

THE PARASITES OF THE FRESH WATER FISHES OF LOUISIANA

I. Incidence and Distribution of Parasitism

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INTRODUCTION

In 1960 an intensive and long-range comprehensive study was undertaken to determine the degree and/or presence of parasitism in the freshwater fishes of Louisiana. Under a cooperative arrangement the fish examined in this study were collected and identified or classified by members of the survey team and by the field units of Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (Bailey, Lagler). Dissection, parasitic identifications and the laboratory aspect of this study were for the most part conducted in the laboratories of Loyola University. Fish collections were continued for over eighteen months and included specimens from fifty-four (54) watersheds (or bodies of water). These represented all sections of the State of Louisiana (see Plate I). A total of eighteen hundred and seven (1807) fishes were examined. The fishes catalogued represented fifty-two (52) species and seventeen (17) families. These are listed below:

Lepisosteidae—Gars

- Lepisosteus oculatus* (Winchell)—spotted gar
Lepisosteus spatula (Lacépède)—alligator gar

Amiidae—Bowfins

- Amia calva* (Linnaeus)—bowfin

Clupeidae—Herrings

- Alosa chrysocloris* (Rafinesque)—skipjack herring
Dorosoma cepedianum (Le Sueur)—gizzard shad
Dorosoma petenense (Günther)—threadfin shad

Esoxidae—Pikes

- Esox americanus vermiculatus* (Le Sueur)—grass pickerel
Esox niger (Le Sueur)—chain pickerel

Cyprinidae—Minnows and Carps

- Carassius auratus* (Linnaeus)—goldfish
Cyprinus carpio Linnaeus—carp
Notemigonus crysoleucas (Mitchill)—golden shiner
Notropis venustus (Girard)—blacktail shiner
Notropis maculatus (Hay)—taillight shiner
Phenacobius mirabilis (Girard)—suckermouth minnow
Pimephales notatus (Rafinesque)—bluntnose minnow
Pimephales vigilax (Baird and Girard)—bullhead minnow

Catostomidae—Suckers

- Erimyzon oblongus* (Mitchill)—creek chubsucker
Erimyzon suetta (Lacépède)—lake chubsucker
Ictiobus bubalus (Rafinesque)—smallmouth buffalo
Minytrema melanops (Rafinesque)—spotted sucker
Moxostoma poecilurum (Jordan)—blacktail redhorse

Ictaluridae—Freshwater Catfishes

- Ictalurus furcatus* (Le Sueur)—blue catfish
Ictalurus melas (Rafinesque)—black bullhead
Ictalurus natalis (Le Sueur)—yellow bullhead
Ictalurus punctatus (Rafinesque)—channel catfish
Pylodictis olivaris (Rafinesque)—flathead catfish

Anguillidae—Freshwater Eels

- Anguilla rostrata* (Le Sueur)—American eel

Cyprinodontidae—Killifishes

- Fundulus chrysotus* (Günther)—golden topminnow

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Lucania parva venusta (Baird and Girard)—rainwater killifish

Poeciliidae—Livebearers

Gambusia affinis (Baird and Girard)—mosquitofish
Mollienesia latipinna (Le Sueur)—sailfin molly

Serranidae—Sea Basses

Roccus chrysops (Rafinesque)—white bass
Roccus mississippiensis (Jordan and Eigenmann)—yellow bass

