

From the Complete Field Notes of the Jan/Feb 1976 Collecting Trip to Sierra Leone

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Technical Editor BKA

Technical Paper #19

The collecting journey to Sierra Leone was undertaken by the following people: Parker, J., BKA, Roberts, R., BKA, Radda, T. Frau, Vienna, Wapenaar, J., BKA, Wright, A. J., BKA.

The journey through Sierra Leone covered some 900 miles in which 31 locations were examined. In biotopes which have not appeared in numerical sequence in the report were found various populations of the species *Epiplatys fasciolatus*, in many cases these fish were found sympatric with the Cichlid species *H. bimaculatus* or with *Pelmatochromis* species. Location 2 was a stream in the village of Pendembu. Location 4, a small pond in Regent Village which only contained *Pelmatochromis* sp. Location 5, pool fed by mountain stream at Regent. Location 6, small pool near to Bathurst. Location 7, irrigation pool about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Regent. Location 8, mountain stream near Bathurst. Location 9, small pool in mountain stream. Location 11, ferry crossing on the Waanje River where an *Aplocheilichthys* species was taken. The appearance of such diminutive fishes sympatric with very large forms of Characin (some at least 16" in length) was most interesting.

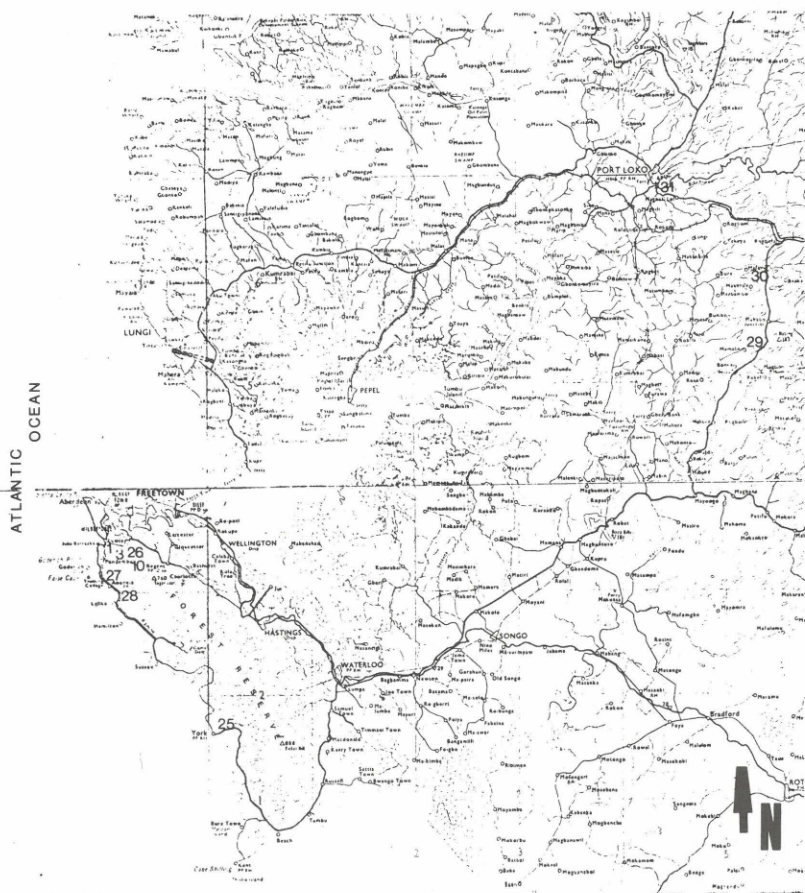
In conclusion, the team would like to express its very grateful thanks to the following people who helped to make the journey a success; to Mr. Raymond Kupelian, Kupelian Garage, Freetown for his help in acquiring transport; to Mrs. Demby, Demby Hotel, Bo for a letter of introduction to the District Officer, Pujehun; to Mr. Victor Foh, District Officer, Pujehum for the allocation of living quarters in his area; to the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources and his staff in supplying letters of credence; finally, to the local population who gave us friendship and help in locating freshwater.

