

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

MOSQUITO CONTROL WITH *GAMBUSIA AFFINIS*

If it was Ron Ward's intent to stimulate discussion by having the forum on *Gambusia affinis*, it would seem he was successful. I doubt that the *Journal* will see some of the classic exchanges that took place in earlier years in other journals where combatants exchanged opposing views for years. However, one hopes Craig W. Downs's paper presented at the Salt Lake City meeting, "Mosquito-Fish Impacts on Endemic Species. Setting the Record Straight!," will make its way to the pages of the *Journal* to get another opinion on the record. That said, I should like to address the two responses to "Adverse Assessments."

My article was addressed, in a nondiscriminatory way, to all mosquito control practitioners. Mr. Boklund's letter revealed that the situation in Indiana was all that any concerned environmentalist could desire. I admit Gary Meffe's comments could be construed as inflammatory, but the aim of the article was to present as wide a range of views (obviously not all-inclusive, *pace* Dr. Eliason) as possible so that mosquito control practitioners might have some idea of the concerns about *Gambusia* in the world outside mosquito control. Were every agency as careful in its use of *Gambusia* as those in Indiana, the only concern about *Gambusia* would be about its effectiveness.

Dr. Eliason's complaint that my article was not a critical review takes me to task for something never intended. That *Gambusia* is effective in the rice fields of California, a habitat that somebody somewhere classified as artificial, means just that: It works in that habitat in that state. The aim of the article was to inform mosquito control practitioners of other views, views they were not likely to see in the pages of the *Journal*. Having been involved with mosquito control since the summer of 1953 and coming from a humanities background, I saw the need for someone to play devil's advocate, but I guess not hewing to the party line is considered bad form. Perhaps the most amusing, or ironic, thing about Dr. Eliason's letter is that his statement, "As with any mosquito control method, the need and potential benefit must be weighed against potential adverse impacts," is exactly the kind of thinking the article was intended to stimulate.

The value of a forum is that a real interchange of ideas can take place. Articles put in the procrustean bed of peer review potentially face the risk of being rejected simply because they are controversial. If there is one canonical view we must adhere to, then our horizons will be limited indeed.

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