LEGEND

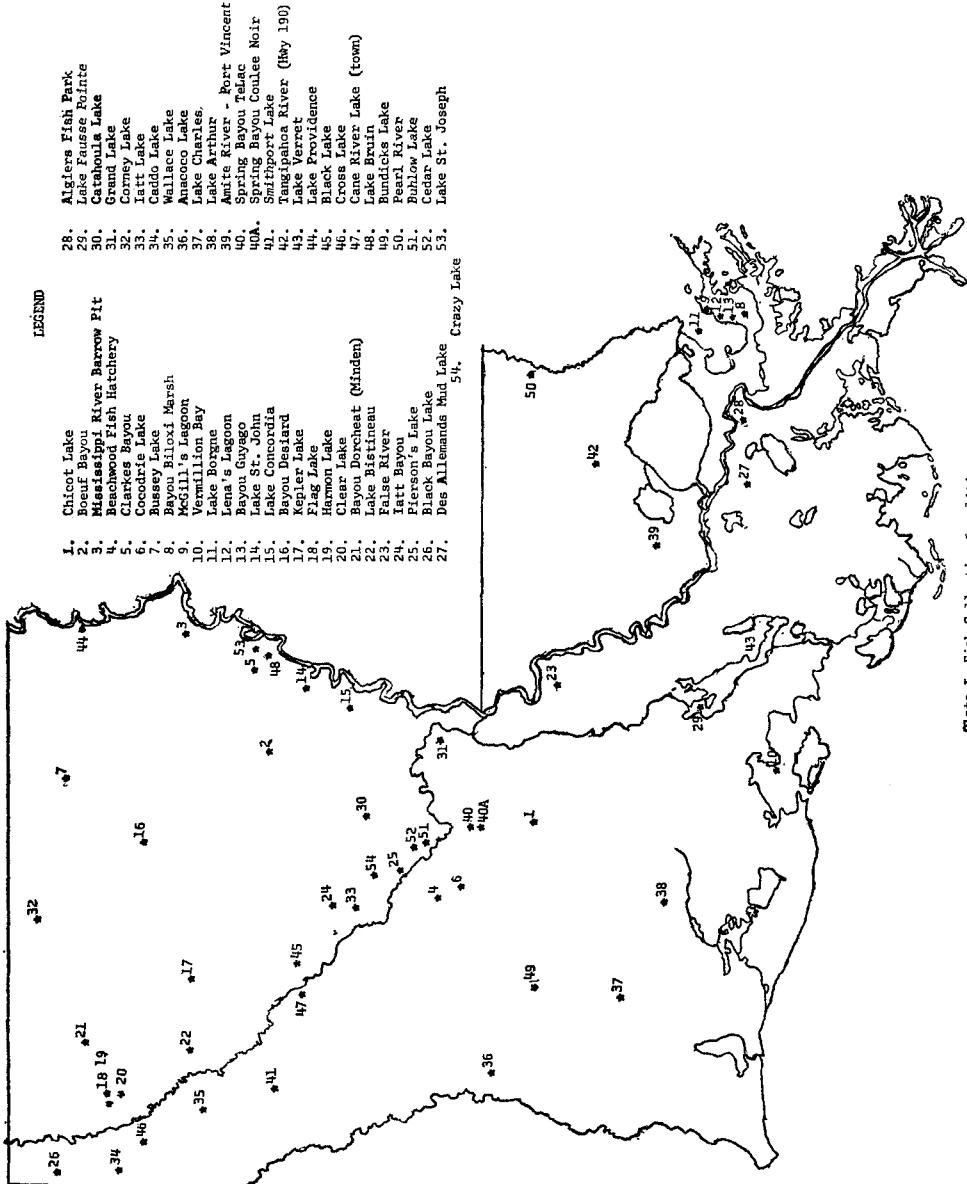


Plate I Fish Collection Localities

Centrarchidae—Sunfishes

- Centrarchus macropterus* (Lacépède)—flier
Chaenobryttus gulosus (Cuvier)—warmouth
Lepomis cyanellus (Rafinesque)—green sunfish
Lepomis humilis (Girard)—orangespotted sunfish
Lepomis macrochirus Rafinesque—bluegill
Lepomis megalotis (Rafinesque)—longear sunfish
Lepomis microlophus (Günther)—redear sunfish
Lepomis punctatus (Valenciennes)—spotted sunfish
Lepomis spp.—sunfish
Micropterus salmoides (Lacépède)—largemouth bass
Pomoxis annularis Rafinesque—white crappie
Pomoxis nigromaculatus (Le Sueur)—black crappie

Sciaenidae—Drums

- Aplodinotus grunniens* Rafinesque—freshwater drum
Cynoscion arenarius Ginsburg—sand seatrout
Micropogon undulatus (Linnaeus)—Atlantic croaker

