

Preface

THIS BOOK IS A COMPLETE REVISION OF MY 1981 *AN ATLAS OF Distribution of the Freshwater Fish Families of the World*. It was written without reference to the first edition, and I did not check the 1981 book until after I had written the first draft of the new material. In a very few cases I discovered that I had said it more clearly in 1981, so I kept some of the wording. Much has happened since 1981. Families have been lumped, and families have been split. New species have been discovered, and known ranges have been extended. As in the first edition, the distribution maps are intended to give a general picture of where a family occurs. At this scale, the maps cannot pinpoint the precise distribution. Classification and family names more or less follow Nelson (1994). However, I have largely relied on Buckup (1998) and de Pinna (1998) for characiform and siluriform relationships. The numbers of genera and species in a family were taken from Nelson (1994) and updated from FISHBASE (www.fishbase.org/search.cfm), which incorporates Eschmeyer's (1998) catalog, or from recent primary literature.

I intend this book for a variety of users. It will be helpful as a ready reference and as an entrance into the literature for undergraduate students writing a term paper or preparing an oral presentation. Graduate students in ichthyology might use it as a starting point and source of ideas for selecting a thesis topic. Professors should find it helpful when preparing lectures on various groups. Ichthyologists and zoogeographers will find it a convenient summary of distribution patterns. In addition, tropical fish hobbyists and anglers may find it a source of information relevant to their pastimes.

By necessity, almost any book is a product of the author's experience. It seems natural that I have included more detail about some families than about others. Most of my career has been spent working with North American and Australian fishes so I have emphasized what I know best. I have included all primary and secondary division freshwater fish families and a sprinkling of peripheral or marine families that have some representatives in fresh water. There are other marine families that could have been included by virtue of their species that enter rivers throughout the world.

The maps in this book show native and not introduced distributions, and map references marked with an asterisk include a distribution map.