

Ornate Rainbowfish

Rhadinocentrus ornatus



The Ornate Rainbowfish, *Rhadinocentrus ornatus*, is truly a unique and beautiful, native, freshwater fish found only in a few locations in the Greater Brisbane area and in the Redlands, and has a patchy distribution through coastal creeks of Queensland and New South Wales ([Wildlife Queensland](#)).

Colour

Ornate Rainbowfish (Soft-spined sunfish) are an iridescent fish that, depending on which population they belong to, can be blue or red or any shade in between. They are identifiable by the colour variation on their second dorsal fins and anal fins. (hancox *et al*) Generally these fish have two rows of black scales in their mid-lateral region and an iridescent lateral line of red or blue. More often than not the males have a much more intensive colouring while the females appear more pale and brown ([ANGFA 2008](#))¹



Diet

R. ornatus are an omnivorous surface eating species and feed on macroalgae, small insects and some larvae of other fish. ([Brisbane City Council 2010](#))².

Size

The Ornate Rainbowfish is a small fish and has a maximum size of 7-8cm, but are most commonly 5-6cm. They are recognizable by the two dorsal fins which are very close together on their spine. One is significantly larger than the other.

Reproduction

The Ornate Rainbowfish spawn from October to December each year. The females lay several eggs each day for up to a week. The eggs usually hatch within the next ten days. ([Brisbane City Council 2010](#))².



Rhadinocentrus ornatus [Brisbane / Redlands] S. Baltais

References

1. ANGFA 2008. Ornate Rainbowfish. <http://rainbowfish.angfaql.org.au/Rhadino.htm>

2. Brisbane City Council. 2010. Wildlife Conservation Action Statement: Soft-spined sunfish. www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/environment-waste/wildlife/threatened-species/index.htm

Page, Sharma and Hughes. 2004. Deep Phylogenetic Structure has conservation implications for ornate rainbowfish (Melanoetaeniidae: Rhadinocentrus Ornatus in Queensland, eastern Australia, Marine and Freshwater Research, v55, 165-172, CSIRO Publishing). <http://www.publish.csiro.au/paper/MF03139.htm>

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Distribution

Thus far, four populations of *R. ornatus* have been identified by their genetic differentiation. This has occurred due to long term isolation from other population members. These populations can be corresponded to their geographic locations. ([ANGFA 2008](#))¹

1. Byfield (Water Park Creek) south to Tin Can Bay and Fraser Island.
2. Searys Creek (Rainbow Beach) population.
3. Noosa River south to Brunswick River in NSW, including Bribie, Moreton and Stradbroke Islands.
4. Northern New South Wales south of the Brunswick River. (Page, Sharma and Hughes, 2004)

Local creeks that support the species include Erapah Creek (Redlands), Tingalpa Creek (Redlands & BCC) and Spring Creek (BCC).



Habitat

R. ornatus are species restricted to freshwater. They are found in the coastal wallums, low lying waterways in sandy heathlands, of Eastern Australia^{1,2}. This species is found in abundance where waterways are slow moving, unpolluted, tannin-stained and have a lower than average acidity, pH5.0 to 6.8². Native vegetation cover also appears important.

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