

W. G. Lowe

NOMENCLATURE OF THE TILAPIAS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

E. Trewavas

Fish Section, British Museum (Natural History),
Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD, England

Ichthyologists who have followed the recent proposal (Trewavas, 1973) to place the substrate-brooding and mouth-brooding tilapias in separate genera will not be pleased to learn that there is a further proposal to group the mouth-brooders in at least two genera, *Sarotherodon* and *Oreochromis* (Trewavas, 1981). None of the species now retained in the genus *Sarotherodon* is native to southern Africa. These all come into one or the other of two subgenera of the genus *Oreochromis*.

According to the rules of nomenclature the name used for a group of generic rank must be the generic name given to a species within that group. *Sarotherodon* was first given by Rüppell (1852) to *Sarotherodon melanotheron*, the black-chinned tilapia of West African brackish waters. This is a paternal mouth-brooder whose males do not congregate in breeding arenas and do not have a distinctive breeding coloration. Related to it is *S. galilaeus*, a biparental mouth-brooder, also lacking differential coloration and habits of the sexes at breeding time. The name *Sarotherodon* is now to be restricted to these and to related West African species with less well-known breeding habits. None of them is known to have the 'lek' type of behaviour.

This latter type of breeding behaviour characterizes the East and Central African mouth-brooders, including *mossambicus* (without a genital tassel) and *macrochir* (with a genital tassel). In these the males congregate in a special arena, where each (if his rivals will let him) establishes and defends a territory. Here they are visited by gravid females who after a brief courtship lay eggs in the centre of the territory of the chosen male. The female immediately takes the eggs into her mouth and the sperm emitted by the male fertilizes them either on the ground or when they are already in the mouth. The female may then visit another male before she moves away with her eggs to a special nursery area. The male may mate with other females.

The first generic name given to a member of this group was *Oreochromis* Günther, 1889, for the species *O. hunteri*, which inhabits a small crater lake on Kilimanjaro, and this is the generic name we propose to use for the maternal mouth-brooders of East and Central Africa.

Oreochromis is defined on reproductive habits. It includes four subgenera, *Oreochromis* (which is both genus and subgenus), *Nyasalapia* Thys, 1968, for the species with a genital tassel, *Alcolapia* Thys, 1968, for the little species of the alkaline lakes Natron and Magadi, and *Neotilapia* Regan, 1920, for *O. (Ne.) tanganicae* of Lake Tanganyika.

According to this classification, the mouth-brooding species of southern Africa are to be named as follows:

- Oreochromis (Oreochromis) mossambicus* (Peters, 1852)
- Oreochromis (O.) placidus* (Trewavas, 1941)
- Oreochromis (O.) mortimeri* (Trewavas, 1966)

- Oreochromis (O.) andersonii* (Castelnau, 1896)
- Oreochromis (O.) shiranus* (Boulenger, 1896)
- Oreochromis (Nyasalapia) squamipinnis* (Günther, 1864)
- Oreochromis (Ny.) saka* (Lowe, 1952)
- Oreochromis (Ny.) lidole* (Trewavas, 1941)
- Oreochromis (Ny.) karongae* (Trewavas, 1941)
- Oreochromis (Ny.) macrochir* (Boulenger, 1910)

In writing of them in a context other than systematic it is not necessary to use the subgeneric name.

A name in brackets after the generic name denotes a subgenus. When it is desired to indicate that a species of *Oreochromis* was formerly included in *Tilapia* one may write:

Oreochromis (formerly *Tilapia*) *mossambicus*
but not: *Oreochromis (Tilapia) mossambicus*.

Populations of two of the species have been given subspecific names. These are:

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| <i>O. placidus placidus</i> | <i>O. placidus ruwumae</i>
(Trewavas, 1966) |
| <i>O. shiranus shiranus</i> | <i>O. shiranus chilwae</i>
(Trewavas, 1966) |

All these genera and subgenera as well as *Tilapia* itself are included in the Tribe Tilapiini of Family Cichlidae and may be referred to as 'tilapiine cichlids' or simply as 'tilapias', with a small 't' and not in italics. The South African species of *Tilapia* are *Tilapia sparrmanii* A. Smith and *T. rendalli* Boulenger.

The Quanza system, Angola, harbours in its lower reaches *Tilapia cabrae* Boulenger and *Oreochromis (Nyasalapia) angolensis* (Trewavas).

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KEYWORDS

Taxonomy; Cichlidae; Southern Africa; *Sarotherodon*; *Oreochromis*.