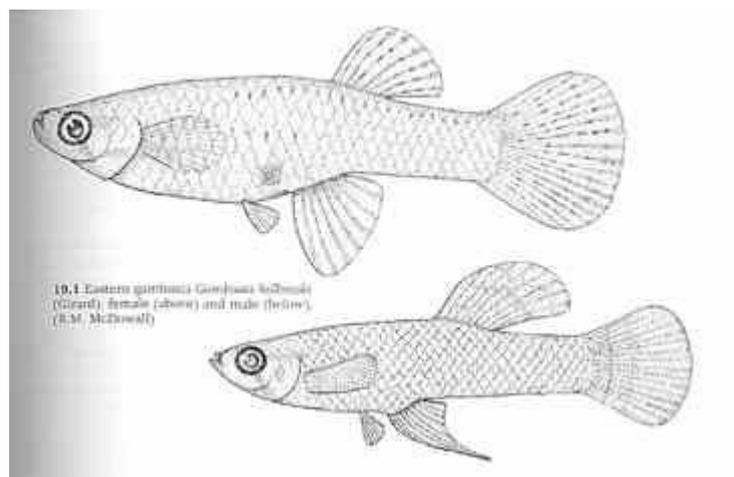


Family - Poeciliidae

A large and diverse popular aquarium group of fish known for giving birth to live young rather than laying eggs, hence the name 'livebearers' for this family. A total range extending from the central United States and northern Argentina. Most species live in freshwaters, but some enter brackish estuaries or the sea. This family is characterised by a protrusible, upturned mouth; large scales; no lateral line; a single soft-rayed dorsal fin.

Several species have become established in the wild in south-eastern Australia either as deliberate releases or accidental escapees. Most closely related to the native family Hemirhamphidae.

Eastern Gambusia *Gambusia holbrooki* (Girard).



10.1 Eastern gambusia *Gambusia holbrooki* (Girard): female (above) and male (below). (R.M. McDowall)



(R.M. McDowall)

Other names: Mosquitofish

Description: Tiny, stout with a deep rounded belly; upper surface flattened, particularly the head. One soft rayed dorsal fin (6-8 rays), short based high and rounded. Anal fin (9-11 rays) small and rounded; tail rounded. Large scales (28-32 along side), no lateral line. Vertebrae 31-33; stout gill rakers (13-15). Females can grow a maximum length of 60 mm; males only grow to 35 mm.

Distribution: This species is widespread throughout Australian inland waters. Very widespread throughout New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria, both inland and coastal drainages.

Abundant in the Canning and North Dandalup catchments, Western Australia, is present in coastal drainages of Queensland, and parts of the Northern Territory; not recorded in Tasmania.

Natural History: Native to rivers draining into the Gulf of Mexico. Original introductions came from the USA via Italy. Was introduced to Australia in about 1926 for use in aquaria and later released as a means of a biological control for mosquitoes.

One-spot live bearer *Phalloceros caudimaculatus*



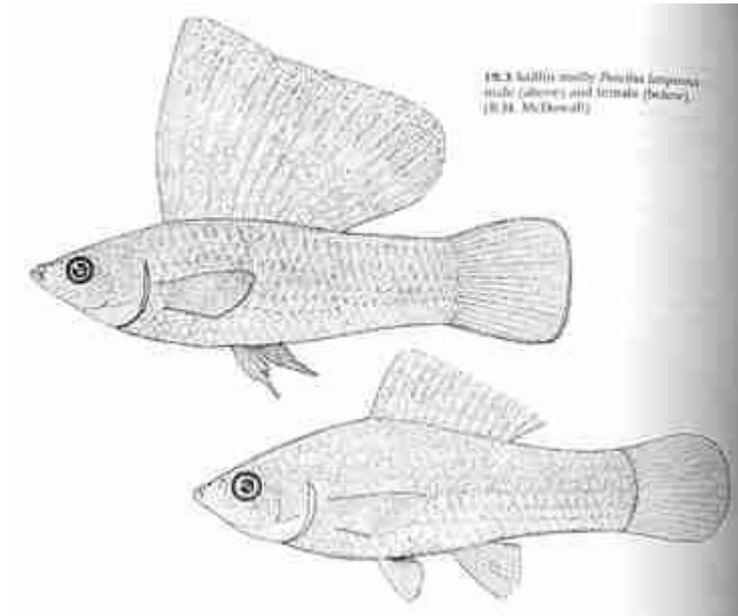
Other names: None.

Description: dorsal rays (7-8); anal rays (9-10); 28-30 lateral line scales. Females known to reach 60 mm, males smaller reaching 25 mm.

Distribution: This species is presently confined to Perth, Western Australia.

Natural History: Native to South America, from Rio de Janeiro to Uruguay and Paraguay. The time of introduction of this aquarium species to Australia is unknown.

Sailfin Molly *Poecilia latipinna* (Le Sueur).



(R.M. McDowall)

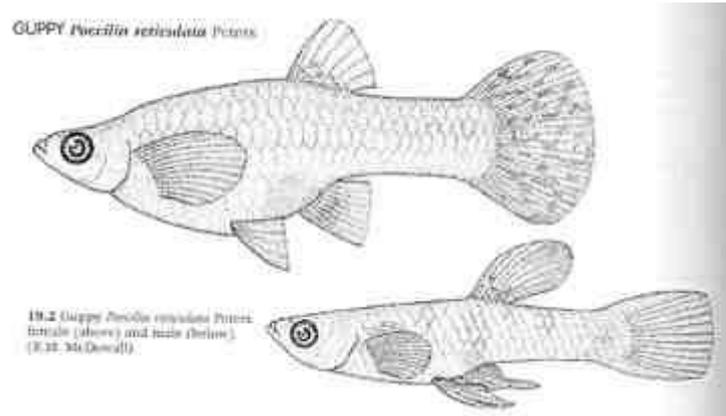
Other names: None.

