

***Lepanthes branchifera* Luer & Vásquez, sp. nov.**

Planta parva, racemo flexuoso folio late elliptico obtuso multilongiore, sepalo dorsali synsepaloque concavis acutis cum carinis et marginibus anguste revolutis leviter erosis, petalis inaequaliter bilobis, lobo superiore setiformi, lobo inferiore longi-ciliato, labelli laminis anguste oblongis, columna angustissima elongata.

Plant small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Secondary stems erect, slender, 2.5-4.5 cm long, enclosed by 5-6 long-ciliate lepanthiform sheaths with markedly dilated ostia. Leaf erect, coriaceous, broadly elliptical, obtuse, 12-15 mm long, 8-10 mm wide, the base broadly cuneate into the petiole 2-3 mm long. Inflorescence a weak, lightly flexuous, successively flowered raceme up to 5 cm long including the filiform peduncle 1-2.5 cm long; floral bract 1 mm long; pedicel 1.25 mm long; ovary 1.25 mm long; dorsal sepal peach colored, ovate, acute, shortly acuminate, deeply concave, 4 mm long, 2 mm wide unspread, the carinae and the narrowly everted margins lightly erose, connate to the lateral sepals for 1 mm; lateral sepals yellow, suffused with red centrally, completely connate into a cymbiform, ovate, acute lamina 3.5 mm long, 2.5 mm wide unexpanded, the carinae and margins similarly narrowly revolute and lightly erose; petals yellow, transversely bilobed, 1 mm long, 4 mm wide, connate to the column between the basal and middle thirds, the upper lobe setiform, the lower lobe much larger, narrowly triangular, attenuate, long-ciliate along the inner margin; lip bright rose, the blades thin, translucent, glabrous, narrowly oblong, 1.25 mm long, the ends obtuse, the connectives cuneate, connate to the column between the distal and middle thirds, the appendix a membranous triangle in the sinus; column very slender, 2 mm long, minutely pubescent, the anther dorsal, the stigma ventral.

Etymology: From the Latin *branchiae*, "the gills of a fish," and *-fer*, "bearing," referring to the appearance of the lower lobes of the petals.

Type: *BOLIVIA*: COCHABAMBA: Prov. of Chapare: epiphytic in cloud forest between Cochabamba and Villa Tunari, alt. 1950 m, 26 Nov. 1978, *C. Luer, F. Fuchs et al. 3506* (Holotype: SEL).

The dorsal sepal and synsepal gape to expose long-ciliate petals hanging to either side of the lip like gills while the narrow, pointed upper lobes crisscross above. Both the petals and the lip are connected to the very long, slender shaft of the column.