

Freshwater Fishes of Northern Vietnam. A preliminary check-list of the fishes known or expected to occur in northern Vietnam with comments on systematics and nomenclature. Kottelat, M., 2001. Environment and Social Development Unit, East Asia and Pacific region, The World Bank, 123 pp, 162 figs.

This book reports on two surveys conducted in 1998 and 1999, of which the latter was curtailed. This is the first systematics report published by the Environment and Social Development Unit of the World Bank. It is divided into two parts: the first part consists of a preliminary checklist of the fishes known or expected to occur in northern Vietnam; and the second part (in three annexes) deals with some important but poorly known Vietnamese freshwater fish literature. This report also highlights the critical situation of biological research in the Indochinese region, due in part to the Vietnam's political isolation during and just after the Vietnam War.

Two hundred and sixty-eight native freshwater fish species are reported in the preliminary checklist. Re-evaluation of the systematic status and nomenclature of these species is carried out, albeit without actual examination of specimens in some cases. The nomenclatural actions and changes made, and a comparative list of fish names used in the current report and by Mai (1978) are summarised in two separate tables. This report also contributes significantly to conforming the nomenclature of the northern Vietnamese and southern Chinese fishes to the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature.

In Annex 1, selected parts of a report by Mai (1978) are translated into English and presented with no alteration. This section is rather confusing due to the lack of consistency of legend used. In Annex 2, problems with the nomenclatural system for Vietnamese freshwater fishes proposed by Nguyen & Daon (1969), and the validity of that publication are raised, although no clear solution is suggested. The original paper by Nguyen & Daon (1969) is reproduced in Annex 3.

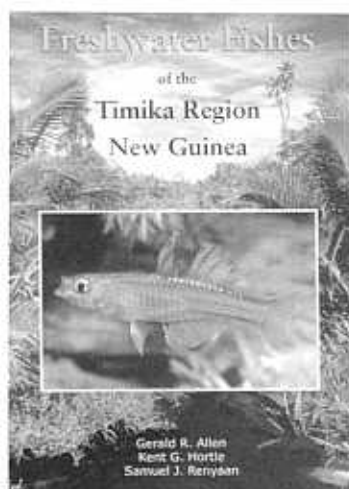
The last part of the report features well-taken photographs of the fishes (162 figures) encountered mainly from the 1999 trip. There are some minor errors in the figure captions - misspelling of names in Fig. 71 (*Balitora kwangsiensis*); and wrong genera names for Fig. 78 (*Beaufortia daon*) and Fig. 103 (*Hemibagrus pluriradiatus*). Some of the material listed is available only from the figures provided, which is a pity. This minor point aside, this is a very important effort and an important piece of work for ichthyologists working on the freshwater fishes of Southeast Asia.

LITERATURE CITED

- Mai, D. Y., 1978. Nha xuất Ban Khoa Hoc Va Ky Thuat, Ha Noi [Identification of freshwater fishes of northern Viet Nam], 339 pp. [In Vietnamese].
- Nguyen V. H. & L. H. Doan, 1969. Mot so dan lieu ve Thanh, nguon goc va su phan bo cac loai trong ho ca chep o mien bac Vietnam [Some data on composition, origin, and distribution of cyprinid species in northern Vietnam]. Trình bày tại hội nghị học thuật ngành thủy sản lần thứ 1 [First Scientific Seminar of Fisheries Division], 19 pp. [In Vietnamese].

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Freshwater Fishes of the Timika Region New Guinea. Allen, G. R., K. G. Hurtle & S. J. Renyaan, 2000. P. T. Freeport Indonesia and Tropical Reef Research. viii+175 pp. ISBN 0-646-40480-6.

This is the first book in a series of field guides to the biodiversity of the Timika Region of southern Indonesian New Guinea. The

Timika Region lies between the Otakwa and Mamo river basins, and the Central Dividing Range in the interior. According to the authors, the fish fauna there was virtually unknown until Freeport Indonesia's Environmental Laboratory began its quarterly sampling program there in 1995.

