



ELECTROFISHING SURVEY

Electrofishing is a technique used by NT Fisheries to survey fish populations in freshwater rivers, billabongs, creeks, drains and other waterbodies across the Top End. NT Fisheries use this method to collect information about fish populations and to determine the presence or absence of non-native fish in our waterways.

Electrofishing is conducted using a flat bottom boat with a generator and/or a backpack unit powered by batteries. Both setups create an electrical field which stuns fish momentarily giving sufficient time to net and transfer to holding tanks to be identified and measured. Any non-native fish that are detected will be removed from the waterway, whilst the native fish will be returned when it is safe to do so.

A non-native fish is a species that does not occur naturally in the Northern Territory. Many ornamental fish are non-native species. Whilst not a problem when properly contained in an aquarium, many of these species have the potential to become pests if allowed to escape into our waterways.

If released into natural waterways, non-native fish can:

- compete with native fish for food and space
- dominate waterways by reproducing in large numbers and surviving in adverse and disturbed habitats
- alter and disturb natural habitats
- feed on native fish, insects, and plants
- introduce diseases and parasites.

If you think you've spotted a pest, take a photo, catch a sample if possible and call the Fishwatch Hotline on 1800 891 136.

Siamese fighting fish, guppies, platies and swordtails are popular non-native ornamental fish that have been found in NT waterways. This is most likely as a result of people illegally dumping unwanted fish or fish escaping from overflowing ponds during heavy wet season rains.



Siamese fighting fish (*Betta splendens*)
Wild caught male (top) and female (bottom)



Guppy (*Poecilia reticulata*)
Wild caught male (top) and female (bottom)



Platy (*Xiphophorus maculatus*)
Wild caught female

For more information please see the NT Fisheries website at www.fisheries.nt.gov.au