

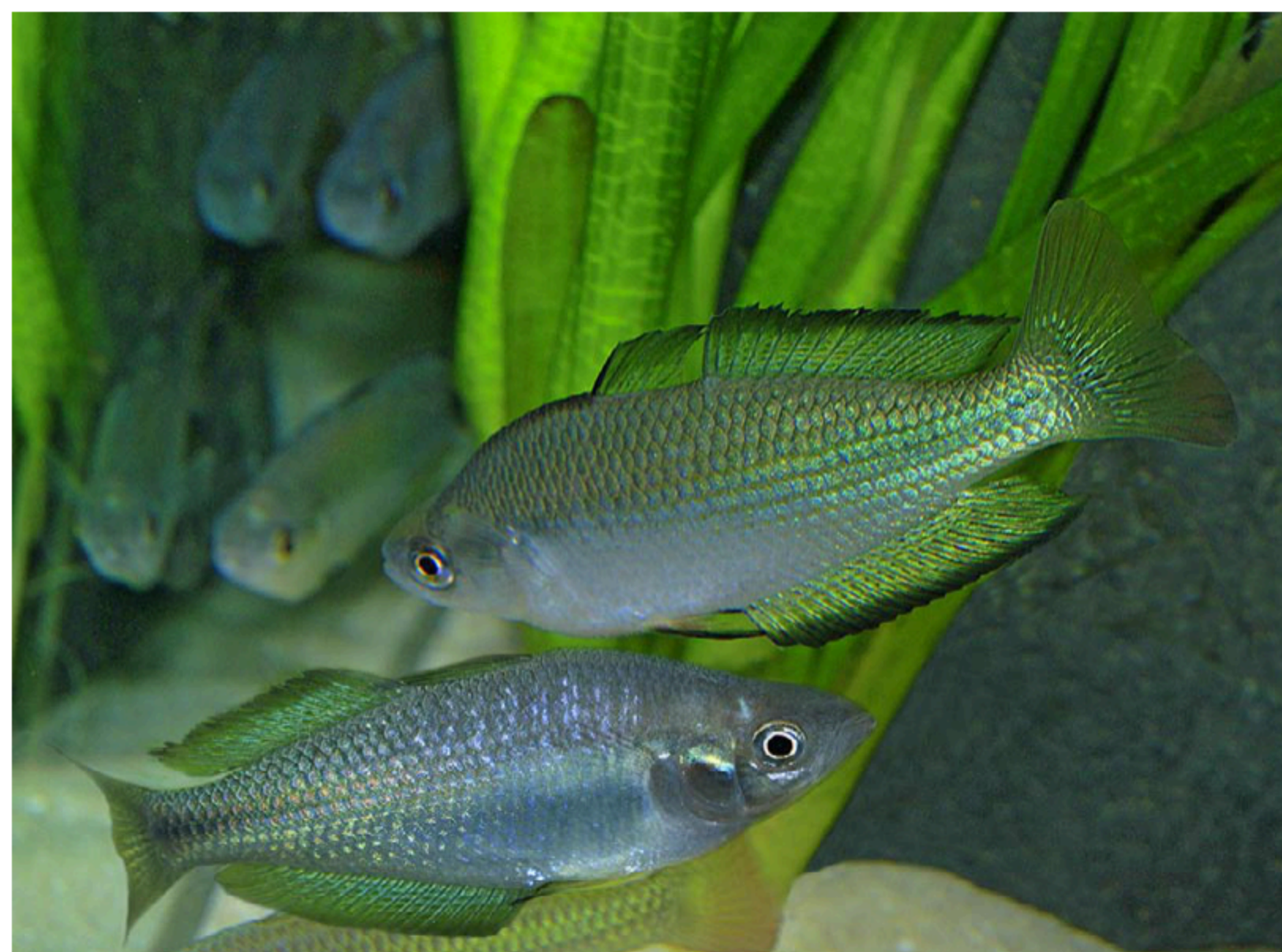
are very diverse (and they are), but the wet tropics of Australia has 5000 species! Change is happening in our environment at an alarming rate via climate change increased population pressure and reduction of water quality. A salutary warning.

