

**COLOUR PICTURES OF FISHES FOR TAXONOMIC PURPOSES.
THE PROBLEMS OF REFLECTIONS & BACKGROUND COLOUR
SMUDGING.**

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ABSTRACT

Colour of fresh fish is too variable to be of diagnostic value. Nevertheless, colour is part of a complete description of fish. Therefore, colour quality has been studied on exposures made on various types of backgrounds and films, in sunlight and in a photographic set-up. Emphasis was on smudging of background colour on the fish. Problems with reflections were solved by submersion of the fish in water. Generally, white, brown and black backgrounds resulted in reduced colour quality and made the fishes look "dead". Green, blue and greyish-blue backgrounds gave the best results. Blue backgrounds made the fishes look more fresh, but green was the most useful colour for versatile applications. Transparent fins received the colour of the background. However, background colour also smudged the colour of the solid fish body. Red background was especially bad in this respect. Smudging became more conspicuous when fish were cut free from the background to be mounted on a white background to yield plates.