



AQUACULTURE POTENTIAL OF ORNAMENTAL FISHES OF UGANDA



¹Namulawa VT, ²Ssekayi J, ³Namulemo G

¹Aquaculture Research & Development Centre, Kajjansi, P. O. Box 530, Kampala Uganda

²NAADS Coordinator, Kakiri Town Council, Wakiso District, P.O. Box 7218, Kampala Uganda

³National Fisheries Resources Research Institute, P. O. Box 343, Jinja



Haplochromis nyererei



Platytaeniodus sp. (Red tail)



Psammochromis ripuanus



Haplochromis rockribensis



Northobranchius ugandensis



Synodontis victoriae



Haplochromis chrysogynaion



Astatotilapia latifaciata



Ctenopoma murei



Haplochromis barbarae

Abstract

Preliminary studies undertaken to investigate the availability of ornamental fish species in Uganda's natural water systems, revealed significant abundance of coloured fishes in Uganda's water systems including the Kyoga and Victoria Lake system. These species are able to breed in captivity and to feed on artificial diets in ponds and glass tanks. The species are attractive and are highly marketable. These observations indicate the potential to culture ornamental fishes as a way of diversifying the range of aquaculture species, a means to generate income and to improve livelihoods in Uganda.

Introduction

Ornamental Fish Trade is one of the most lucrative businesses in the world today, fetching close to USD 15 billion annually (Helfaman, 2007). This trade is led by countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, with a diversity of ichthofauna as is the case in Uganda. This trade is popular and profitable because the unit value of ornamental fish is higher than that of food fish. In Uganda, several middle men have taken to collecting some ornamental fishes from Lakes Kyoga and Victoria, however, this is not ecologically sustainable. There is need produce the required critical masses through aquaculture, in this way those occurring naturally will not be exhausted. This avenue offers opportunity for rural and urban households to indulge in aquaculture, and through this, augment their income and develop linkages to the international trade.

Opportunities

- Studies reveal that Uganda has abundance of coloured haplochromine cichlids in its fresh water bodies (Witte & van Oijen, 1990; Byaruhanga & Kigoolo, 2005), however these have not been well utilized for ornamental or aquarium trade (UEPB, 2012).
- There are reports of increased interest in ornamental fish from Lakes Nakuwa, and Nawampasa in Paliisa district and Lake Victoria in the Central region.
- Fish especially of the *Haplochromis* family have gained market in the USA and the European Union.
- Uganda is endowed with a suitable climate, water resources and large manpower base in the public sector.
- The technology for breeding and feeding ornamental fish in captivity is available.
- Uganda has a well developed freight system that can be used to distribute the ornamental fishes to various market destinations.

Challenges

- Lack of systematic policies on ornamental fish trade and specific research on ornamental fish culture.
- Lack of adequate infrastructure and key inputs. These hinder the production of varieties which are on demand in the fast growing domestic and international market.

Way forward

- There is need to develop and streamline ornamental fish trade policies in Uganda.
- There is need to develop strategies towards the production critical masses of ornamental fishes through aquaculture.

References

- Byaruhanga A, Kigoolo S (2005). sites.wetlands.org/reports/ris/1UG005_RISen06.pdf.
- Helfman GF (2007). *Fish conservation. A guide to understanding and restoring global aquatic biodiversity and fishery resources*. Island Press.
- Witte F, van Oijen JP (1990). Taxonomy, ecology and fisheries of Lake Victoria haplochromine trophic groups. *Zool. Verh. Leiden*, 1-47.
- UEPB, Uganda Export Promotion Board (2012). Opportunities and strategies for wildlife trade sector in Uganda. www.biotrade.org/.../Uganda_wildlife_opps_strategies.pdf.