Mike Hammer also mentioned A.R. Wallace as his next talk was about an area that Wallace would have been around. In a way he was doing similar work, collecting and identifying specimens that were often new to science. The specific area of Mike's work was the Hindenberg Wall, an area of amazing steepness roughly in the middle of the PNG-Irian Jaya boundary. This area has a rainfall of about nine metres per annum, so Mike was working in mud for most of this trip. He was collecting fish and even got a 15cm *M. oktediensis*. However, there were other species as well, many previously unknown to science, although the locals knew what they were. There were damselflies, giant rats, bats, prawns, frogs grasshoppers, skinks, geckoes, highland catfish and even a 'magic fish' (a giant gudgeon).

Heiko was the last speaker and his explorations are always thrilling, in part because of the dangers involved and in part because of the things he finds. This time most of his talk was about Aru Island, an area of spectacular limestone (karst) scenery. The tropical rainforest and the fish in the streams were amazing. The range of species in a small area was significant. As usual, the photography was marvellous and it was hard not to feel just a little jealous of those European aquarists that have access to the fish Heiko has brought back with him. Two of his stories evoked quite different responses. One was of a Japanese family that was just recently discovered living in a cave. They thought World War 2 was still going on!

The second was of a permit that has been granted for a sugar cane plantation to replace the pristine rainforest on most of Aru Island. The island is 650,000 ha. The plantation is proposed to be 500,000 ha! There is just so much wrong with this, it is incomprehensible.

To come back to the Convention though, everything worked well, the presentations were of an excellent standard and the atmosphere



was very friendly and positive. Comments were made about the newness of the material. Others, reluctant to single out any one thing, liked the variety.

So well done to all of the organisers, the presenters, the sponsors and to the participants.

Roll on Sydney 2015. A very grateful — Cuz

Book review *(Glenn Briggs)*

TITLE: *Ecology of Australian Freshwater Fishes*

AUTHORS: Numerous (Edited by Paul Humpheries and Keith Walker)

ISBN: 9780643097438

PUBLISHER: CSIRO Publishing

PAGES: 440

PRICE: \$130

COVER: Hard 27 x 21 cm

ARTWORK: Monochrome photographs and line drawings.

This book is not really subject to your "standard" ANGFA News book review, as this is certainly not a new book of more typically reviewed subjects such as identifying fish of Australia or New Guinea, or how to keep natives in aquaria etc.

This book is probably primarily aimed at science students, no doubt aquarists or natural history buffs were not even considered as

potential target readers. But nevertheless any native fish enthusiast will find a huge amount of interesting information in this book, particularly as it covers many aspects of our fishes' natural history and the influence of the Australian environment on our fishes, aspects that we often don't stop to contemplate.

You will also find out why did the Spangled Perch cross the road (i.e. swim across a flooded road) – who said scientists don't have a sense of humour!

With 423 pages in total, this book comprises 13 chapters, each chapter done by separate contributors. Many of these chapter authors are well known to ANGFA members because of past contributions to ANGFA and our publications or have contributed many scientific papers (eg Mike Hammer, Peter Unmack, John Koehn, Angela Arthington etc.).

A list of the chapters is listed below, this gives some indication of what sort of topics are discussed in this book. You will not find a lot of "pretty pictures" in this book (in fact, no colour photos at all), but you will find a lot of intriguing information on the ecology of our native fishes, with many black and white photographs, diagrams and tables, to help explain significant points of each chapter. But readers with non-scientific backgrounds are warned – a dictionary of scientific terms is a great help when reading this book!

Chapter 1 The ecology of Australian freshwater fishes: an introduction

Chapter 2 Biogeography

Chapter 3 Evolutionary processes and biodiversity

Chapter 4 Habitats

Chapter 5 Movements and migration

Chapter 6 Trophic ecology

Chapter 7 Reproduction and early life history

Chapter 8 Age and growth

Chapter 9 Dynamics of population

Chapter 10 Assemblages

Ecology of Australian Freshwater Fishes



Editors: Paul Humphries and Keith Walker

Chapter 11 Fishes from elsewhere

Chapter 12 Conservation and management

Chapter 13 Looking ahead

"Spangled Perch crossing the road" answer: It is in their genes! (It has a very strong urge to disperse far and wide as soon as flood waters arrive.)