Description: Deep-bodied and highly compressed, body arching to dorsal fin. Dorsal fin (15-17 rays), quite low in female and greatly enlarged in males; anal fin (8-10 rays). Tail slightly rounded to truncate; 26-28 large scales along side; 24-28 gill rakers. Commonly reaches a length of 60-70 mm, but has been recorded at 120 mm.

Distribution: Present in only a few creeks and drains slightly north of Brisbane. Likely to find congenial habitats in northern parts of Australia.

Natural History: A warm water species endemic to southern and eastern states of the United States, from North Carolina south and west, to areas bordering the Gulf of Mexico. Introduced to Australia in 1969 as an aquarium species.

Guppy *Poecilia reticulata* Peters.



(R.M. McDowall)

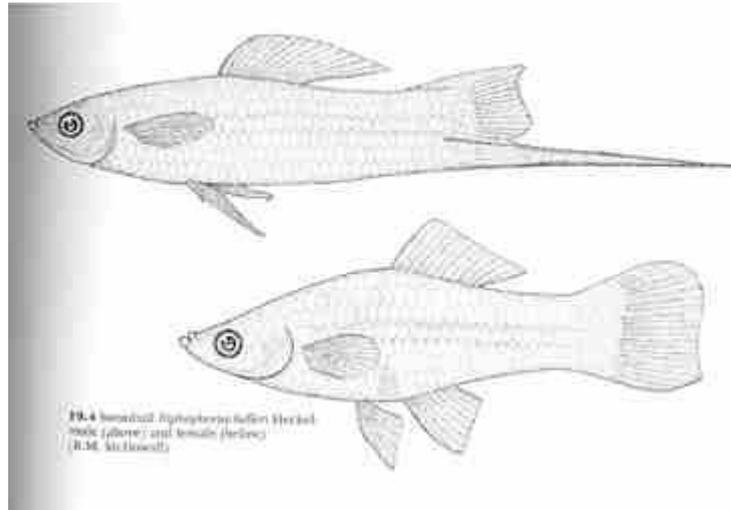
Other names: Millionsfish

Description: Stout, small fish, compressed towards tail. Single soft-rayed dorsal fin (7-8 rays), small and angular in the female, but longer in males. Anal rays (8-9); 26-28 midlateral line scales; 13-16 gill rakers. A great number of form and colour varieties. Females reaching about 60 mm and males reaching 30 mm.

Distribution: Established in many coastal creeks near urban centres between Brisbane and Townsville, including Cairns, Rockhampton, and Mackay, Queensland.

Natural History: Native to the West Indies, Venezuela, and Guyana. Introduction of this species is unknown, but is documented that it has been kept by aquarists for many decades.

Swordtail *Xiphophorus helleri* Heckel.



19.4 *Platy Xiphophorus bifasciatus* (Herbert
Moore) (above); anal female (below)
(R.M. McDowall)



(R.M. McDowall)

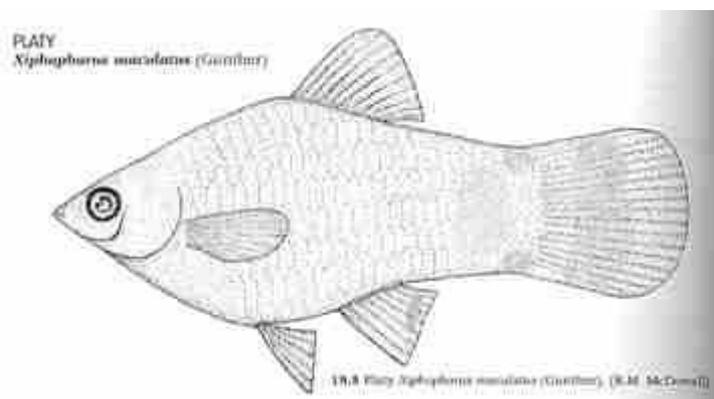
Other names: None.

Description: Deep-bodied and compressed. Dorsal fin angular (11-12 rays); anal fin (8-9 rays), below dorsal in female and forward of dorsal in male. Tail truncated; 26-27 scales along midlateral line, 18-20 slender gill rakers. Males reach up to 80 mm and females 120 mm.

Distribution: Occurs in many coastal drainages of northern New South Wales and a few rivers around Brisbane in eastern Queensland.

Natural History: Native to waters of the eastern Atlantic drainages of Central America, from Mexico to Belize. First introduced to Australia in 1965 for aquarists.

Platy *Xiphophorus maculatus* (Gunther).



PLATY
Xiphophorus maculatus (Gunther)

19.8 *Platy Xiphophorus maculatus* (Gunther) (R.M. McDowall)



(R.M. McDowall)

Other names: None.

Description: Small, deep-bodied, compressed fish. Dorsal fin high on arching back, angular (10-11 rays); anal fin (8-9 rays). Tail slightly rounded to truncate; scales 25-27 along midlateral line. Females reach 60 mm, males reach 40 mm.

Distribution: Present in only a few swamps and around and north of Brisbane, Queensland.

Natural History: Native to the inland waters of North America, Central America and Asia.

Domingo Mosquito Fish *Gambusia dominicensis*

Other names: None.

Description: Deep, rounded belly and flattened upper surface. 9 dorsal rays; anal rays (10-11); 26-29 midlateral scales. Females attain a maximum length of 60 mm, males smaller 25 mm.

Distribution: Found around springs and waterholes around Alice Springs in the Lake Eyre division.

Natural History: Native to Haiti preferring warmer temperatures than *G. affinis*.