Cichlidae—Cichlids

- Tilapia mossambica* Peters—Java tilapia

Mugillidae—Mullets

- Mugil cephalus* Linnaeus—striped mullet

Atherinidae—Silversides

- Labidesthes sicculus* (Cope)—brook silverside

Bothidae—Lefteye Flounders

- Paralichthys lethostigma* Jordan and Gilbert—
southern flounder

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A variety of methods were used in the collection of fishes. These included traps, rotenone, trammel nets, seines, and gill nets. While some of the fishes were iced temporarily all were preserved in formalin before dissection. This preservative was found to be the most practical considering the distances from collection sites to the laboratories.

The parasitological examination of each fish included a thorough study of the body surface, mouth, eyes, gills, fins, and a dorsal antero-posterior incision. The viscera were examined macroscopically and microscopically. All parasites were preserved in formalin until ready for cytological staining and mounting. Delafield's hematoxylin and eosin and triple carmine were used to stain the whole mount and section preparations. Glycerine was used for some of the round-worm preparations.

DISCUSSION

This research project was undertaken because no complete or comprehensive study of the parasites of the fresh water fishes had ever been undertaken in the State of Louisiana, as has been accomplished in many other states or regions of the United States. Many of these latter works are excellent and are considered invaluable to the Wildlife and Fisheries Commissions and/or Conservation Departments of these states. A representative listing of the investigators responsible for these projects include Bangham and his associates, Cook, Essex, Fischthal, Fritts, Haderlie, Huggins, Hunter and his associates, E. P. Meyer, M. C. Meyer, Mueller, Pearse, Van Cleave, and Ward. Bennett and his associates and F. Sogandares-Bernal and his associates have conducted Louisiana fish parasite studies for many years. The former investigator has specialized in the Trematoda, while the latter has concentrated on the parasites of marine or brackish water fishes. Bennett (1938) published a partial checklist of the trematodes of Louisiana Vertebrates. He and his associates (Corkum, Hopkins, Sparks, Melugin, and Miller) have continued to conduct excellent research activities in this field.

In the current project an examination of eighteen hundred and seven (1807) fishes revealed that one thousand and ninety-three (1093), or 60.4%, harbored at least one species of parasite (Plate III). An

