

with, is unlikely to induce many to leave their comfortable warm water. So in winter keeping the traps right up at the surface is more likely to give results. (The exception as we will soon see, is where the trap can be positioned right up against a section of overhanging bank.)

When the sun has gone down, the chilly night air rapidly cools the surface water out in mid-stream. However there is one part of the underwater surface not exposed to this chilly night air. That's the water surface underneath overhanging banks. The best of these overhanging banks are invariably below streamside trees, where the roots stabilise the bank, allowing earth from below to be eroded while the earth around the tree stays in place.

During the day warm surface water moves into these under bank hiding places, and tends to stay warmer relative to the rest of the stream during the night. So under the banks is a prime comfort zone for fish day or night.

So when you stand on the bank looking at a stream amazingly short of visible fish, you may well be standing right on top of them. A frame net, not too big pushed in under the bank is likely to come up with results in winter. Sections of bank with heavy grasses hanging over the edge into the water are likely to produce top results.

Enticing fish to take an interest.

How frustrating is it to have plenty of rainbows in sight, swimming about in the warmed surface layer midstream, taking no interest in your offerings in the trap, and easily dodging your efforts with a frame net?

Have you thought about taking a leaf out of those fishing for the table and sport? Particularly in winter catches can be poor unless a bit of berleying is carried out to attract the fish nearer the baited hooks. Had some flake food going a bit stale that you stopped using, leaving a bit in the container? Got some stale bread from home, or leftovers, which might attract fish? How about some of the same berley concoctions the chain stores sell to fishermen? Get some berley out to the edges of where the fish are swimming about, and then back near where you are, to drag them in to find more.

Transporting Fish

One of the key advantages of collecting fish in winter is that it is a far better time to transport captured fish than summer. The fish are coming out of cooler water, and are less likely to be subjected to wide water temperature variations, and are therefore likely to be far less stressed. They also are naturally less dependent on continual feeding at this time of year, and can easily survive days without feeding, and have less digested food to purge into the water.

So all in all, it's a very good time to keep exploring the streams. Sure you tootsies get a bit chilly, but it's worth it. 🐟

Book Review

TITLE	FISHES OF THE LAKE EYRE CATCHMENT OF CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
AUTHOR	ROB WAGER & PETER J. UNMACK
EDITION	2001
ISBN	0 7345 01242
PUBLISHER	Queensland Department of Primary Industries
PAGES	88
SIZE	approx. 17X25 cm
PRICE	about \$25.00
COVER	Soft
ARTWORK	Mostly small full colour photographs of fishes and habitats supplemented by a few maps and drawings in B&W. In general the small size of the illustrations is adequate for the identification of the fishes but the habitat photos, which are even smaller, tend to lose their effectiveness.

COMMENTS:

This volume is an illustrated field guide to the desert fishes of central Australia and was prepared for the Lake Eyre Zonal Committee and published by the Queensland Fisheries Service (part of the DPI) with the assistance of the Natural Heritage Trust.

The first 23 pages contain brief introductory remarks about the region, the Great Artesian Basin, the aquatic habitats and the flora & fauna of the region. Pages 26 to 66 carry the fish descriptions - both native and introduced. Most species rate a page, which includes information on description, habitat, biology and distribution as well as a colour photograph. Some get more coverage e.g. the Red-finned Blue-eye, others less. Unfortunately illustrations are not provided for some species, presumably because of the difficulties of getting fish and photographers together from such a distant region. As an offset to this, some species are seen illustrated for the first time that I am aware of.

The final section of some 21 pages covers management issues, references and an index. I liked the layout feature of marginal coloured tabs to facilitate "navigation" but in this instance it needed a little more fine-tuning. Overall the book serves it's function well, is easy to read and is a useful addition to the bookshelf of those interested in native fishes.

~ Bruce Hansen
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