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MOSQUITOFISH

(*Gambusia holbrooki*)

Mosquitofish are native to North America and were first introduced to Australia in 1925 to assist in mosquito control. Unfortunately, these fish are not very effective at controlling mosquitoes as mosquitoes do not make up a large percentage of their diet.

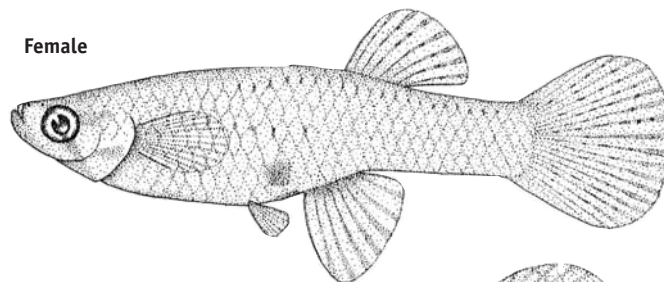
Mosquitofish occur in clear and muddy waters, primarily in warm still or slow flowing water with surface vegetation. They prefer water temperatures between 25°C and 38°C, but have been known to survive under ice and in temperatures up to 44°C. Like Carp and Goldfish, the Mosquitofish can tolerate a wide range of salinities, all of these strategies allowing it to be highly competitive and widespread.

Females are internally fertilised and carry the fertilised eggs for 3-4 weeks before the live young are 'born' during the warmer months. On average about 50 young are born, but up to 300 offspring at a time have been reported. Mosquitofish

bear up to nine broods each year and mature rapidly (under two months), ensuring populations have the capacity to increase rapidly. Mosquitofish feed on a wide variety of organisms, particularly terrestrial insects such as ants and flies and aquatic insects.

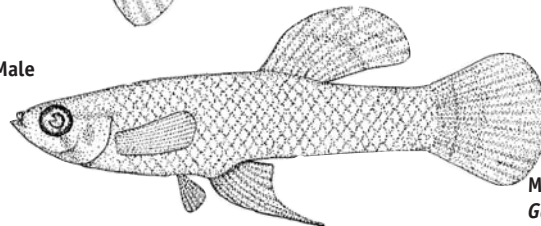
Unfortunately, Mosquitofish have an extremely effective breeding strategy, being live bearers, out compete native fish especially in degraded systems and harass and nip the fins of other small fish and tadpoles. Mosquitofish has been implicated in the decline of several small native fish species. Mosquitofish are very aggressive and probably outcompete native fish for food and shelter. The decline of the soft spined rainbow fish in Queensland has been attributed to Mosquitofish. They may also prey on native fish eggs and fry. Mosquito fish are listed as a threatening process for frogs in NSW.

Female



Average Length:
20-40 mm

Male



Mosquitofish
Gambusia holbrooki
(R. M. McDowall)

Environment ACT Website: www.environment.act.gov.au

Environment ACT Helpline: 02 6207 9777