

**A REVIEW OF EXPORT TRADE OF INDIGENOUS  
FRESHWATER FISH SPECIES IN SRI LANKA AND  
THEIR CONSERVATION ISSUES**

A dissertation submitted to the  
Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture  
Uva Wellassa University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirement of  
the degree of  
Bachelor of Aquatic Resources Technology

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**2013**

## ABSTRACT

Ornamental fish are exported to 71 countries around the world. Many species of fresh water fish in Sri Lanka are collected from wild habitat for ornamental fish export trade which causes a series conservation issue on the particular endemic freshwater fishes. Present study was intended to analyze and evaluate the trade of freshwater fish in Sri Lanka with a particular focus on endemic species.

Data on the freshwater fish species subjected to ornamental export trade and their quantities were extracted from 3037 Customs Goods Declaration Forms submitted by the ornamental fish exporters to the Air Cargo Terminal in Katunayake under the Department of Sri Lanka Customs during the period of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013.

During the one year period total of 29 fish species under 15 families were collected from freshwater habitats for the export from Sri Lanka. Among the total, 18 species were indigenous, 10 species Endemic, 3 salt dispersants and one were exotic and the most common species exported was the *Garra ceylonensis*, and *Anguilla bicolor* was the species exported in least quantities. When considering the foreign exchange *G. ceylonensis* has earned highest amount while *Devario pathirana* were has brought least earnings. Total income generated from the ornamental fish trade during one year period was SL Rs.1, 069,066,413 and contribution of endemic freshwater fish was 0.001% with compare to total earnings of ornamental fish trade. Among more than 200 exporters who registered in Sri Lanka Customs for the export of ornamental fish, only 15 exporters were exported endemic freshwater fishes. According to present study there are no any exporters who practicing captive breeding and do 100% wild collection of endemic fishes.

Therefore endemic freshwater fish trade is in the declining trend and due to the lack of involvement of government authorities in the development of sector almost due revenue which can generate from the trade is lost. For sustainable management of this resource need the collaboration of each and every shareholders who are involving in the ornamental fish industry.

Key words – Conservation, Endemic, Export, Freshwater fish, Revenue