

□ Discussion at the December meeting focussed upon two items: the flat back catfish (*Neosilurus*) and how to highlight the colours of native fishes.

Flat back catfish (*Neosilurus*)

Among the points raised by members were the following: Take care when collecting this species; there are several colour variations; very difficult to sex; breeding in captivity unknown; very active fish; rarely seen or caught in daylight; in the wild they shoal at night; feed on anything in captivity.

Highlighting colours in natives

For rainbow fish: these are best kept in their own tanks, since some species tend to dominate others (although some work well together, e.g. McCulloch's and *Nigrans*); heat brings out colours; heavily planted tanks are essential; dark gravel and dark backgrounds are important; security is essential; appropriate food brings out the best; full-spectrum fluorescent lights are recommended and these should be located towards the front of the tank.

For Empirefish: colour varies with the time of day and the type of food provided - prawns are good.

For gudgeons: frequent water changes enhance colours.

BOOKS

Australian Freshwater Fishes

John S. Lake, Nelson, Melbourne, 1978, 160pp.

This was the first comprehensive work on Australian freshwater fish. Intended as an easy to use field guide, it isn't technical, and is quite brief.

Where the information was available, notes under the headings of distribution (by use of drainage divisions), breeding, food/

feeding, and general comments (eg. good eating or angling, potential as aquarium display) are given. However, due to the lack of much information, some notes are missing for many species (breeding in particular).

Further taxonomic work on our freshwater fish, resulting in changes in nomenclature, since the book's publishing, and the discovery of many new species, make the book largely obsolete.

All species discussed are illustrated (most in colour photographs), and full cross-referencing is provided. A list of marine species which commonly enter freshwater, along with some freshwater species known from only a few specimens, is given. One annoying feature of the publication is that the photographs of fish described in the book appear elsewhere in the book - separated from the text.

Being superseded by more recent publications, the book is of little use as a means of identification, but some of the comments on life history and behaviour make interesting reading.

- Chris Marshall

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Northern Territory Adventure

I recently had the good fortune to travel to the Northern Territory and sample the rivers and creeks. Not only was there a rich supply of fish life, but also an abundance of birds and native animals.

One of our first stops was Palm Valley just outside Alice Springs where we found schools of *M. S. tati*, *Amniataba percoides* and *Leiopatheron*. The last two species of fish were found together in most rivers and pools sampled.

As we journeyed north we came to the river which was the habitat for the number one fish on my list - *Quirichthys stramineus*