



ANGFA

Australia New Guinea Fishes Association
NATIONAL CONVENTION 2022



Eatons Hill
Queensland



Nerang River, south east Queensland
Photo: Gunther Schmida

Cover Photograph



Malanda Rainbowfish by Keith Martin

This fish is a sub-adult male Malanda Rainbowfish (*Melanotaenia* sp. 'Malanda'). It was collected from a small tributary of the North Johnstone River, Queensland at the Wallace Road crossing. Susan and I went there in August 2014 while searching around that area for what was then thought to be a mysterious 'upland utchee' rainbowfish variety. It was raining that day so pretty miserable, but when these little gems came up in the frame

net I knew we were on to something special.

I kept this fish in a 60 cm aquarium with two or three others and he was often firing up and displaying, so I got quite a few nice photos. This particular photo was taken with a Nikon D90 camera and 100 mm macro lens using two overhead flashes and one front mounted. For the photo nerds, settings were ISO 200, f/11 at 1/90 sec.



ANGFA



ANGFA QLD organisers statement

National Convention 2022

WELCOME

Welcome one and all to the ANGFA National Convention 2022 Brisbane proudly hosted by ANGFA Qld. This year represents our first post-covid convention after the disappointment of cancelling Sydney 2021 and the even sadder passing of ANGFA NSW member Ian Baddock. Certainly during the initial phases of planning this particular convention, Australia was still suffering from mandated lockdowns and there was a real risk that this was going to continue into the near future. With this risk in mind, the team planning the 2022 Convention decided to pare back this particular convention to help deliver this and future conventions via a joint Australia wide ANGFA-based Convention Planning Committee. Such a team has been discussed many times in the past and it has been partly performed in an ad-hoc fashion with previous conventions. But it was not until the travails of covid were forced upon us that the opportunity presented itself for a core dedicated convention planning team to step up and leverage off the successes of previous conventions in Melbourne and the Gold Coast. With this in mind, the Convention Planning Committee formed with the hope to plan this and future conventions and also help deliver conventions that are outside the traditional capital city locations of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. We plan to look further afield to locations of interest to ANGFA members to continue to provide Conventions that are of interest to members and non-members. Always remember that Convention is a time for native fish people to come together to meet other native fish people, hear talks by native fish people and to celebrate our native fish. Please join in and enjoy yourself

ANGFA

Over the last 39 years, Australian New Guinea Fishes Association has brought together people with common interests in understanding more about the freshwater fishes and aquatic habitats of the Australian and New Guinea region.

ANGFA's objectives are to promote the study, conservation and culture of the native freshwater fish species of Australia and New Guinea, and to provide a forum for the exchange of information.

ANGFA members come from diverse backgrounds and walks of life. Members include people with a curiosity about what's in their local creek or lake, aquarists with a keen interest to maintain and culture fish, Non Government Organisations, volunteer conservation groups, through to university and government scientists, just to mention a few.

CONVENTION ORGANISERS

The ANGFA National Convention 2022 Brisbane has been brought to you by the Convention Planning Committee, hosted by ANGFA Qld with the assistance of ANGFA National. The Convention Planning Committee consists of (alphabetically) Steve Baines, George Brand, Darrell Chase, Peter Ford, Graeme Finsen, Peter Johnson, John Lenagan, Greg Martin, Leo O'Reilly, Dave Shoesmith and Peter Unmack.

Thanks to John Tebble for Field Trip planning and organising. Thank you also to Glenn Briggs, David Roberts and Greg Ure for helping out with key tasks.

Special thanks needs to given to Greg Wallis and the ANGFA Publications Committee for the production of this year's convention eBooklet.

The support of all ANGFA clubs and their committees, our sponsors, and all attending or interested members deserves special mention. All of that put together is what makes a great ANGFA Convention.

Thank you also to Monita Iwan, Functions & Events Manager, and the staff at Eatons Hill Hotel for their assistance with Convention 2022.



