

BOOK REVIEW

THE FISHES OF OKLAHOMA

Rudolph J. Miller and Henry W. Robison, Okla. State Univ. Press, Mus. Nat. Hist. Ser. No. 1, Stillwater, 1973.

This handbook, *The Fishes of Oklahoma*, is well written, timely, and suitable for use by teachers, students, amateurs and professionals. The photographs and species distribution maps should have general appeal. The authors have arranged the keys and simplified the identification of the species to the point whereby students and week-end fishermen can use them with only minimal training.

Teachers and professional field biologists will find the book an excellent teaching guide. The basis of valid field biology is positive species identification. The ability to identify the species of fishes is essential to valid observation of fluctuations of populations due to ecological imbalances, pollution, and disease. The identification of any species requires familiarity with certain technical terms and, in this book, a description of these terms is in an ideal location. The glossary is placed where it should be, near the descriptions of the structural features which are necessary for identification of families and species. The distinguishing characteristics of closely related species are described clearly, and photographs of each species show the reader the actual detailed features and diagnostic characteristics necessary for identification.

The natural history of each species is educational and interesting. Specific information pertaining to the biology and habitat of little known species is well documented with references. The index is well arranged and includes both the common and scientific names.

There are two items which should have been included in the handbook. First, in

the key to families, the page number of the text should appear immediately after the family name. The reader could then turn directly to the page where the representatives of the families are located. Second, a brief description of age determination should have been included; elaboration of more advanced methods could be reserved for other texts.

The dedication to Dr. Moore is very fitting since the book not only provides an excellent guide to the identification of Oklahoma fishes, but also stresses the importance of studying this fascinating field.

This handbook has been made simple enough for the untrained nature lover, youth or adult, and at the same time it is sufficiently reliable to be used in serious ichthyological studies.

Herbert F. Upchurch
The Samuel Roberts
Noble Foundation, Inc.
Ardmore, Oklahoma