

AN EXPLANATORY NOTE FOR USERS

Coverage. This book includes 568 fish species belonging to 258 genera and 78 families, found in the Indochinese Mekong. The term "Indochinese Mekong" is used to indicate the Mekong Basin in Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam; namely, it does not cover the Burmese (Myanmar) Mekong and Chinese Mekong. This book is actually not a comprehensive guide for the fishes of the Mekong where *ca.* 1,100 species are presumably found (Hortle, 2009), but almost all fish species commonly found in the Indochinese Mekong are thought to be covered at least. All fish species shown here have been confirmed with respective voucher specimens from the Indochinese Mekong during our field surveys in 2007–2013, unless otherwise noted. Some fishes, considered to be the flagship species for the conservation purposes in this region (*e.g.*, highly threatened and/or extinct species), are also shown here, even if we did not actually collect them [*e.g.*, *Balantiocheilos ambusticauda* (Cyprinidae)]. The brackish-water species and temporary visitors from coastal marine waters, found in the tidal estuaries in the Vietnamese Mekong, are also included. Although this book contains several putative undescribed species, we do not give their new-species descriptions here; these fishes will be described as new elsewhere, and some are now being studied by us.

Photographs and specimens. All photographs shown in this book were taken based on the specimens from the Indochinese Mekong during the NEF Project in 2007–2013, unless otherwise noted. The photographed specimens were deposited in the fish collection rooms of respective institutions. The collection abbreviations are as follows: **CTU**, Can Tho University, Cần Thơ, Vietnam (preferred style of fish collection is CTU-P 123); **IFREDI**, Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute (IFReDI), Fisheries Administration (FiA), Phnom Penh, Cambodia (preferred style of fish collection is IFREDI-P 123); **RLIKU**, Research Laboratory of Ichthyology, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand; **NUOL**, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, National University of Laos, Vientiane, Lao PDR (preferred style of fish collection is NUOL-P 123); **UNMF**, Ubonratchathani University Natural History Museum of Fishery, Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand. Abbreviations of the photographers are as follows: **CG**, Chaiwut Grudpan (UNMF, Thailand); **HVM**, Hieu Van Mai (CTU, Vietnam); **JWRC**, Japan Wildlife Research Center (Japan); **KS**, Koichi Shibukawa (formerly NEF, Japan); **KU**, Kenzo Utsugi (formerly NEF, Japan); **LXT**, Loi Xuan Tran (CTU, Vietnam); **PM**, Prachya Musikasinthorn (RLIKU, Thailand); **PT**, Phanara Thach (IFReDI, Cambodia); **TP**, Thonglom Phommavong (NUOL, Laos); **VP**, Vannaphone Phutthana (NUOL, Laos); **VV**, Viengkhone Vannachak (NUOL, Laos). These abbreviations are shown at the side of the respective photographs.

Text. Text was supervised by the editorial board (composed of delegates in respective involved institutions in the NEF project), by adopting many discussions with participating researchers in the NEF project, as well as several additional fish research specialists whose names are listed in the acknowledgment section. Responsibility for correspondence in particular the scientific purposes is received by K. Shibukawa (Museum of Natural and Environmental History, Shizuoka, Japan), who wrote/compiled a draft manuscript of the text.

Classification and arrangement of fish taxa. Suprageneric taxa (*e.g.*, orders and families) are arranged for the most part following the systematic order of Nelson (2006). We have sometimes deviated from Nelson (2006) with respect to several distantly-related fish families that look similar (*e.g.*, Aplocheilidae and Adrianichthyidae). Even if they are not closely related, arranging similar-looking fish families close together can make the identification of specimens easier for non-professionals. Limits of the orders and families largely follow those of Nelson (2006), unless otherwise noted. Family code numbers, that are being used for curatorial works of voucher specimens housed in participating institutions (see "Photographs and specimens", left), also follow those of Nelson (2006: 469–483); in the species accounts, the family codes are given after respective family names (in parentheses, abbreviation: FC). Within a family, genera/species are arranged based on similarities in their general appearance; namely, similar fishes may be found nearby within the family, but they do not necessarily have a close phylogenetic relationship. This manner, however, may cause some difficulty for the search of the target species, in particular with the large families with great species diversity (*e.g.*, Cyprinidae), since the decision of "similar or different" is merely the authors' subjective matter. The pictorial index of species (pp. 26–31), arranging almost all fish species shown in this book as respective thumbnails of fishes, may help for searching the target species.

Species names. All fish names are given with the scientific names of respective species, as well as the authors and published years for respective names. Both vernacular and English names are not included. In the Indochinese region, many of fishes have more than a single vernacular names in each country and, contrarily, many vernacular names may refer to some other species in each (*i.e.*, some or more fish species may be confused under a single vernacular name); the "national standard" common names of fishes is not yet developed, and there are no good dictionaries of vernacular names of fishes in this region. In order to provide the vernacular names, comprehensive grounded researches are needed; the works are beyond a scope of this book.

Size and distribution data of fishes. Size of fishes is given as its reliable maximum size, presented in standard length (SL), total length (TL), or disc width (DW, for stingrays only), with the respective references in parentheses. Methods for the measurements are shown in p. 11. Size data is usually shown to the nearest 0.1 cm (in species < 10 cm) or 1 cm (10 cm or more). The other morphological data are primarily based on the voucher specimens collected by ourselves, and complemented/reinforced by data of reliable references. Regarding the distribution data, that in the Mekong Basin is given first, followed by whole (*viz.* worldwide) data of the respective species. Data of fish distribution in the Indochinese Mekong refers to the results of our field surveys in 2007–2013, as well as reliable records in the literatures.

References. List of scientific articles cited and/or referred to in this book is given in the last section.