CONVENTION SPONSORS



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ANGFA National Convention 2022



PROGRAM

Friday 14th October

During the day explore the nearby Kumbartcho Sanctuary at your own leisure, and perhaps spot a platypus. In the evening from 5–8pm join David Roberts spotlighting for ancient lungfish in the shallows of the North Pine River



Saturday 15th October

8.30	REGISTRATION
9.00	Opening by ANGFA Qld President Graeme Finsen
9.15	HELEN LARSON A look at the fiendish goby genus <i>Rhinogobius</i> Sponsored by Livefish
10.00	Morning tea
10.30	GARY LANGE The most amazing rainbowfish! Sponsored by Livefish
11.45	Pre-lunch drinks then Lunch
1.00	MICHAEL HAMMER Ten years of Bush Blitzing across northern Australia Sponsored by Fish Organic and Reptile Supplies
1.45	PETER ROSE Working together to recover southern purple-spotted gudgeon in the Murray River corridor Sponsored by Aquariums by Design
2.30	Afternoon tea
2.30	Trading tables open to the public and/or field trip to South Pine River
5.00	Pre-dinner drinks
6.00	Dinner
8.00	Annual General Meeting
8.15	GARY LANGE The Blood Sweat and Cheers of 105 Days Chasing Rainbowfish in New Guinea Sponsored by Livefish



Sunday 16th October

9.00	REGISTRATION
9.15	JAWAHAR G. PATIL Controlling <i>Gambusia</i> in the Australian water-scape – what can we learn from Tasmania? Sponsored by Shrimplovers
10.00	Morning tea
10.30	ROBERT PULVINETI My friend Gunther Schmida and brackish water Gobies of SE Qld Sponsored by Premier Pet
11.15	DEAN GILLIGAN Latest updates on Edgbaston and techniques in the recovery of Red Finned Blue Eyes Sponsored by Shrimplovers
12.00	Pre-lunch drinks then Lunch
1.15	TIM MARSDEN Fish communities in the upper Flinders River system Sponsored by Premier Pet
2.00	PETER JOHNSON Fish in schools Sponsored by QFAS
2.45	Afternoon tea
3.15	ROB WAGER The Luckiest Fish Sponsored by QFAS
4.00	Closing by ANGFA Qld President Graeme Finsen
4.20	Clean up



Monday 17th October

Join the ANGFA convoy and head north to the Sunshine Coast hinterland as we survey several rivers. Fish species including the Crimson Spotted Rainbow (*M. duboulayi*), Pacific Blue Eye (*P. signifer*) and the Ornate Rainbowfish (*Rhadinocentrus ornatus*) are likely to be observed. If we're lucky we may also see some *Ambassis agassizii* (Glassfish), shrimp or even the elusive *Nannoperca oxleyana* (Oxleyan Pygmy Perch)



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CONVENTION 2022 FIELD TRIPS

Three trips to gain an insight into the fishes of SE Qld



The great thing about our conference venue this year is that you are literally walking distance from South Pine River, and a short drive to the North Pine River, where you can dip your net and see what jewels are in the waters in urban Brisbane. During the conference, there is opportunity to visit a number of locations where you can take in the natural environment, survey the rivers, chance a glimpse of some living fossils and see what impediments to fish migration and habitation have been overcome with a little bit of human lateral thinking.



Get to know your river

On Friday, you can visit **Kumbartcho Sanctuary** which is a short drive from the Conference Centre. 'Kumbartcho' is the Gubbi Gubbi first nations word for the *Araucaria cunninghamii* or Hoop Pine and some may recall this was the site of the former Bunya Park Zoo which was closed in the early 1990's. This land has been preserved as a sanctuary, where you can learn about the flora and fauna of the area, walk the scenic paths and perhaps spot a frog or platypus – time permitting. *Note: **Kumbartcho** is a volunteer organisation. The information centre is only open Monday to Friday, however the **Frog Hollow**, walking tracks and access to the river – **Playtpus viewing** – is open all weekend. There is no guarantee Platypus will make an appearance.

Friday afternoon (**Leichts Crossing** and **Kumbartcho Sanctuary**) and Saturday afternoon (**South Pine River**) present opportunities to visit and see for yourself these locations prior to and within the conference program.

Rocking it upstream

Nearby **Leichts Crossing** on **South Pine River** is where you can view an operational 'rock ramp fishway', and you will hear from presenter Tim Marsden as part of the convention program.

Friday 14th

Lungfish locating

For the intrepid urban explorer keen for some Friday night spotlighting (5 to 8pm), join a convoy on a short drive to **Lake Samsonvale** (North Pine Dam on the North Pine River) where we may get very lucky and spot a *Neoceratodus forsteri* – Australian Lungfish spawning in the shallows. Convention back up presenter Dr David Roberts will take us on a good ol fashion spotlighting hunt to spot this elusive treasure and hear a little bit about the Lungfish lifestyle and possible find some eggs in the shallows.*

*Note: There is no guarantee you will actually see a Lungfish.