Location #1
January 26, 1976

Lumley Village

NW Sierra Leone

A large lagoon close to the named village. Size of lagoon at its widest part 50 yds, depth at its greatest part 4 feet. Bottom of volcanic rock with a hard sand covering. Refuse at the bottom which included all sorts of domestic waste. Water clear with a DH of 20 + and a pH of 7.5. No aquatic plants present but mangrove in the biotope. Position fully exposed. Water temperature at 10.00 hours--82°F. Air temperature at



Map 1. Freetown-Cape Sierra area. Port Loko area.

10.00 hours--82°F. Here was found the species *Aplocheilichthys spilauchen* Dumeril 1895. Although the biotope was almost of marine water, during the rainy season this water becomes almost fresh. Sympatric with this form was found three types of Cichlid, Catfish species, Mud Skippers and Crabs. the *A. spilauchen* found were of good size and were in excellent coloration.

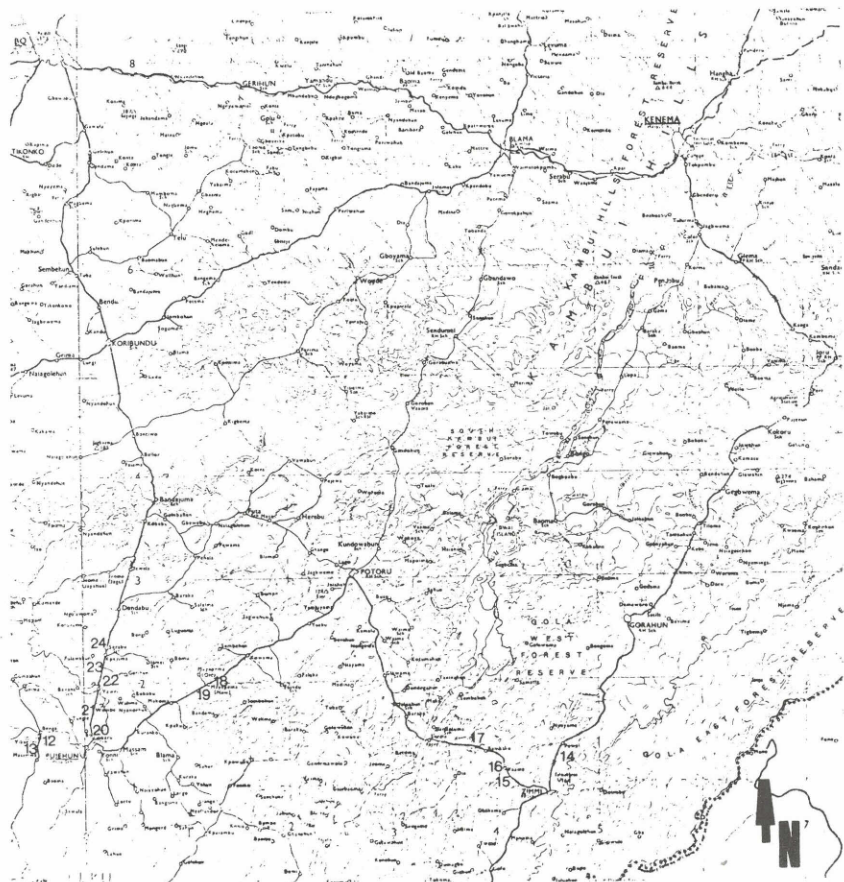
Location #3

Marjay Village

NW Sierra Leone

January 26, 1976

A small pool in a hill stream above the village of Marjay about two miles from the larger village of Pendembu. The pool had been formed by artificial damming (small concrete wall with outlet at its base—3 inch iron pipe) 10 feet at its widest part and 30 inches deep at its deepest part. Base volcanic rock over which was a rich deposit of sediment. Profuse aquatic vegetation present and the pool well shaded by bush and fallen vegetation of terrestrial origin. Water very clear and had a slight flow. Water



Map 2. Pujehun Area-SW Province.

temperature 74°F and air temperature 80°F at 16.00 hours. DH was 0.5 and pH 5.7.

A species of *Roloffia* was found which at this time cannot be placed within any known form of this genus. No other fish fauna present. Further down stream from this biotope was found a population of Cichlids sympatric with *E. fasciolatus* but the *Roloffia* did not occur here although access would have been possible.

This form requires further study before coming to any conclusion.

