

Media Release:

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Katherine River Home to New Species of Fish

A new species of freshwater fish – *Hypseleotris barrawayi* (common name Barraway's carp gudgeon) - originally discovered in an abandoned uranium mine, has recently been described and a breeding program is underway to protect the rare native.

Dr Helen Larson, Curator of Fishes at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory said the new species was discovered in the upper Katherine River system and at this stage is the only area where it's known to live.

"The fish were first discovered in the abandoned uranium mine pit and neighbouring billabongs at the abandoned Sleisbeck Camp in Kakadu National Park," Dr Larson said.

"They seem to have a preference for clear quiet water with shelter provided from steep banks and overhanging trees."

The new species was named after the late Sandy Barraway, traditional owner of the Sleisbeck country who had great knowledge of the fauna and stories associated with that country.

"The Barraway differs from other native carp gudgeons because it has distinct vertical bars on the body and the dorsal fins have horizontal stripes of light blue, black and red," Dr Larson said.

"In addition the caudal fin has several dusky bars, or row of spots, and a dark bar on the pectoral base."

Local ornamental fish breeder Dave Wilson said there's already been keen interest from aquarium keepers overseas.

"The Barraway is small, rare and quite an attractive fish making it an interesting addition for aquariums," Mr Wilson said.

"The breeding program will help ensure the species is protected and will also provide an income for the traditional owners.

"They are actually quite difficult to breed in captivity as the larvae need a particular type of movement to excite them into eating."

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Media Note – for more information contact Helen Larson on 8999 8253

Image *Hypseleotris barrawayi* credit to Neil Armstrong

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