

AQUATIC INVADERS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The inland waters of Western Australia are home to many species of native fish and crustaceans but are gradually being invaded by introduced species that don't occur naturally in our rivers and lakes. Some have little effect on the local ecologies, but others can be devastating and need to be controlled.



CARP and GOLDFISH
(*Cyprinus carpio* and *Carassius auratus*)

Carp and goldfish can change habitats by digging around in river and lake beds, uprooting plants and muddying the water. They compete with native species for food and may eat their young.



GUPPIES (*Poecilia reticulata*)

Guppies have been recorded in the Gascoyne region and can breed rapidly and out-compete native fish for both food and space.



MOSQUITOFISH (*Gambusia holbrooki*)

Mosquitofish were introduced from Central America in 1934 to help control mosquitoes. They only consume mosquito larvae however, if nothing else is available. *Gambusia* consume the eggs of our native species, who generally consume more mosquito larvae.



REDFIN PERCH (*Perca fluviatilis*)

Redfin perch are ravenous predators consuming marron, frogs, insects and native fish including trout eggs and fry.



SWORDTAILS (*Xiphophorus helleri*)

Found in the Irwin River near Dongara, swordtails produce many broods a year, so easily outcompete native species for food and habitat.



TILAPIA or MOZAMBIQUE MOUTHBROODER (*Oreochromis mossambicus*)

Tilapia are a threat in tropical waterways as they may consume fish eggs and change habitats. They also breed quickly and so can dominate local fish communities.



YABBIES (*Cherax albidus* and *Cherax destructor*)

Introduced from Victoria in the 1930s, yabbies threaten marron in south-west rivers. Yabbies breed faster and out-compete marron and can carry diseases affecting other native freshwater crayfish species.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- If you catch an aquatic invader, do not release it back into the water.
- Never release introduced species into our waterways and dams.
- Dispose of unwanted aquatic animals humanely (refrigerate the fish in water and when the fish stops moving, put the bag into the freezer overnight – this method is endorsed by the RSPCA WA Inc.).
- Report the presence of freshwater pests using the FishWatch line – **1800 815 507**.

