

RESERVOIR AND CULTURE-BASED FISHERIES: BIOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

**Proceedings of an International Workshop held in
Bangkok, Thailand from 15–18 February 2000**

Editor: Sena S. De Silva

Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
Canberra, 2001

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Canberra, ACT 2601
<http://www.aciar.gov.au/publications>

Sena S. De Silva, ed. 2001. Reservoir and culture-based fisheries: biology and management. Proceedings of an International Workshop held in Bangkok, Thailand from 15–18 February 2000. ACIAR Proceedings No. 98. 384pp.

ISBN 0 642 45694 1 (printed)
ISBN 0 642 45695 X (electronic)

Editorial management: P.W. Lynch
Production editing: PK Editorial Services, Brisbane
Typesetting, page layout and illustrations: Sun Photoset Pty Ltd, Brisbane
Printing: Watson Ferguson & Co., Brisbane

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FOREWORD

RESERVOIRS are a major, and for several Asian countries an expanding, water resource which is very diverse both in terms of size and fisheries potential. They range from small water bodies with productive culture-based fisheries to expansive reservoirs with variable and often low fish production. The strategies required to achieve desirable productivity levels from these water bodies are similarly diverse, and importantly, are still evolving as our knowledge of these systems improves. This workshop, jointly sponsored by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Mekong River Commission Fisheries Program, brought together 55 scientists from 16 countries to discuss recent progress and future challenges in the wise use and management of reservoir fisheries resources through culture-based interventions. It is particularly pleasing to note the active participation of scientists from all major ongoing reservoir fisheries projects in Asia variously funded by ACIAR, the Mekong River Commission (MRC), European Union (EU), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), as well as several national programs.

Such an international gathering on reservoir fisheries was timely, being the first time in almost a decade that scientists from Asian countries actively involved in this area of research have convened for a dedicated scientific exchange on the topic. This enabled regional and international specialists to share research findings and management experience, to identify gaps in existing knowledge, and from this to establish R&D priorities for the future. This is reflected in the workshop objectives below:

- *To bring together the leading reservoir fishery researchers, planners and managers involved in research on aspects of reservoir fisheries biology and management in Asia and to provide an open forum to present the research findings on reservoir and culture-based fisheries biology and management.*
- *To review the current status of reservoir fisheries in Asia; their importance to the animal protein supply, and current management strategies and approaches.*
- *To provide a forum for an exchange of views on potential improvements to reservoir and culture-based fisheries development and management in Asia.*
- *Attempt to prioritise the research needs in reservoir fisheries biology and management at the regional level.*
- *Based on the above, to explore the possibilities of developing a tangible research strategy for reservoir and culture-based fisheries research in Asia (tropics), at the regional level that could impact on the sustainable utilisation of fishery resources in Asian reservoirs.*
- *To explore the possibilities of maintaining a continued dialogue and exchange of information among researchers, planners and managers involved directly and/or indirectly on reservoir and culture based fisheries in Asia.*

The workshop was opportune in other ways as well. The major findings and recommendations of the workshop were presented to a thematic session on 'Fisheries Enhancement' at the joint NACA-FAO international meeting on 'Aquaculture in the Next Millennium' held in Bangkok (21–25 February 2000). This provided valuable input into these broader deliberations aimed at the development of global policies on aquaculture. As a result, the workshop recommendations are reflected in the major outputs of this meeting—'the Bangkok Declaration and Strategy: Aquaculture beyond 2000'.

The success of meetings such as this depend on the dedicated effort of many individuals. I would particularly like to note the contributions of Prof. Sena de Silva, Dr Niklas Mattson and Dr Wolf Hartman, and the exceptional support provided to the activity by Deakin University.

I hope that the papers presented in these Proceedings will assist scientists, managers and all with an interest in reservoir fisheries in their efforts to improve the productivity of reservoirs in a sustainable and equitable manner.

*B.R. Smith
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Fisheries*