Saturday 15th

Collect in your local river

On Saturday afternoon, take the opportunity for some fresh air. South Pine River at **Cashes Crossing** is 100 m from the Convention venue (you can walk but remember OH&S – buckets of water aren't light). There is easy collecting on the southern downstream side, you will find the Crimson Spotted Rainbow (*Melanotaenia duboulayi*), Olive Perchlet (*Ambassis* sp), juvenile freshwater mullet and a range of other native species.

Monday 16th

Sunshine Coast creeks and rivers

Queensland's beautiful Sunshine Coast is just north of Brisbane. On Monday, join the convoy and head north into the **Sunshine Coast hinterland** as we survey the upper and lower catchments of several rivers. Fish species including the Crimson Spotted Rainbow (*M. duboulayi*), Pacific Blue Eye (*P. signifier*) and the Ornate Rainbowfish (*Rhadinocentrus ornatus*) are likely to be caught. Recent rain has ensured the countryside remains green and is everything you expect the Sunshine Coast to be. If we're lucky we may also come across some *Ambassis agassizii* (Glassfish), shrimp or even the elusive and protected *Nannoperca oxleyana* (Oxleyan Pygmy Perch).

Helen Larson

A look at the fiendish goby genus *Rhinogobius*



Male *Rhinogobius* cf. *albomarginatus*. Photo: Andreas Wagnitz

Species of the tridentigerine goby genus *Rhinogobius* have created a difficult detective puzzle to be solved. They are popular aquarium fish in the northern hemisphere but some have proved themselves to be invasive, hostile fishes in a non-native environment. There are over 70 species known, with more likely to be described as research continues. Many species have not been well described and some appear to be limited to just one river system so working out who is really who is hard work for a gobyologist. Type specimens are often faded, damaged or missing altogether, making matching them up with fresh or live fish difficult. I have worked through species described up to the end of 2017 for the second volume of our Big Goby Book and have got them into some semblance of order.



Rhinogobius duospilus type specimen
Photo courtesy of the California Academy of Sciences



Helen at Singapore Aquarium during a Red List workshop

Dr Helen K. Larson is Emeritus Curator of Fishes, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin. She is also a Research Associate of the Museum of Tropical Queensland, Townsville. Helen is known as the Goby Queen, because gobies are the most fascinating small fishes in the world. She first recognised gobies while snorkelling in the Cocos (Keeling) Atoll lagoon when she was 12, and fell in love with them.

Her research interests are the taxonomy, systematics, ecology and behaviour of Indo-Pacific mangrove and coral reef fishes, especially gobioid fishes (gobies, gudgeons, mudskippers). Much of her

work is on the taxonomy of estuarine and coral reef gobioid fishes, usually by means of generic revisions. The goby subfamily Tridentigerinae is of particular fascination – these are mostly estuarine and mangrove gobies. She has been actively publishing since 1975.

Helen retired from the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in late 2009 and moved to north Queensland where she works on gobies in association with the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin. Her expertise as a taxonomist/systematist is regularly sought from around the world and she is on the editorial boards of several scientific

journals. She also carries out extinction risk assessments for gobioid and other fishes for the IUCN Red List of threatened species.

When not looking at gobies, Helen watches birds wherever she is and is Vice-President for the Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation at Mission Beach, a member of the IUCN's Species Survival Commission and Birdlife Australia.

Gary Lange

The most amazing rainbowfish!



In our pursuit of this amazing rainbowfish we used planes, a Ferry Boat (yes a ferry boat), Cars, Taxis, Motorcycles and a giant Dump Truck! Whatever it took to complete our mission! Oh, and then there was that 18-foot boat with twin 40 HP motors to head alongside the shoreline fighting 4 foot ocean waves. Our 7th trip to West Papua was indeed lucky as we brought back four species that will almost for sure see commercial production. Two of them perfect for that mid-sized planted aquarium. Move over praecox and boesemani!

Convention Dinner Presentation: The Blood Sweat and Cheers of 105 Days of Chasing Rainbowfish in New Guinea

Since 2005 I have been fortunate enough to make seven trips to West Papua. We have brought back species that haven't been in the hobby as well as some fifteen brand new species of rainbowfish! I'll take snippets from each of those trips showing you the wonderful fish found and some of the difficulties encountered to collect them.



Gary has been keeping fish since he was 10 and has been associated with the organized hobby for the last 40 years. He is a member of the Missouri Aquarium Society (MASI) and has held various positions in the club. He is a grand master breeder in MASI, and has won 'Best Fish In Show' on four different occasions, twice with rainbowfish.