Description of the *Roloffia* males from location #3

Flanks basically of greenish-brown which was superimposed in the forward part of the body with iridescent crimson markings with iridescent green also present from the gills to just in front of the commencement of the D reappearing again at the root of the caudal. Dorsally of a brassy color. Head orange, lips orange with some red reticulations. Top of head with some green iridescence and also around the eye. Eye iridescent green, throat orange.

D—basic color orange-yellow with some dark markings which forms an almost purplish streak at the distal part of the fin, outer margin of blue-white.

A—same basic coloration with a row of 4 deep crimson spots at the root which appear in some samples, purple. Distal part dark grey with the tips of the rays being crimson.

C—basic coloration yellow-green with the extreme outer edge being almost transparent—some greyish pigment present. Center of C with reticulated crimson markings with a large crimson spot at the top of the caudal peduncle. Top outer margin deep yellow to orange, bottom outer margin of the same coloration but being wider than the top margin. Inner margins of crimson.

V—deep orange

P—small being yellowish-green with a faint dark outer line.

Description of the females

Basic coloration dorsally green-grey, lower part of body medium orange which is overlaid crimson markings and spots. Red markings on gills, belly region pinkish.

D—transparent-root grey-green with many small crimson spots.

A—root of fin orange remainder of fin transparent.

C—root of fin orange and green with a black spot top of caudal peduncle remainder of fin transparent.

V—transparent.

P—transparent.

Summary—In view of the color pattern of the female which does not resemble any form of *Roloffia* known it must be considered that this fish may represent a new species.

Location #10

Fonima Village

NW Sierra Leone

A well shaded pool in a small stream which had a slight flow. Base of volcanic rock and gravel covering at the banks, rotting vegetation present, overhung by trees and small bushes. Water temperature was 78°F and air temperature was 84°F at 13.30 hours.

Here was found a population of a *Roloffia* species which was identified as *R. geryi* by the pattern of the females.

The water depth at its deepest part was 1'6" and the pool some 3'6" at its widest point. The *Roloffia* found sheltering beneath the banks. Water was very clear. Sympatric species *E. fasciolatus*. DH 1.5 and pH 6.7. Fish were taken January 29, 1976.

Location #12

Benga

SW Sierra Leone

A small rivulet approximately 1 mile from Benga Village. Soil base with rotting vegetation and a profuse growth of aquatic plants, water lilies and a type of plant resembling Aponegeton. Biotope exposed but one or

two trees present which gave a little shade. Water temperature 82°F and air temperature 98°F at 15.00 hours. DH 2, pH 6.3. Water clear, flow slight. Depth at deepest part 3', width at widest part 4'. Surroundings of this biotope was swamplike in character. Present an *Epiplatys* species which resembled the known *Ps. annulatus* in shape but not in color pattern, in size slightly larger than the species mentioned. The form found was not plentiful and did not survive the journey to the U.K.

Description of the male *Epiplatys* species from location #12.

Dorsally light olive. Flanks light grey superimposed by very fine darkish vertical bars which were incomplete forward of the D fin and complete towards the C fin. Lower lip dark iris silver.

D—transparent with slight amber overcast.

A—transparent with yellowish overcast which was more intense in the lower part.

C—transparent with a few dark markings mainly in the upper part. Center of C elongated.

V—transparent.

P—transparent.

Female similar to male but having weaker coloration.

**Location 13 2 miles from Masamwa
On the road from Benga to Kalu**

**SW Sierra Leone
February 2, 1976**

A very swampy area through which ran a small rivulet which was, at its deepest point 1'6" and at its widest point about 2'6." Stream with some aquatic vegetation and had much terrestrial vegetation along its banks which comprised ferns and small bushes. Water temperature at 15.25 hours was 82°F and air temperature at 15.25 hours was 94°F. DH 1, pH 6.3. Water clear which ran over a soil bottom.

Here was found an *Epiplatys* species and also an *Aplocheilichthys* species occurring sympatrically with a form of Cichlid although the latter form remained within the deeper part of the biotope.

**Location #14 Pewa
On the Zimmi to Gorahun road**

**SW Sierra Leone
February 3, 1976**

Streams at the side of the road near to Zimmi which had a slight flow and turbid water. Stream with soil base and well covered by rotting leaves, tree bark and tree stumps. Depth at deepest part 1'3" and some 18/20' at its widest part. Stream well shaded by overhanging trees and at the banks, ferns. Water temperature at 11.30 hours was 76°F and air temperature at 11.30 hours was 82°F. DH 1.0 and pH 6.5. Upstream the waters were used by villagers for washing.

