

# Book Reviews

## ZOOLOGY

### Lake, River and Sea-Run Fishes of Canada

By Frederick H. Wooding. 1994. Harbour Publishing, Madeira Park, British Columbia. \$32.95.

This book is the most recent edition of *The Angler's Book of Canadian Fishes* (1959) and *The Book of Canadian Fishes* (1973). It comprises a "Foreword" of 4 pages by J. S. Nelson, an "Introduction" of 10 pages covering some general aspects of biology and structure, a section on "Canada's Aquatic Heritage" by R. R. Campbell of 11 pages which treats threatened fishes, 7 pages of references, an index of 11 pages, and the bulk of the text at 239 pages.

The main text is given over to descriptions of selected families and species of freshwater fishes, for a total of 87 named species in the table of contents plus comments on 7 families in general. The salmon family deals with 21 species (covering almost half the species text at 100 pages), the carp family 13 species (16 pages), the sunfish family 10 species (18 pages), the catfish family 8 species (10 pages), and the remainder having 5 or less species listed. The species coverage is of the more prominent, larger species and those of commercial or sporting importance, with some other groups. Coverage is not exhaustive for this fauna as should be expected from a popular guide. Illustrations comprise 36 small colour plates and 18 line drawings.

As a general guide to Canadian freshwater fishes, this book is an easily readable account with anecdote and fact nicely mixed. Having said this I must draw attention to various items I found disconcerting. These include errors which should have been caught by the editors such as the misspelling of *Ammocrypta*, the margined madtom's scientific name being given as *Gasterosteus insignis*, and the contents listing a Class Actinopterygii for two orders but not the others which fall in this category nor indeed any indication of those orders which do not (taxonomy is confusing enough for the layperson without adding to it).

The colour plates are small and generally inaccurate. The line drawings are not distinctive enough; e.g., on page 179 there are six fish with four names — which name applies to which fish? Factual errors sneak in occasionally — tuna are not warm-blooded in the same sense that we are, the story is fascinating but not told here; eels do have scales, albeit small ones; there are three, not two, Canadian hagfish species.

A number of fish are mentioned which are not Canadian or not freshwater fishes. The tuna is a case in point but acceptable in a general account of biology; but why is the Californian grunion given equal billing with a Canadian relative and why mention the Asiatic masu and amago? The reference list is eclectic and coverage is not a full entry to the Canadian fish literature. It ill behooves me to quote omissions as there are too many colleagues neglected. Some references are incompletely cited making them difficult to locate.

I believe there is more room for Canadian information and anecdote, focusing perhaps on the lesser known species as the sport fishes have been well covered in numerous works. I would even advocate a book on Canadian fishes not drawn from the species composition (too many to cover in a popular guide) but from topics enlivened by Canadian examples. Many interesting features of fish biology can be developed as an entertaining and informative read on behaviour, evolution, adaptations, reproduction, migration, physiology, age and growth, experimental animals, unusual products, fisheries and their decline, and so on.

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