ATE II

INCIDENCE OF PARASITISM BY LOCALITY

MAP NO.	LOCALITY	FISH STATISTICS						PARASITISM STATISTICS						
		Number Collected	Infested		Negative		Trematodes		Cestodes		Nematodes		Acanthoc.	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Chicot Lake	30	21	70.0	9	30.0	21	70.0	4	13.3	6	20.0	1	3.3
2.	Boeuf Bayou	6	5	83.3	1	16.7	5	83.3	0	0.0	3	50.0	0	0.0
3.	Miss. River Barrow Pit	64	52	81.2	12	18.8	48	75.0	4	6.3	17	26.5	1	1.5
4.	Beachwood Fish Hatchery	25	1	4.0	24	96.0	1	4.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
5.	Clarkes Bayou	42	20	47.6	22	52.4	17	40.4	4	9.5	2	4.7	0	0.0
6.	Cocodrie Lake	32	16	50.0	16	50.0	15	46.8	4	12.5	6	18.7	4	12.5
7.	Bussey Lake	35	18	51.4	17	48.6	10	28.5	3	8.5	8	22.3	2	5.7
8.	Bayou Biloxi Marsh	3	3	100.0	0	0.0	2	66.6	1	33.3	2	66.6	0	0.0
9.	McGill's Lagoon	10	4	40.0	6	60.0	4	40.0	3	30.0	2	20.0	2	20.0
10.	Vermilion Bay	23	16	69.5	7	30.4	6	26.0	0	0.0	11	47.8	12	52.1
11.	Lake Borgne	2	2	100.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	2	100.0	0	0.0
12.	Lena's Lagoon	14	9	64.2	5	35.8	6	42.9	4	28.5	3	21.4	0	0.0
13.	Bayou Guyago	34	23	67.6	11	32.4	0	0.0	15	44.1	5	14.7	4	11.7
14.	Lake St. John	158	49	31.1	109	68.9	12	7.5	2	1.3	13	8.2	35	22.1
15.	Lake Concordia	108	82	75.9	26	24.1	30	27.7	5	4.6	23	21.3	65	60.1
16.	Bayou Desirad	41	17	41.4	24	58.5	4	9.7	1	2.4	14	34.1	4	9.7
17.	Kepler Lake	63	52	82.5	11	17.5	48	76.1	8	12.7	16	25.3	16	25.3
18.	Flag Lake	12	7	58.3	5	41.7	7	58.3	3	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
19.	Harmon Lake	21	19	90.4	2	9.5	17	80.9	4	19.0	7	33.3	1	4.9
20.	Clear Lake	14	5	35.7	9	64.3	5	35.7	0	0.0	2	14.2	0	0.0
21.	Bayou Dorcheat (Mindens)	1	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
22.	Lake Bistineau	1	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
23.	False River	3	3	100.0	0	0.0	0	100.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	0	0.0
24.	Iatt Bayou	42	30	71.4	12	28.6	13	30.9	3	7.3	17	40.1	21	50.0
25.	Pierson's Lake	19	15	78.9	4	21.1	3	15.7	4	21.1	12	63.1	9	47.3
26.	Black Bayou Lake	37	33	89.2	4	10.8	6	43.3	6	16.2	12	32.4	31	83.7
27.	Des Allemands Mud Lake	27	9	33.3	18	66.7	7	25.9	3	11.1	3	11.1	5	14.9
28.	Algiers Fish Park	96	48	50.0	48	50.0	8	8.3	2	2.1	27	28.0	32	33.3
29.	Lake Fausse Pointe	47	9	19.2	38	81.8	5	10.6	3	6.3	7	14.8	2	4.2
30.	Catahoula Lake	1	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	1	0.0
31.	Grand Lake	99	50	50.5	49	49.5	42	42.4	10	10.1	20	20.2	5	5.0
32.	Corney Lake	10	8	80.0	2	20.0	7	70.0	1	10.0	6	60.0	2	20.0
33.	Iatt Lake	43	26	60.5	17	39.5	22	51.1	8	18.6	9	20.9	2	4.6
34.	Caddo Lake	16	15	93.8	1	6.2	12	75.0	1	6.2	4	25.0	10	62.5
35.	Wallace Lake	35	32	91.4	3	8.6	30	85.7	10	28.6	12	34.2	4	11.4
36.	Anacoco Lake	19	16	84.2	3	15.7	15	78.9	8	42.0	7	36.8	1	5.2
37.	Lake Charles	5	3	60.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	2	40.0	1	20.0
38.	Lake Arthur	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	3	75.0	1	25.0	3	75.0	0	0.0
39.	Amitie River - Port Vincent	54	40	74.0	14	25.9	33	61.1	9	16.6	13	24.0	1	1.8
40.	Spring Bayou Telac	38	31	81.5	7	18.4	28	73.6	3	7.8	10	26.3	1	2.6
40A	Spring Bayou Coulee Noir	100	44	40.0	56	56.0	30	30.0	20	20.0	15	15.0	3	3.0
41.	Smithport Lake	17	16	94.1	1	5.8	11	64.7	1	5.8	14	82.3	1	5.8
42.	Tangipahoa River (Hwy 190)	18	5	27.7	13	72.3	4	22.2	0	0.0	3	16.6	1	5.5
43.	Lake Verret	27	27	100.0	0	0.0	22	81.4	2	7.4	4	14.8	16	59.2
44.	Lake Providence	44	33	75.0	11	25.0	4	9.1	3	6.8	9	20.4	31	70.4
45.	Black Lake	13	13	100.0	0	0.0	7	53.8	1	7.7	9	69.2	7	53.8
46.	Cross Lake	21	17	80.9	4	19.0	15	71.4	1	4.7	9	42.8	4	19.0
47.	Cane River Lake	34	26	76.4	8	23.5	24	70.5	8	23.5	22	64.7	1	2.9
48.	Lake Bruin	21	17	80.9	4	19.1	6	28.5	0	0.0	11	52.3	3	52.3
49.	Bundicks Lake	17	13	76.4	4	23.6	13	76.4	1	5.9	2	11.8	11	17.6
50.	Pearl River	9	4	44.4	5	55.5	4	44.4	0	0.0	3	33.3	0	0.0
51.	Buhlow Lake	36	16	44.4	20	55.5	5	13.8	1	2.7	10	27.7	7	19.4
52.	Cedar Lake	30	22	73.3	8	26.7	16	53.5	6	20.0	7	23.3	2	6.6
53.	Lake St. Joseph	25	22	88.0	3	12.0	22	88.0	0	0.0	3	12.0	2	8.0
54.	Crazy Lake	61	23	37.7	38	62.3	3	4.9	1	1.6	18	29.5	15	24.5
TOTALS		1807	1093	60.4	714	39.5	694	38.4	182	10.0	446	24.7	385	21.3
													27	1.4