Here was found a new type of *Epiplatys* sympatric with a small Characin species.

Description of the male *Epiplatys* from location #14.

Dorsally dark brown to bronze. Flanks brown, belly grey to light

brown. Iris green. Head with red markings on gills, lips dark.

D—lemon yellow to transparent with a few dark markings, outer margin of very pale blue.

A—orange to yellow but transparent at the root, outer margin purplish.

C—yellow with orange in the lower part. Upper margin of pale blue, lower margin of some thin dark pigment. Center of C elongated.

V—transparent but with slight yellow tinge.

P—orange.

Females—Basically olive. All fins transparent with a slight yellow overcast.

Provisionally this species must be considered as being Spec. Nova.

Location #15

Vaama

SW Sierra Leone

On the Potoru to Zimmi road

February 3, 1976

Well shaded stream passing under the road. Soil gravel base with rotting vegetation. Water clear and with moderate flow which ran over rocks in places. Pools formed near banks which appeared slightly turbid and which were overhung by tall trees and bushes. Some aquatic plants present but being thinly spread over the area. Stream 5' at its widest point and 2' deep at the deepest point. Water temperature at 13.00 hours was 76°F and air temperature at 13.00 hours was 84°F. DH 1.5 and pH 6.

Here was found a type of *E. fasciolatus* sympatric with a *Roloffia* species, crabs, tadpoles and a form of Catfish also present. The *Roloffia* species was not numerous and were difficult to catch.

Location #16

½ mile from Vaama

SW Sierra Leone

February 3, 1976

A small stream which ran under the road. Stream with moderate flow, gravel base, very scarce aquatic vegetation. Pool formed in the stream where fish were taken. Pool in moderate shade to deep shade which was provided by overhanging trees and bushes. Depth at deepest part 10" and 10' wide at its widest point. Water clear. Water temperature at 13.55 hours was 78°F and air temperature at 13.55 hours was 86°F. DH 2.0 and pH 6.3.

Here was taken a very beautiful population of *E. fasciolatus* and a type of *Epiplatys* which could not be identified and may be a new species.

Description of the male *Epiplatys* species from location 16.

Dorsally blue-grey. Flanks basic coloration light grey. 3 vermiform crimson markings on and behind the gill covers with iridescent blue on the gill covers. Along flanks are 11 thin vertical herringbone-like bars. Head—lips crimson, throat orange. Eye—golden with a turquoise spot below eye. Each scale edged in some dark pigment which gave a net-like pattern in upper two-thirds of body.

D—basic coloration yellow with many crimson spots.

A—basically yellow for two-thirds from root of fin, remaining one-third of grey-blue with a faint crimson outer margin. A elongated and pointed at the rearward part.

C—basic color yellow with the fin rays picked out crimson and which have a few crimson spots present. Lower margin grey-blue with faint crimson edge. Extreme end of C whitish and the fin being spade-like in shape.

V—yellow.

P—yellow.

The females are dorsally olive-brown. Flanks light olive with a thick dark line along the lateral position and 11 thin dark bars in the vertical plane. Eye—golden with blue spot below eye, crimson flash on gill covers.

D—transparent.

A—transparent.

C—transparent but with a slight yellowish tint at the roots. Shape of fin as for the male.

P & V—transparent.

This form may well be a new species and must be considered as Spec. Nova.

Location #17
February 3, 1976

Kouma Village

SW Sierra Leone

A slow moving stream which was partially shaded by tall trees on one side and had some aquatic vegetation (Nymphaea type plants). Stream 9' wide at its widest point and 2'6" deep at its deepest part. Soil base. On one side ferns grew close to the bank and roots of terrestrial bushes into the water. Near to bridge over which the road passed, the water had a more rapid flow and received more shade. Water slightly turbid. Water temperature at 14.50 hours was 80°F and air temperature at 14.50 hours was 94°F. DH 1.5 and pH 6.8.

Here was found sympatric with an *Epiplatys* type form of the genus *Aplocheilichthys* which we could not identify also sympatric were a type of Gobie and Characins. The *Aplocheilichthys* occurred in great numbers and swam in shoals and, were most easily caught.