In 2005 he took the rainbowfish collectors dream trip – collecting in West Papua. He's now made a total of seven trips to West Papua. He brought back rainbowfish that have never been seen in the hobby including *Chilatherina alleni* and *Melanotaenia vanheurni*. With these trips he's collected and brought back at least 17 different undescribed species of rainbowfish. Along with his collecting partner, Johannes Graf, and now Wim Heemskerk, they are currently working on naming them. He is currently running over 90 aquariums (~2,500 gallons, 9,500 litres) and keeping over 65 species and locations of rainbowfish and blue-eyes.







The Queensland Federation of Aquarium Societies

www.qfas.org

QFAS has as its members Queensland Aquarium Societies

- **AUSTRALIA NEW GUINEA FISHES ASSOCIATION QLD**
- **BETTA AUSTRALIS**
- **AQUARIUM & TERRARIUM SOCIETY OF QLD**
- **QUEENSLAND AQUARIUM HOBBYISTS**
- **THE QUEENSLAND CICHLID GROUP**

Each member club has three delegates which along with any other interested parties come to QFAS meetings. These discussions are held at the Bar Jai Hall, Alexandra Rd, Clayfield every few months. Here we discuss items of aquarium interest including government legislation, fish judging, QFAS auction rules and other guidelines.



Michael Hammer

Ten years of Bush Blitzing across northern Australia



Bush Blitz is Australia's largest species discovery program, and a key support for museum collections based research. A unique cross-sector partnership that organises expeditions to document plants and animals across Australia, Bush Blitz has included a strong focus on fishes in eight surveys across the north. Survey areas are vast and remote largely requiring helicopter access to selected sites both representative of the region and habitat types present, but also areas where new species to western science might be predicted to occur (e.g. above waterfalls, springs, gorges). Information gathered

helps to inform land management (e.g. narrow range species or habitat specialists) and contributes to species discovery and revision of more wide spread groups by comparing populations across the landscape. Surveys have extended from Olkola Country on southern Cape York in the east, to Groote Eylandt IPA, Fish River Station and Wongalara Sanctuary in the Top End, the Bradshaw Military Field Training Area and other properties in the East Kimberley, and through to the most recent survey in July 2022 focused on a section of Wilinggin Country in the West Kimberley based out of the

Charnley River–Artesian Range Wildlife Sanctuary, covering spectacular gorges and escarpment across seven catchment areas (Drysedale, Prince Regent, Sale, Calder, Charnley, Isdell & Lennard). A diverse range of species have been encountered over the ten years of expeditions including swamp eels, Threadfin Rainbowfish, Angalarri Grunter, a new eel-tailed catfish and Kimberley Spangled Perch to name a few. The presentation highlights the scenery, places and species encountered, as well as an overview of progress on research questions arising from the work.



Michael is the Curator of Fishes at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in tropical Darwin. His role involves field biodiversity and species discovery surveys across spectacular parts of northern Australia and New Guinea, with follow up taxonomy, reporting and advice to improve conservation and management outcomes. This work is achieved through a collaborative base with partner research agencies, government and community stakeholders. He has a strong focus on publication, science communication and public programs. A passion for native fishes was spurred through aquarium keeping at an early age, and he strongly appreciates the role that groups like ANGFA play in citizen science, awareness and species discovery.

Peter Rose

Working together to recover southern purple-spotted gudgeon in the Murray River corridor

Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon was thought to be extinct in Victoria. In 2019 it was re-discovered in Third Reedy Lake near Kerang just one day before the lake was due to be drained for a water savings project.

This presentation outlines the steps taken since the discovery: to map the distribution of the population in the region, identify its preferred habitat, collect broodstock, undertake captive breeding, conservation stocking and monitoring, as well as plans underway to bring this species back to natural floodplain habitats throughout its former range in the Murray Corridor. The success of the project to date has only been possible through strong collaboration with native fish interest groups (such as ANGFA and Native Fish Australia) and private hatcheries, working in partnership with government, researchers, land managers, community groups, and landholders.



Peter is freshwater ecologist and Project Manager for North Central CMA's Native Fish Recovery Plan–Gunbower and lower Loddon, and the Recovery Reach Coordinator for the Mid-Murray Floodplain Recovery Reach.

With more than 10 years of professional experience within the government and private sectors, Peter has expertise in the ecological assessment of rivers, lakes and wetlands, design and implementation of monitoring programs, survey and identification of aquatic flora and fauna, water quality and aquatic habitat assessment, and ecological modelling.

