

NANFA to Fund “*Freshwater Fishes of North America*”

Todd Crail

2348 Sherwood, Toledo, OH 43614

toddcrail@gmail.com

During the 2012 NANFA Research Grant application process, each member of the Grant Review Committee found one particular proposal to be evaluated separately from the other proposals. The proposal was made by two very prolific authors in North American fish work, Brooks Burr and Melvin Warren, who are editing a three volume book set entitled “*Freshwater Fishes of North America*”. From their proposal:

“The book will be the first-ever, fully-illustrated work synthesizing practically all that is known about the diversity, natural history, ecology, and biology of 52 families of North American freshwater fishes (including 12 marine families with species persistently in fresh waters). The book covers all of Canada, the coterminous United States, and Mexico (south to about the Isthmus of Tehuantepec). No current book synthesizes information on every North American freshwater fish family and genus, and no one book has ever been published that covers distribution, biology, and ecology of every family on the continent. In sum, no other books exist or have ever existed that compare to this one.”

The proposed three volume set includes contributions from seventy-four expert authors synthesizing information on standard topic areas for each fish family with an emphasis on the generic level. Each chapter features Joe Tomelleri color illustrations of each available North American fish genus and will contain up to 350 color photographs and maps per volume and an Introduction to the family, which will highlight the specialized features of the group. Consequent sections will include topics on Diversity and Distribution, Phylogenetic Relationships, The Fossil Record, Morphology, Genetics, Physiology, Behavior, Reproduction, Ecology, Conservation, and Commercial Importance. Chapters are then summarized by a Literature Guide, directing the reader to the major

sources of information on the family, and features detailed species-specific or topic specific treatments, including a standardized life table summarizing important aspects of the life history of each genus or exemplar species within each genus.

The benefits of this combined set of information will be invaluable to many different interests involved in North American native fish, from hobbyists to professionals. We found that the proposed work is consistent with the mission of NANFA:

- to increase and disseminate knowledge about North America’s native fishes and their habitats
- to promote the conservation of native fishes and the protection/ restoration of natural habitats
- to advance the captive husbandry of North America’s native fishes for the educational, scientific, and conservation benefits it affords through Education, Scientific Knowledge and Conservation.

As such, the Research Grant Review Committee recommended funding the proposal separate from our normal Research Grant program. We are pleased to report that the NANFA Board of Directors accepted funding the proposal, and have committed \$2,000 each year for three years (\$6,000 total contribution from NANFA) to help offset the cost of publishing by Johns Hopkins University Press (\$20,000 per volume). Volumes will be donated to NANFA for the annual Convention auction to help recuperate costs, and the NANFA logo will be featured prominently in the acknowledgements of each volume.

While the amount is unprecedented in the history of NANFA, and is a hefty contribution from our small organization, consideration of the proposal speaks volumes about the commitment of NANFA’s members to the conservation and dissemination of knowledge about North American fishes. That is, three volumes, actually. 🍷