

Wildlife Matters

MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

CREEK HEALTH MONITORING

HAVE you ever wondered what fish we have in our local creeks? Moggill Creek supports the greatest variety of native fish species of any creek system in the Brisbane City Council area, but its ability to do this is continually under threat from run-off and pollution, especially in built-up areas.



Swordtails (*Xiphophorus hellerii*) Top: male
Bottom: female. Photo Tim Howell

Last year Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) obtained funding from the Queensland Government for a 'Citizen Science' project to monitor creek health. The project aims to survey at least 6 primary sites in the Moggill Creek catchment over a period of 3 years. Biannual surveys will be carried out at each site and will comprise water quality monitoring, fish and macro-invertebrate surveys and assessment of structure and composition of the creek bed, bank and riparian zone at each site (including invasive weeds).

The first major event of the program was a Fish Survey Training session led by Leo Lee from 'Save Our Waterways Now' (SOWN), who is an expert on native fish in the greater Brisbane area. Volunteers were taught how to catch fish with box net traps and dip nets. Leo's favourite bait for the box nets is vegemite on small pieces of toast, together with a few pellets of cat food! This was very successful in capturing a variety of fish, both native and introduced. (All native fish were returned to the creek).

We learned that while almost all native fish are egg-layers, many exotic species such as swordtails (*Xiphophorus hellerii*) – see photo, retain the eggs inside their bodies, giving birth to live young. This can provide them with a competitive advantage. Only mature males exhibit the long tail, but the species can undergo sex-reversal under some environmental conditions. The presence of a well-endowed male spurs the maturity of females, while inhibiting the maturity of juvenile males in the vicinity.

For information on upcoming events and how you can be involved, go to: www.moggillcreek.org.au/creek-health-monitoring-project

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VIST MCCG: www.moggillcreek.org.au