He has a strong interest in the management and recovery of threatened floodplain specialist fish in the southern Murray Darling Basin, with other research interests including species distribution modelling of aquatic taxa, drought effects on aquatic ecosystems, and improving the sensitivity of stream and wetland bioassessment methods, indicators and metrics.



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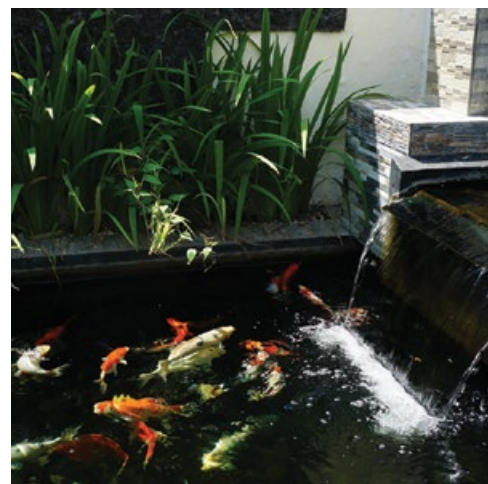
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Jawahar G. Patil

Controlling Gambusia in the Australian waterscape – what can we learn from Tasmania?



The presentation will outline our efforts to develop genetic approaches for controlling pest fish at large spatial scales, with a particular focus on *Gambusia*. This includes evaluating feasibility, assessing public acceptance, and making technical advances on Trojan chromosome (Trojan C), with complimentary short- and long-term outcomes. Specifically, built on strong stakeholder and community engagement, we have overcome key biological hurdles (e.g., population modelling, their field validation and sex-ratio manipulation) in preparation for ‘field-testing’ Trojan C, paving way to manage this and many other pest-fish. Importantly, the presentation will also discuss short term population suppression strategies to provide immediate reprieve for native species to recover, that can be readily adopted nationally, with community/ stakeholder engagements.



Jawahar is an independent consultant and an Adjunct academic at the University of Tasmania (UTAS). Currently, his group is developing Trojan C as a genetic option to control *Gambusia* and carp, which are both high-profile pest fish of concern to Australia. His work on eDNA detection of pests has contributed to the design, operation, and refinement of regulatory elements of the Australian System for Management of Marine Pest Incursions and that of the UNDP GloBallst program. As a member

of international consortia, he was instrumental in establishing the elephant fish as a model cartilaginous fish genome and is a recipient of the inaugural CSIRO John Philip Award.

Importantly, his sustained collaboration with Inland Fisheries Service Tasmania continues to contribute to the integrated carp eradication program of the agency. A fundamental interest of his is understanding the mechanisms of sex differentiation and determination in fish, and how they

respond to environmental stressors, including the effects at species and population level.

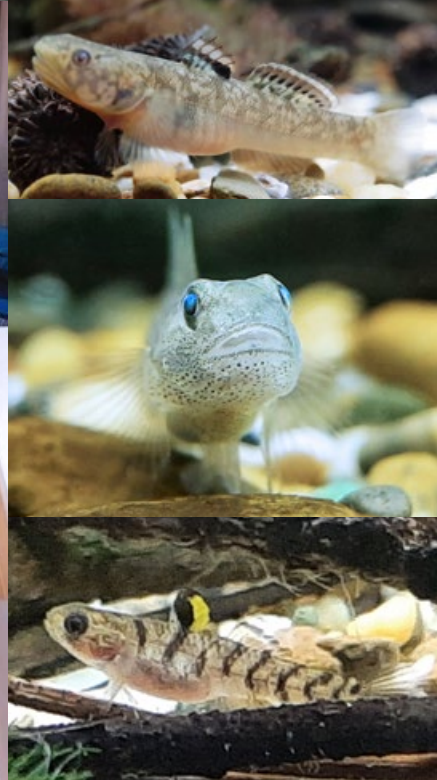
As a consultant, he specialises in streamlining hatchery production of monosex populations of farmed fish (such as Atlantic salmon and tilapia), better utilisation of carp and formulation/assessment of fisheries and aquaculture related developmental projects.

Robert Pulvirenti

My friend Gunther Schmida & brackish water gobies of SE Qld

My talk is in two parts. First I'll talk about 'My friend Gunther Schmida' and our friendship which lasted nearly 45 years. There will be photos of Gunther doing what he did best and a few stories about some of our collecting adventures and trips away. Our trip from the Gold Coast to Darwin will be the main one, as it was the first time I took a small camera to document the trip and it shows Gunther in his element. I will recall some of the stories Gunther told me about his early days back in Germany and his early years in Australia.