Location #18
Pujehun to Potoru road

Mayepema Village

SW Sierra Leone
February 4, 1976

A small stream which had moderate flow and which formed many small pool. Base of rock with light sedimentous covering, leaves and rotting material present. Shade moderate given by overhanging trees. The pools formed varied in size from 10' wide to under 3' and varied in depth from 1'6" to 10" in depth. DH 2 and pH 6.3. Water temperature at 09.30 hours was 77°F and air temperature at 09.30 hours 79°F.

In one pool was taken a type of *Aplocheilichthys* species and a

population of *E. fasciolatus*. In another pool but connected to the first pool, was seen a species of Cichlid.

Location #19 **1½ miles from Mayepema**
Pujehun to Potoru road

SW Sierra Leone
February 4, 1976

A stream passing through dense shade and under the road. At the bridge a pool was formed which was fully exposed the only shade coming from the shadow of the bridge itself. Some aquatic plants present (*Nymphaea* types) which became quite profuse near to the banks. Pool formed at bridge 10' wide and was some 3'6" deep at its deepest part. Greatest width of the stream was 18'. Stream with a soil and gravel base and turbid where pools were formed, although stream ran through the pools with a slight to moderate flow. Water temperature at 10.30 hours was 78°F and air temperature at 10.30 hours 84°F. DH was 1.0 and pH 6.6.

In this biotope occurred the following fauna; an *Epiplatys* type #1, *Epiplatys* type #2, *Ps. annulatus* of a distinct population, a *Roloffia* species (*R. geryi* type) which were in very small numbers, *Aplocheilichthys* species and all of which were sympatric with 2 forms of Characin and a form of *Marmoryd* type fish. This biotope proved one of the most interesting examined in view of the number and types of fish present.

Location #20 **2 miles from Gaboru**
Pujehun to Bo road

SW Sierra Leone
February 5, 1976

Small pools in a rapidly drying brook. Largest pool 5' wide at its widest part and some 6" at its greatest depth. The pool was shaded on by sedge-like plants. The bottom was of soil and with a covering in depth of rotting vegetation. All pools stagnant and very turbid. Water temperature at 13.30 hours was 76°F and air temperature at 13.30 hours 88°F. DH 2.0 and pH 6.5.

Here was found *Roloffia* of a blue basic phenotype sympatric with a type of *Epiplatys* (*E. barmoionsis*?). The *Roloffia* were found sheltering at the banks in the roots of sedge plants close to the banks, where banks as such existed. So far we have not been able to identify the *Roloffia* species taken.

Location #21 **2¾ miles from Gaboru Village**

SW Sierra Leone

Stream by side of road (Feb. 5, 1976) flowing through savanna. Pools formed along course of stream. Largest pool 15' in width and 1' in depth. Soil base with some rotting vegetation present. Center of pool exposed but some shade afforded at banks by sedge-like plants, few overhanging trees at one side which gave only partial shade. Some water plants present but sparse. Water clear with a slight flow. Water temperature at 14.00 hours was 80°F and air temperature at 14.00 hours 90°F. DH 1.5 and pH 6.3.

In this location was found 4 species of *Epiplatys* and two recognizable forms of *Epiplatys*, *E. fasciolatus*, *Ps. annulatus*, an *Aplocheilichthys*

species sympatric with Characin and catfish species. The *Ps. annulatus* differed from the type taken at location #19 and did not occur in any numbers.

Location #22 Kpeyima Swamp
On the road from Yawei to Bo

SW Sierra Leone
February 6, 1976

Nymphaea type plants and some type of Aponetion plants present on one side of the stream which received most sunlight. One part of stream fully exposed. Soil base with fair covering of rotting leaves and decomposing vegetation. On the exposed side of stream were Cichlid species and in the more shaded side but swimming in open water the following species occurred; *Ps. annulatus* and an *Aplocheilichthys* species. The *Ps. annulatus* differing in color pattern to the form already taken at Location #21. The stream had a slight to moderate flow. Water temperature at 09.55 hours was 76°F and Air temperature at 09.55 hours 88°F. DH 1.0 and pH 6.7. Stream at widest part was 10'. Stream at greatest depth 1'3".

