound centrum including up to eighth vertebra". There is no variation according to our knowledge, so *S. cuniculus* has the complex centrum extended to the vertebra 8 (including the 8v.).

Pg 8, L 59-60: "attached along the entire length anteriorly to the first anal fin ray", suggest to reword "anteriorly to" is slightly awkward.

It is a standardize way to describe this sexual character in auchenipterids, and "anteriorly" is representing the position of the intromittent organ related to the anal-fin rays, thus we kept the sentence as it is.

Pg 11, L9-10: "....hindered a better understanding of the genus' diversity and distribution." Plural possessive here. Genus is singular. Genera is plural. The authors need to reword this sentence to correct the grammar, e.g., ".....hindered understanding of the species diversity and distribution of the genus."

Phrase adjusted.

PG 11, L20-21: "Their use of narrow deep tunnels within the substrate for shelter and the

possible benthic insectivory habit points...." Suggest to reword here. e.g., "Their use of narrow deep tunnels within the substrate for shelter and possible insectivorous diet points...."

We adjust for "benthic insectivorous diet"; thanks!

Pg 11, L43: "....within Auchenipterinae with its origin dating from Miocene about 20 mya." Suggest slight rewording here to "...within Auchenipterinae with its origin dating to the Miocene, approx. 20 mya."

We rephrased as suggested.

Pg. 11, L46-48: "and needs additional surveys with particular sampling methods aiming for additional unknown species of the genus." suggest rewrite to: "and additional surveys using specialized sampling methods are likely to result in the discovery of additional species." I think this is what the authors mean here.

Thank you! The phrase has quite improved. We rephrased as suggested.

Pg 12, L 36: "may constitute a key factor in the species' " – another plural possessive here. Species is always singular and can not be modified to plural. If they mean more than one species then write species of this genus of species of *Spinipterus*. Reword (but avoid using "Spinipterus species").

We have corrected; thanks!

Figure 1 caption reads "mature male" but Figure 2 caption reads only "male". Are the males in figure 2 immature? Perhaps slight modification of caption is needed to clarify this.

No, I do not think they are immature, but neither we can assume they are mature. Because they are smaller-sized individuals we prefer do not assume any developmental state.

Associate editor's decision after peer review (18/06/2026).

Dear Dr. Calegari:

Manuscript ID NI-2026-0022.R1 entitled "A new species of diminutive spiny driftwood catfish *Spinipterus* (Siluriformes: Auchenipteridae) from the Madeira River system, Amazon basin, Brazil" which you submitted to the Neotropical Ichthyology, has been reviewed.

There are some minor revisions to your manuscript. Therefore, I invite you to respond to my comments (attached file) and revise your manuscript. I also recommend to rename figure files according to ms legends, to avoid any confusion with the same number for different figures (eg, Figs. 3 and 5).

To revise your manuscript, log into <https://mc04.manuscriptcentral.com/ni-scielo> and enter your Author Center, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

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IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to the Neotropical Ichthyology, your revised manuscript should be submitted before 19-Jul-2026. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision by this date, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to the Neotropical Ichthyology and I look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,

Marcelo Britto

Associate Editor, Neotropical Ichthyology

mrbritto2002@yahoo.com.br

Author's Rebuttal Letter (28/06/2026).

Prezado editor Marcelo,

Obrigada pelas correções.

Nós concordamos e aceitamos todas as poucas correções sugeridas no texto.

Enviamos as versões com track changes e uma "limpa" com tudo aceito.

Abraço,

Bárbara

Associate editor's decision after peer review (30/06/2026).

Dear Dr. Calegari:

It is a pleasure to accept your manuscript entitled "A new species of diminutive spiny driftwood catfish *Spinipterus* (Siluriformes: Auchenipteridae) from the Madeira River system, Amazon basin, Brazil" in its current form for publication in the Neotropical Ichthyology.

Congratulations for the acceptance of your article, and be aware on the following topics:

1. Publication Fee

NI will charge a publication fee if none of the co-authors is an active SBI member. This measure is essential to strengthen SBI and thus ensure the continuity of our journal, scientific society, and biannual meetings. SBI is not limited to Brazilians but is open to anyone interested in freshwater and marine Neotropical fishes. More details on SBI are available at <https://www.sbi.bio.br/>. Please email tesouraria.sbi@gmail.com to confirm whether any of your co-authors is a current SBI member and to activate your SBI membership if needed. Otherwise, if you will cover the publication fee of R\$1.000, please inform us at the same email. For authors outside Brazil, the fee will be converted to US dollars based on the official exchange rate on the date of payment. The only exceptions to this fee are invited articles.

2. Science Communication and Social Media

NI actively promotes published articles to both academic colleagues and the general public, including science journalists. To support this, we create social media posts and require images and/or videos of fish related to your work. If your article does not include such images, please send a photo of a representative fish species, preferably alive in its natural habitat. If you do not have your own photo, you may provide a link to an online image, along with the source, author, and, if applicable, authorization for its use. We also publish video summaries of articles in Portuguese on our Instagram (@neoichth). We ask you to designate one author to record a short video using a mobile phone, following the attached instructions. The video should include visual materials (photos, graphics) and a script for subtitles to enhance accessibility. Please email the completed material to our Social Media Editor, Igor Souto-Santos, at icass.ufjf@gmail.com within 30 days.

Additionally, if your article is taxonomic in nature and has been submitted to Zoobank, it is your responsibility to update the manuscript's status on Zoobank once it has been published.

All of the above information and materials are mandatory for the publication of your article, including the scientific dissemination component, which is crucial in the current climate of science denial and misinformation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at neoichth@nupelia.uem.br.

Please send an e-mail to neoichth@nupelia.uem.br within five working days to let us know you are aware of all the important points mentioned above.

Thank you for your fine contribution. On behalf of the Editors of the Neotropical Ichthyology, we look forward to your continued contributions to the Journal.

Sincerely,

Marcelo Britto

Associate Editor, Neotropical Ichthyology

mrbritto2002@yahoo.com.br

Neotropical Ichthyology

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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

- **Calegari BB, Ohara WM, Akama A, Zuanon J.** A new species of diminutive spiny driftwood catfish *Spinipterus* (Siluriformes: Auchenipteridae) from the Madeira River system, Amazon basin, Brazil. *Neotrop Ichthyol.* 2026; 24(3):e260022. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-0224-2026-0022>



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