

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 throughout coastal creeks of Queensland and New South Wales ([Wildlife Queensland](#)).

The Issue!

Native fish species of the greater Brisbane area are experiencing population declines as the number of introduced species increases.

Exotic Species

Exotic species have been introduced since European settlement in 1788. Species such as the mosquito fish *Gambusia holbrooki* outcompete and displace *R. ornatus*, while also displaying aggressive behavior towards *R. Ornatus*. *Rainbowfish eggs and larvae are also preyed upon by G holbrooki (ANGFA, 2008).* 1.

Urbanisation

South East Queensland (SEQ) is one of the fastest developing areas in Australia. Natural vegetation is being destroyed to make way for commercial businesses, industry and residences for an increasing population. As natural areas disappear so does the habitat for *R. ornatus*.

Habitat fragmentation

When urbanisation occurs, habitats are also fragmented. A waterway may be undisturbed in a few sections but when urban areas occur in sections, the fish are no longer able to move from one undisturbed section to another.

Pollution

Pollution is also a significant problem in maintaining this species. Their preferred habitat is undisturbed and non polluted streams. Habitats of this nature are increasingly rare due to urbanisation.

Conservation Status

Conservation status changes from local to national. Nationally *R. ornatus* is not a significant species and is not listed nationally as endangered or threatened. However it is 'significant' within the Brisbane area (conservation action statement September 2010). 2.



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

Feral species



Gambusia spp. Source: Simon Baltais

Gambusia spp

A live-bearing small fish, growing to less than 7 cm with most only reaching 3 or 4 cm. Large-scaled and stocky-bodied they live and feed at or near the surface of the water. Their colour varies with habitat but usually they are dark grey or olive on the head and back, becoming lighter on the belly. This fish is declared noxious in Queensland and it's unlawful to keep them alive or dead or to use them as bait. It is illegal to place or release noxious fish alive or dead into QLD waterways.



Female Swordtail (left) and male (right). Source: S. Baltais

Swordtail, Xiphophorus hellerii

A stout bodied fish with rounded dorsal and tail fins and an upturned mouth. Males have a distinctive swordlike tail, which extends from the bottom of the caudal fin. Male swordtails grow to 14 cm and females grow to 16 cm. Wild caught fish are usually pale brown, with a brighter green back and silver underside. Aquarium species are variable in colour. It is illegal to release them into waterways.

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