Location #23 ½ mile from Serabu Village
February 6, 1976

SW Sierra Leone

A small stream running through a swamp area near the village of Serabu. Deep shade afforded one side of the stream where it passed under the road, this shade was given by banana and dwarf palm trees also by taller types of trees. No shade opposite side of road. Soil base and the water slightly turbid with a thick algal growth on the bottom. Some rotting vegetation present. Very slight flow in part where fish were taken. Deepest part 2' and greatest width 7'6". Water temperature at 11.00 hours was 81°F and air temperature at 11.00 hours 86°F. DH 1.5 and pH 6.3.

Fish fauna present: a *Roloffia* species, *Epiplatys* species sympatric with a form of Cichlid. The *Roloffia* were found sheltering beneath a slightly overhanging bank and in terrestrial type grasses and tree roots. In most biotopes where *Roloffia* occurred it was always other fish fauna which were caught first and the *Roloffia* last of all to be taken.

Location #24 Serabu Village
February 6, 1976

SW Sierra Leone

At the village proper in a swamp-like area, a stream running through a drying swamp and under the road. Fully exposed location except for a small amount of shade afforded by sedge like plants growing at the edge of the stream. Farther upstream some shade given by dwarf palm trees. Stream with soil base and clear, well covered by rotting vegetation with few water plants present of undetermined form. Stream at its widest part 7', at the deepest part 3'. Water temperature at 11.35 hours was 81°F and air temperature at 11.35 hours 92°F. DH 1.5 and pH 6.3.

Fish fauna present: a *Roloffia* species, a form of *Epiplatys* species, *Ps. annulatus* again which differed from other forms taken in color pattern and a small species of Gobie.

Location #25

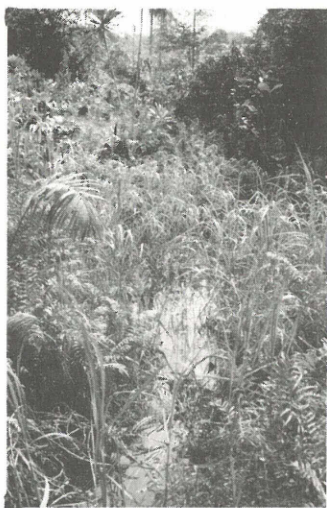
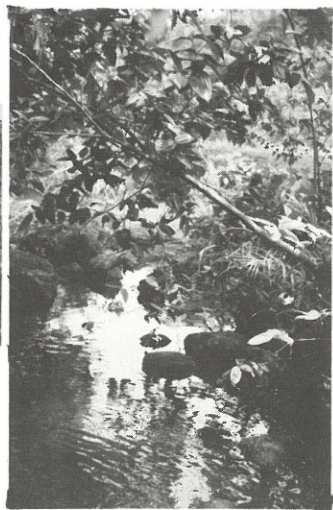
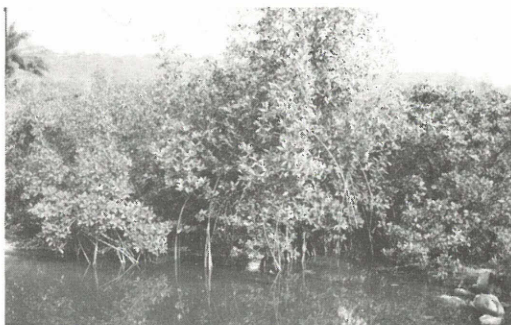
York Area