The second part of the talk will be 'Brackish water gobies of SE Qld' and will cover the species that can be kept at lower salinities and a couple that do well in freshwater long term. It will have photos by Gunther and myself of these gobies as well as some recent new finds for the SE Qld area. Tips on keeping the different species as far as water conditions and what other species can be kept with them. There will be photos of some of the higher algae and moss-like plants that do well in a brackish aquascaped aquarium.



I started keeping fish around the age of 12 or 13 and was collecting and keeping natives by my mid-teens, normally catching them by micro-fishing. This was in the days long before ANGFA and information about native fish was hard to come by, I was keeping exotic fish as well as they were easily obtained from aquarium shops. When I started driving at age 17 my number of tanks started to increase and I had an interest in dwarf chichlids for a while, but natives were always my constant. I also have a keen interest in killifish, mainly

the non-annuals and joined the Sydney Killie Group which is still running back in the late 70s. It was through this group that I heard of and met Gunther Schmida about 44 or 45 years ago and that opened my eyes to all that was out there. In 1986 I moved up to the Gold Coast a few months after Gunther and his family moved up as well and we were both living in Tallai. We both started exploring our new home range together and a bit later on we started working together on some jobs in Brisbane, Sydney and Adelaide. We and our families

have become close friends over the years, and I have had the privilege and pleasure of many a trip away with Gunther or just a cuppa on the verandah and just chatting about fish and all sorts of wildlife. Hanging out in the fishroom never got old and there was always something new to look at. Brackish water gobies are one of my bigger interests and the more new ones I find the more I keep looking, there are still more surprises to come as far as species and distribution goes here in SE Qld.

Dean Gilligan

Latest updates on Edgbaston and techniques in the recovery of Red Finned Blue Eyes



Red-finned Blue-eye are considered one of Australia's 20 freshwater fish species most at risk of extinction. The tiny species was only discovered in 1990. Eastern Gambusia (mosquitofish) invaded the area at about the same time, and quickly led to the extinction of most of the populations. At its worst, Red-finned Blue-eye only survived in four small Great Artesian Basin springs on the reserve, with only one natural remnant population. Despite tolerance of a broad range of water quality parameters and breeding readily in captivity, numerous attempts to maintain the species in aquaria had failed. Since acquiring Edgbaston in 2008, Bush Heritage Australia's efforts have increased the number of populations to 12. This has resulted from a series of incremental improvements to its Gambusia eradication, exclusion and reintroduction programs.

Bush Heritage also manages a captive breeding program on the reserve. A grant from the federal government's Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan is facilitating a burst of recovery actions in 2022–23, and should result in substantial recovery of the species over the next year. Since February 2022, three more springs have been cleansed of Gambusia, one more is very near to completion and two more Gambusia populations are planned for eradication by the end of 2022. Some of these are very large springs. Red-finned Blue-eye reintroductions will commence over coming months. By 2023, the number of Red-finned Blue-eye populations should have reached 19. In contrast, relatively little effort has been made to improve the conservation status of Edgbaston Goby. This will become a focus at Edgbaston from 2023.



Dr Dean Gilligan is Bush Heritage Australia's freshwater & wetlands ecologist and the senior ecologist for the NSW & ACT. He has only been working for Bush Heritage for a little over one year. Before then he had a 23 year career as a senior research scientist for NSW Fisheries department managing captive-breeding and reintroductions of threatened fish, integrated pest management and freshwater fish sampling across NSW rivers and

wetlands. At Bush Heritage, his primary role is to manage the recovery plan for the Endangered Red-finned Blue-eye and Edgbaston goby on Edgbaston Reserve in Central-West Queensland. Other responsibilities include monitoring of spring flora and fauna and terrestrial ecosystems on Edgbaston, as well as assisting other reserves (nationally) with monitoring aquatic ecosystems.



Fish communities in the upper Flinders River system



The Flinders River system in the Gulf of Carpentaria covers a broad geographic spread through northern inland Queensland, originating to the east of Hughenden and traversing West and then North to the coast near Karumba. This system has a unique and interesting freshwater fish community, with over 40 fish species having been recorded from the freshwater reaches of the river, from small tank gobies through to large sawfish

with many unusual species in between. We have recently been undertaking studies in the upper Flinders catchment, upstream from Richmond, looking at the fish communities and how they move within this system. These studies have identified some interesting traits within the system that impact the way in which fish survive within these harsh environments and highlights the need to protect refuge habitats.