The taxonomy is up-to-date as first author Dr. Gerald Allen is an internationally recognised authority on both freshwater and coral reef fishes of the Australia-New Guinea region. In this comprehensive guide, 93 native species and five feral species of freshwater fish are presented. Two of the native species are new to science. The formal descriptions of the apogonid *Glossamia timika* and eleotrid *Oxyeleotris stagnicola*, appended at the rear end of the book do not interfere with the flow of the book's concise format.

Each species is illustrated with their English and scientific names, a diagnosis that highlights the more important characters including succinct descriptions of colour and markings. There are brief comments on the fish's habitat and abundance, followed by notes on their distribution in New Guinea. These notes are illustrated on a map of New Guinea on the top right hand corner of the page. A list of local names is also provided.

Good pictures and accurate illustrations of entire fish are arguably the quickest and most reliable tool to identify the various types of fishes, and this is adequately furnished for each and every species in this guide. Many species are illustrated in life with excellent photographs. Where good photographs are wanting, line drawings and paintings made by Australian artists Jill Ruse and Roger Swainston are effective substitutes.

Apart from the illustrations, the user can also refer to keys

that highlight important morphologic and meristic characters. There is a key that differentiates the 27 families of indigenous and five families of introduced freshwater fish in the area. If more than one species is present in a family, a key to the different species in that group is provided.

This book certainly lives up to its design as a quick identification guide to the freshwater fishes of the Timika region. It is a good reference for anyone who is generally interested in fishes, and/or the biodiversity of the Australia-New Guinea region.

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A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Indonesia. Strange, M., 2001. Periplus, Singapore, 416 pp. ISBN 962-593-402-2.

At last, the Indonesian birds can be compiled in one field guide gathering field guides on the Birds of Sumatra, Java, Bali and Kalimantan, Birds of Wallacea and Birds of New Guinea. This is another book dedicated to the geographical region. It may also be used as a complement to

Birding Indonesia edited by Paul Jepson and Rosie Ounsted and produced by the same publisher in 1997. Despite its size and weight, it is suitable for being carried away to the field.

Morten Strange has had close association with Indonesia over 20 years. He traveled all over the country to obtain the photographs of many bird species that had never been photographed especially those distributed only in Nusa Tenggara and Irian Jaya/West Irian. He showed his master in photography by illustrating most of the species taken by him though he was assisted by other 35 photographers to complete the book. The author has written the Photographic Guide to the Birds of Peninsula Malaysia and Singapore (1993) and the Photographic Guide to the Birds of South East Asia including Phillipine and Borneo (2000).

The book basically contains three main sections:

introduction, how to use this book and systematic section. The introduction is very comprehensive and detailed. Terminology and names used in the book are clearly explained. However, there is an inconsistency in the explanation of some terminology, e.g. the term of Sunda in the 'How to use this Book' section is different from the Glossary. One spelling mistake of the scientific name of the Blue Nuthatch, should be *Sitta azurea* not *Sitta azrea*.

It provides some tips on birding techniques, photographing birds, documentation, information on habitats, birding time, interesting places for birding and conservation concerns. The section how to use this book explains the area covered, the nomenclature, taxonomy and sequence applied including some important references and guidance for the systematic section. The systematic section illustrates the species with coloured photograph, short description, information on voice and habits as well as a map of distribution. For some dimorphic species, photographs of both sexes are shown.

There are 1534 bird species recorded in Indonesian region. This book presents 686 species or less than 50% of total species. Each species is well described with brief information on voice and sufficient behaviour notes for field observation. Since the book is heavily relied on coloured photographs for species identification, we were a bit disappointed with their uneven quality. Some photographs (such as on pages 68, 70, 77, 145, 175, 176, 191, 283, 289, 296, 305, 322, 359 and 375) have poor quality and are less detailed, they could not be used properly for identification as the book intended to be.

Although it was mentioned that most photographs were taken on location in Indonesia or South East Asia, the photograph of Grey teal *Anas gibberifrons* was taken in Australian region because it is less accurate. The Indonesian (Sunda) grey teal