NW Sierra Leone

Road from York Village to Kent

February 8, 1976

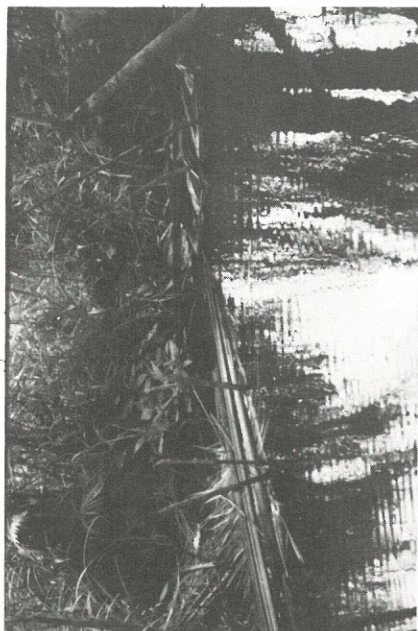
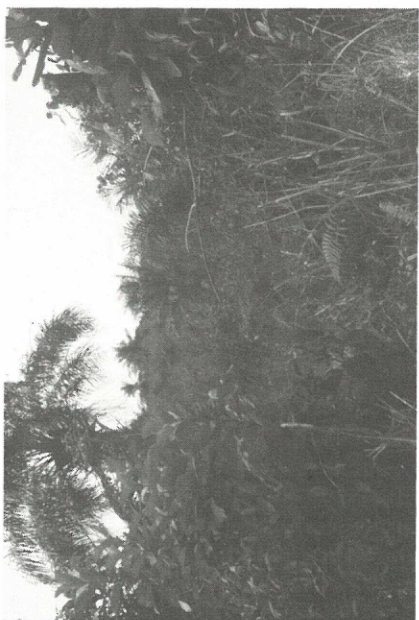
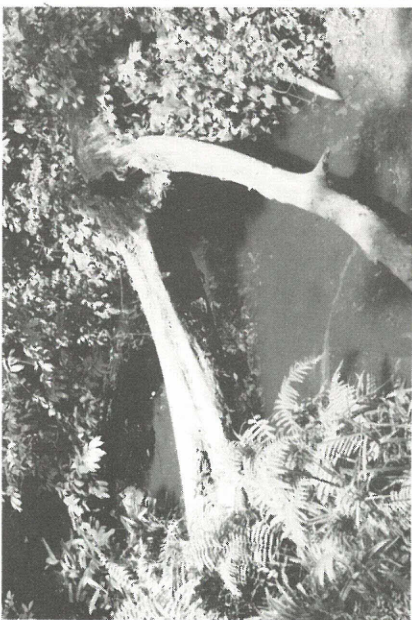
A small stream running from forest reserve. Pools formed by the roadside which were exposed and had only slight flow. Some 40' from the road on each side the pools and stream became well shaded by ferns, trees and terrestrial grasses. Widest part of pools 6' and greatest depth 1'2". Stone and sediment bottom, water clear except at banks where slight turbidity occurred. Algae at the sides of pools. Water temperature at



Upper Left: Home of a beautiful population of *Apl. spilauchen* (Loc. 1). **Upper Right:** Fonima. Here was found a population of *R. geryi*. (Loc. 10). **Lower Right:** Benga. Taken here was a strange form of *Epiplatys*—a greenish orange finned type of *E. [Ps.] annulatus*. (Loc. 12). **Lower Left:** Masamwa. Home of an *Epiplatys* species and a type of *Aplocheilichthys* (Loc. 13).
Photos by Jim Wapenaar, Holland.

11.50 hours was 78°F and air temperature at 11.50 hours 87°F. DH 2.0 and pH 6.5.

Here was found a species of *Roloffia* which were caught sheltering at the banks where algae formed most prolifically. Algae also covered many large stones which dotted the water course. Sympatric species were *E.*



Upper left: Near Vaama. Here was found the new species *Epeplatys nyalaensis* Neumann 1976. (Loc. 16). Upper right: 1½ miles from Mayepema. Location of *E. [P.] annulatus*, 2 types of *Epeplatys* ss, *R. geryi*, *Aplocheilichthys*, 2 types of Characin and catfish. Photos by Jim Wapenaar, Holland

Lower left: Masai-ka Swamp. Home of *R. geryi* of a bright red population of *R. geryi*, *Epeplatys* ss sympatric with a large type of Cichlid. (Loc. 31). Lower photos by Fred Wright.

fasciolatus of a very large in size population (some taken reaching 4½ to 5 inches, these being a most beautiful population) and a type of freshwater shrimp.

Location #26 1 mile from Marjay Village NW Sierra Leone

Stream which flowed through forest reserve formed many small pools among boulder outcrops. Base of stream volcanic rock and a covering of sediment. Stream fairly fast in flow and shaded in part by overhanging terrestrial plants whose roots penetrated the water and gave some shelter from the current. Water clear along its course, pools clear. Deepest pool was 1'6" and widest pool 9'6". Water temperature at 14.00 hours was 82°F and air temperature at 14.00 hours 106°F. DH 4.0 and pH 6.3.

Here was found sheltering at the banks and well in among the roots of terrestrial plants, a species of *Roloffia*. No other fish fauna present.