Tim Marsden is Principal Consultant at AFPS who specialise in the design and implementation of fish habitat rehabilitation projects, particularly in relation to fish passage. Tim has travelled throughout Australia and SE Asia for the last 30 years studying the fish communities of freshwater systems and the impact that barriers have on these fish communities. He has overseen the successful implementation of hundreds of individual projects, and has undertaken sampling in most catchments on the east coast of Australia from the Nicholson River in the Gulf of Carpentaria to the Glenelg-Hopkins catchment in western Victoria. Electrofishing is his favoured fishing method of choice, using

both boat and backpack electrofishing. Tim has been undertaking electrofishing in both the government and private capacity for over 30 years, loving the fast results that can be attained and the veneer of protection that is provided against crocodiles! Having undertaken fish sampling over such a broad geographic region, Tim has developed an affinity for the rainbow fish complex and loves seeing the broad variation that occurs within these species across their geographic ranges. He hopes one day to retire and go pottering around the countryside catching rainbowfish and recording the variation in these widespread and wonderful species.





Rhads from Moreton Island, SE Qld, type locality
Photo: Gunther Schmida – fish supplied by David Roberts



'Cairns' Blue-eyes from the Little Mulgrave River
Photo: Gunther Schmida – fish supplied by Bruce Hansen and Jason Sulda

Australian Government Environmental Project

FISH IN SCHOOLS



Through the Australian Governments "Fish in Schools" project, the Hon Luke Howarth MP has been supporting the education of the younger generation in conservation and environmental issues.

Local schools now have these special native fish in their ponds.



Honey Blue Eye
Rainbow Fish



Crimson Spotted
Rainbow Fish



Ornate
Rainbow Fish



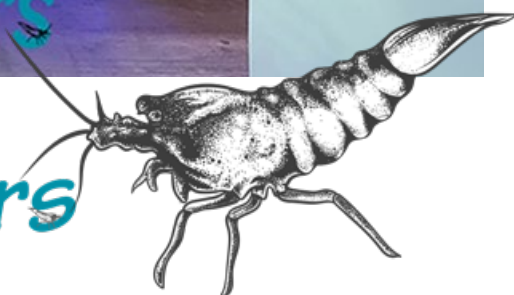
Luke HOWARTH MP
Federal Member for **Petrie**

Authorised by L. Howarth, LNP QLD, 40 Hornibrook Esplanade, Clontarf QLD 4019.

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Shrimplovers



Peter Johnson

Fish in schools – empowering the next generation

In 2018, in an effort to engage more broadly in the community with people who might not otherwise be involved in fishkeeping, ANGFA Qld decided to trial a program of breeding local native fish at schools. The program, Fish in Schools, aims to empower students to get directly involved in conservation projects, and to give teachers tools to incorporate fish breeding and aquatic ecosystems into their curriculum. Through the support of volunteers, grants, and donations from suppliers the program has expanded to include over fifty schools in southeast Queensland, and interest from teachers continues to grow.



Peter works in the conservation sector and has been secretary of the Queensland branch of the Australia New Guinea Fishes Association (ANGFA Qld) for 12 years. In an effort to give something back to the creeks and puddles he's gotten so much out of, Peter looks for opportunities to get ANGFA involved in conservation projects. He coordinates the 'Fish in Schools' program which now has more than fifty schools in southeast Queensland breeding threatened native fish species; Peter is a member of the Red-finned Blue-eye recovery team and coordinates off-site captive breeding; and, he leads aquatic surveys for the BioBlitz program.

Rob Wager

The Luckiest Fish

The Luckiest Fish is a good news story of saving a special population of Ornate Rainbowfish from sprawling urban development in the south-east suburbs of Brisbane City. Ornate Rainbowfish (*Rhadinocentrus ornatus*), or Rhads as we native fish enthusiasts call them, were thought to have become extinct in the Brisbane River catchment by the 1980s. An opportunistic distraction from the job at hand led to the rediscovery of Brisbane catchment Rhads, and a lucky set of circumstances and fortuitous timings enabled a tiny Rhad population to maintain a tenuous presence in an unexpected location. The story then moves to reconciling resource exploitation to provide funding for conservation, overcoming challenges in negotiating urban development and infrastructure projects, establishing captive

populations, rebuilding suitable habitat and ultimately conserving a species. Many individuals, community groups, consultancies, developers and local authorities played a positive role in this story. With assistance from Jason Sulda from Australian Biotopes, who expertly captured digitally the essence of the recreated habitat, Rob Wager will document the lucky history of Rhads survival in Spring Creek. With increasing challenges from changing climate and introduced species the future of our Rhads is not assured, but Rob can show how tinkering with a contemporary ecology can allow aquatic conservation to succeed in an increasingly human conquered world.



