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[\[Wildlife Conservation\] China Fishers' Cross-border Fishing Makes the Valuable Species Wenchan Fish Publicly Recognized](#)

[Wildlife Conservation] China Fishers' Cross-border Fishing Makes the Valuable Species Wenchan Fish Publicly Recognized ([Chinese Version](#))

Udn.com & EpochTimes (2009/09/12) Taiwan Offshore Flotilla 9 (Kinmen), Coast Guard Administration, seized 62 fishers from Xiamen who came to fish for "wenchan fish" beyond the border. Wenchan fish, whose length is shorter than 5 cm, is actually not fish; it is a living fossil, the ancestor of the vertebrates five hundred million years ago. Because of the cross-border event, the precious creature in Taiwan ocean drew people's attention.

Wenchan fish's anatomy diagram (cited from the Fish Database of Taiwan, Alexander 1975)

Wenchan fish (cited from Wikipedia)

Wenchan (*Branchiostoma lanceolatum*, its Chinese name stands for the star god as well as personality god of literature Wenchang) is threadlike, with two pointed ends and white, translucent body. Its length is usually less than 5 cm and easily mistaken for eel fry. Chief of Conservation Research Section, Kinmen National Park Headquarters, Tien-huo CHIOU said, wenchan is biologically classified as cephalochordata subphylum under chordata; it is actually not fish. There are, *ibid.*, only 22 species, two genera and one family of wenchan in the world. In evolution, its position is between invertebrates and vertebrates; it still preserves the features of the ancestor of vertebrates five hundred million years ago. Being a living fossil, wenchan is significant and valuable with regard to the study of biological evolution for its demonstrating the origin of modern vertebrates.

The sea area between Kinmen and Xiamen is the main habitat of wenchan; Liuwudian in Xiamen was once the major fishery whose catch could reach over one hundred tons per year. Due to the seawall construction, the ecological environment in Xiamen has been seriously damaged; added is the commercial fishing. Hence wenchan in China is endangered and listed as animals under the second class state protection. China government has also established protection area in Xiamen in order to study and conserve the species. Kinmen National Park Headquarters pointed out, wenchan fish lives in coastal waters and is very sensitive to the environment and the water quality, due to which wenchan is often regarded as an ecological index. That China fishers need to step beyond the border and fish for wenchan in Taiwan's sea area indicates Kinmen sea area is uncontaminated. Kinmen National Park Headquarters thus suggested to list wenchan fish as the animals under protection and as the prior target of investigation.

Further Information:

[digitalarchives.tw-the Fish Database of Taiwan: Wenchan](#) (Chinese)

[Udn.com 2009/09/12](#) (Chinese)

[EpochTimes 2009/09/12](#) (Chinese)

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