

NOTEWORTHY DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT RECORDS FOR FOUR OKLAHOMA FISHES

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During the past six years, collections of fish during the annual biotrend sampling program by personnel from the Water Quality Laboratory of the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) has yielded several unusual records of Oklahoma fishes.

The alligator gar (*Lepisosteus spatula*) has seldom been collected in recent years from the major rivers of the state. To my knowledge, there are no recent collections of the alligator gar except in Lake Texoma (1, 2).

Two young-of-year alligator gars were collected July 1, 1981 by the author and D. Lessman using a seine in a shallow, sluggish-flowing, turbid backwater channel of the Red River south of Harris in McCurtain County (Sec 16 T10S R25E), Oklahoma. The location was a divided channel of the Red River located along the south bank beneath the bridge on Highway 259 as it enters Texas.

The two specimens were deposited in the fish collections of OSDH in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and were assigned the number OSDH 721. Length in centimeters followed by weight in grams for each specimen is 10.0, 4.59 and 11.9, 6.35.

On January 23, 1981 another record of alligator gar appeared in the *Little River News*, a newspaper printed in Ashdown, Arkansas, and later repeated in the *McCurtain County News*, which is published in Idabel, Oklahoma. The story included pictures of four large alligator gars which were captured using "scare fishing" and trammel nets. On January 18, 1981 three fishermen captured these gars weighing 152 (7 ft., 3 in.) 148 (7 ft.), 109, and 95 pounds. The four gars weighed a total of 504 pounds and were taken from Lake Millwood near Beard's Buff, Arkansas. Millwood Lake is a mainstream reservoir on the Little River in Arkansas. However, extensive netting and sampling by the author between 1975-1981 in the Little River drainage of Oklahoma failed to turn up this species.

The banded pygmy sunfish (*Elassoma zonatum*), usually found only in swamps, quiet backwaters of lowland streams, and springs with dense vegetation (3), was taken on June 6, 1977 during the annual OSDH biotrend sampling program in the Red River south of Harris in McCurtain County (Sec 16 T10S R25E), Oklahoma. One specimen was seined from the main channel next to a deep raceway along the south bank of the river. Three additional specimens from this site were taken during routine dipnet sampling for macroinvertebrates on July 7, 1979 and July 15, 1981. The three specimens obtained by dipnetting efforts were found in masses of red willow roots protruding from the bank at water level. These specimens were placed in the OSDH fish collections and were assigned numbers OSDH 119 and OSDH 450.

The tilapia (*Sarotherodon aurea*) remains abundant in the North Canadian River as indicated earlier. (3). During the period 1978-1981, this species was collected in fairly large numbers in five samples from near Harrah, Oklahoma County (Sec 22 T12N R1E). Additional specimens were found in seven samples from near Wetumka, Hughes County (Sec 3 T9N R11E). During the winter sampling on Nov. 15, 1980 at the Harrah site, both living and many dying tilapia were collected when the water temperature was 14 C.

The relatively rare blue sucker (*Cycleptus elongatus*) was collected from two sites during the OSDH biotrend sampling program. Two specimens were obtained on June 4, 1976 from the Cimarron River one mile south of Perkins in Payne County (Sec 12 T17N R20E), Oklahoma. This specimen was placed in the Oklahoma State

Zoological Museum at Stillwater, Oklahoma. Two additional specimens were taken on June 9, 1977, from the Red River south of Harris, McCurtain County (Sec 16 T10S R25E), Oklahoma; these specimens were cataloged into OSDH collections as number 118.

REFERENCES

1. E. B. MAY and A. A. ECHELLE, *Copeia* 3: 629-630 (1968).
2. H. McCARLEY and L. G. HILL, *Southwest. Natur.* 24: 694-695 (1979).
3. J. PIGG, *Proc. Okla. Acad. Sci.* 58: 111-112 (1978).