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Review of Parasites of North American Freshwater Fishes, Second Edition

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BOOK REVIEW . . .

Parasites of North American Freshwater Fishes, Second Edition, by Glenn L. Hoffman. Comstock Publishing Associates, a division of Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York. 1999. 539 p. ISBN 0-8014-3409-2.

Thirty-two years ago, Glenn Hoffman published the first version of this book. I remember it well because I was teaching a field parasitology course at the W.K. Kellogg Biological Station of Michigan State University, and depended to a very great extent on various fish parasites to use for examples in class study. As a result, the book was canonical as a source of information, and it continued to serve me well as I moved elsewhere in subsequent years. I know from personal knowledge that others who worked with fish parasites were equally served by the book. My copy of the first edition has become worn and threadbare, and the new version is a welcome addition to my personal library.

With a foreword by Ernest H. Williams, Jr., the text of the new book covers some 414 pages, followed by 95 pages of references, an excellent glossary, and a thorough index. The first four sections (which can hardly be called chapters) of the book include an introduction, a very brief description of the public health aspects of fish parasites, a short focus on methods for dissecting fish hosts and then fixation and staining procedures for parasites, and, finally, where to look in, and on, fishes for parasites. Parasitic taxa in the book include everything eukaryotic that could possibly infect fishes in North America. Most chapters provide

descriptions of parasites down to the generic level, comments on histopathology and some micrographs, species and host checklists, brief descriptions of the epizootiology of many parasites, the generic keys for parasites in most of the important families, a full repertoire of elegant line drawings, and four pages of color micrographs. There is also a separate checklist of fishes and parasites in North America from Mexico northward, and then another checklist which includes parasites of ornamental fishes which are commonly shipped into North America from other countries around the world. Last, there is a section that deals with chemotherapy and prophylactic measures for coping with fish parasites and diseases.

For those of us who 'grew up' with Glenn's first book, the second edition was a long time coming and is now highly welcome. For those who are new to the field, or relatively so, I recommend this book without hesitation. It is written by a person who is not only tremendously knowledgeable about fishes and their parasites, based on a very distinguished 50 year career, but who is completely enthusiastic in sharing this information and his expertise. This volume is an absolute must for any research library, and for the shelf of any researcher with an interest in fish parasites.

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