Location #27 Adonkia NW Sierra Leone
February 10, 1976

A large stream flowing from forest reserve through savanna. Gravel and soil bottom, mainly exposed but slight shade afforded by sedge plant growth and some small bushes. 4' at the deepest part and some 18' at its widest. Water clear with moderate flow. Water temperature at 10.10 hours was 78°F and air temperature at 10.10 hours 80°F. DH 2.0 and pH 6.0.

Here was found a blue type of *E. fasciolatus* sympatric with a large Cichlid species.

Location #28 ½ mile from Adonkia NW Sierra Leone

A large dammed stream which runs from the hills of a forest reserve and maintained at a high level by damming (Guma Valley Water Supply Co.). Upstream very well shaded by large trees and bushes. Water plants in profusion which included a giant form of *Anubias* species. At banks also profuse growth of water plants and tree roots, overhanging terrestrial grasses and small bushes near to both banks. Heavy soil deposit at bottom with much aquatic and terrestrial plant refuse and water logged tree branches. Deepest part 4'6", widest part 45'. Basement of volcanic rock. Water clear with moderate flow. Water temperature at 11.00 hours was 80°F and air temperature at 11.00 hours 79°F. DH 2.0 and pH 6.0.

Present a form of *R. roloffi* which varied from types taken in previous locations sympatric with *E. fasciolatus* and a *Barbus* species.

Location #30 Mile 58 on the Masiaka to Port Loko road NW Sierra Leone

A stream which flowed through a swamp area and on through savannah. Heavy soil deposit in stream and profuse aquatic vegetation. Stream exposed but the swamp water afforded shade by sedge and small bushes, fallen logs and tree branches. Stream obviously used as a drinking

pool by wild animals as the presence of game traps illustrated. Water in stream with slight to moderate flow and very clear in the center part but turbid at the banks. In against the banks was found sheltering a species of *Epiplatys* which greatly resembled the species *Epiplatys bifasciatus*. In the stream and in the swamp water was found a type of *Roloffia geryi* in fair numbers. In the stream proper was found also a species of *Aplocheilichthys* and a medium sized Characin species. Water temperature of the stream at 12.00 hours was 84°F, air temperature of the stream at 12.00 hours 94°F, and water temperature of swamp waters at 12.00 hours 86°F. Widest part of stream was 2', deepest part 1'2". Swamp area about 1 acre in area and rapidly drying out. Depth of water in swamp 6".

The species of *Aplocheilichthys*, is perhaps *A. flavipinnis* Meinken 1932.

Location #31

Port Loko Area

NW Sierra Leone

February 11, 1976

A large stream slowly flowing through savannah with dense aquatic plant growth in places and exposed where stream flowed under bridge by the road but shaded further upstream on one side of road and on other side downstream about 30 yds. from bridge. Bottom soil and gravel. Width at widest part 30' and deepest part 2'. Water temperature at 13.00 hours was 80°F and air temperature at 13.00 hours 88°F. DH 1.5 and pH 6.7.

Roloffia geryi found in shallow overflow pool in which the water temperature was 94°F. Sympatric with *R. geryi* in the stream was an *Epiplatys* species, *Aplocheilichthys* and a form of Cichlid.

Summary

1. That it is well worth considering the frequently occurring high temperatures which are well above those which are maintained in most aquaria for the species mentioned in the above field notes.
2. The frequently occurring species *Ps. annulatus* (*E. annulatus*) in the Pujehun area although never in any great numbers any biotope examined. That each biotope of the species gave a differing population in some degree.
3. The survival of the small *Epiplatys* species (*Ps. annulatus* and a close relative which has been described in color pattern in this formal report) with much larger fish fauna such as large Cichlid species and Characins also larger *Epiplatys* species. Mostly the smaller *Epiplatys* were found in mid-stream or pool where they swam at the water surface. ☆

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EDITORIAL 248

From the Complete Field Notes
of the Jan/Feb 1976 Collecting
Trip to Sierra Leone
by Fred Wright 249

A Beautiful Little Jewel
from Ikeja
by Mark Chan 262

The Forgotten Genus
by Jeff McKee 266

Breeding *A. australe*
by Joe Komarek 268

Chairman's Report 272

Letters to the Editor 273