For his entire life Rob has maintained some sort of connection with fish: as a youngster with aquariums and ponds or exploring and fishing; then working as a professional biologist, aquatic ecosystem consultant and aquaculturist, and nearing retirement returning to hobbyist status with the construction of his retirement fish room. Rob presents a fairly interesting combination of fish biologist, hard core fish keeper and intimately connected ecologist drawing on a broad jack-of-all-trades skills base to easily communicate between managers, the scientific community, aquarium hobbyists and lay people. He often brings unexpected insights and ideas to solve a range of fishy or ecological problems.

In recent years Rob has had his conservation outlook battered by a changing, growing public ignorance of or indifference to ecosystems, and burgeoning



bureaucracy. With over 40 years' experience Rob observes that we have made very little effective progress in protecting our fish and their habitats and has titled his presentation *The Luckiest Fish* because it shows how the new paradigm of working with nature rather than against it can offer a favourable compromise and restore hope.

David Roberts

Vallisneria – trials and tribulations

Aquatic macrophytes in waterways are often neglected when it comes to importance and management for improved habitat quality for wildlife. They are seen as important but we know little about what drives good or bad macrophyte habitat, and are often not actively managed for improved quality or recovery. Recent research shows that the humble Vallisneria is a critically important species for SEQ waterways and is essential habitat for a number of threatened species, including the Australian Lungfish. This talk takes ANGFA on a walk through several years of trials and tribulations on attempts to restore lost Vallisneria and how one critter in particular has hampered efforts.



David is an Aquatic Ecologist currently employed at Seqwater, and holds an Adjunct Research Fellow position at the Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University. He also has a PhD from Griffith University in Aquatic Ecology having investigated the trophic dynamics of a sub-tropical reservoir ecosystem. David's research career has focussed on freshwater ecosystems including fish ecology, limnology and water quality processes. Recent research includes investigating catadromous fish migration needs, fishway performance assessments, Australian Lungfish ecology and application of novel DNA technologies. As part of a research program focussing on conserving the Australian Lungfish, the research team have trialled various methods to re-establish important aquatic habitats in the rivers of SEQ.



This talk will highlight a number of fishing expeditions in Northern Australia, including exploring the Weipa area to find *Iriatherina wernerii* (the Threadfin Rainbowfish) and encountering a range of environments and colourful fish in the process; flying into the Upper Katherine River by helicopter with Dave Wilson to catch the Upper Katherine River Black Finned Rainbowfish (UKRBFR); and assisting the Rangers on Fraser Island to survey the freshwater resources on the Island (Fraser is a national park where you are normally prohibited from fishing in the freshwater).



Leo O'Reilly visited the Northern Territory in the late 1990s where he met Dave Wilson from Aquagreen, who introduced him to the wonderful world of Australian native aquarium fish.

Leo soon joined ANGFA QLD where he quickly learned about rainbowfish, blue-eyes, gudgeons and gobies; and was fortunate to be mentored by the likes of Dave Wilson, Bruce Hanson, Steve Baines and Gunther Schmida. His love of small native fish quickly became an obsession.

While Leo's kept a variety of fish including cichlids, bristlenose, angel-fish, and gourami's, his main interest is in Australian native fish. He specialises

in the *Rhadinocentrus ornatus* (Ornate Rainbowfish) and the *Pseudomugil mellis* (Honey Blue-eye). At one stage he had a dedicated fish room with 40 aquariums, however the workload of keeping the aquariums clean was impacting on his fishing so he transitioned to using ponds and tubs outdoors. He now has over 100 small tubs (100–200l) and 25 Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs) and is building a fish room to house his aquariums.

While his fish keeping is obvious, his real passion is spending time in the bush, exploring remote areas, and finding creeks and waterholes that have probably never been fished before. And there's always the

excitement of finding a new or colourful fish. He's planned and led many field trips including many combined clubs field trips. Leo has served as President of ANGFA QLD and been President and Vice President of ANGFA National. He is currently Vice President of ANGFA QLD and a member of the ANGFA Publications Committee.

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The Convention Planning Committee hopes you
learned hearing from experts in their fields
laughed catching up with old friends
exchanged knowledge about fish-keeping and conservation
shared stories with new friends
got some bargains at the trading tables
indulged in the convention dinner
got your feet and dipnets wet on a field trip
and enjoyed the 2022 ANGFA National Convention

We welcome your feedback here



ANGFA