analysis of this group showed that six hundred and ninety-four (694) or 38.4%, contained trematodes; one hundred and eighty-two (182), or 10.0%, were parasitized by cestodes; four hundred and forty-six (446), or 24.7% were infested by nematodes; three hundred and eighty-five (385), or 21.3%, were the hosts of acanthocephalans, and twenty-seven (27), or 1.4%, were associated with such forms as leeches and arthropods. Bennett (1956) in studying fish parasites in the Louisiana Dingell-Johnson Project F-5-R area found a high incidence of parasitism. He stated that one or more kinds of parasites were found in ninety-six percent (96%) of game fishes and eighty-seven percent (87%) of the rough fishes. Miller and Bennett (1957) studied six hundred and twenty-nine (629) fishes which represented fourteen (14) families and thirty-one (31) species. These were taken from twenty-six (26) localities. In this research report Miller and Bennett discussed only the incidence of digenetic trematode parasitism. They stated that three hundred and eighty-six (386) of the six hundred and twenty-nine (629), or 61.3%, were parasitized. This is still somewhat higher than recorded in the current survey (Plate III). The

PLATE III

HOST NO.	FISH HOST	INCIDENCE OF PARASITISM BY HOST										
		FISH STATISTICS					PARASITISM STATISTICS					
		Number of Fishes	Infested		Negative		Trematodes	Cestodes		Nematodes	Acantho-	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Others	
1	<i>Alosa chrysocloris</i>	4	0	0.0	4	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	<i>Anguilla rostrata</i>	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0
3	<i>Ania calva</i>	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0
4	<i>Aplodinotus grunniens</i>	7	4	57.1	3	42.8	2	28.6	1	14.3	3	42.8
5	<i>Carassius auratus</i>	1	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
6	<i>Centrarchus macropterus</i>	23	8	34.8	15	65.1	4	17.4	6	26.0	0	0.0
7	<i>Chaoenobrytus gulosus</i>	154	123	79.8	31	20.1	78	50.6	12	7.7	50	32.5
8	<i>Cynoscion arenarius</i>	4	2	50.0	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0.0	1	25.0
9	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>	3	1	33.3	2	66.6	1	33.3	0	0.0	1	33.3
10	<i>Dorosoma cepedianum</i>	59	10	16.9	49	83.0	4	6.7	3	5.1	2	3.3
11	<i>Dorosoma petenense</i>	64	7	10.9	57	89.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	10.9
12	<i>Erimyzon oblongus</i>	6	3	50.0	3	50.0	0	0.0	3	50.0	0	0.0
13	<i>Erimyzon suetta</i>	1	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
14	<i>Esox americanus vermiculatus</i>	12	1	8.3	11	91.7	1	8.3	0	0.0	1	8.3
15	<i>Esox niger</i>	1	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
16	<i>Fundulus chrysotus</i>	3	2	66.6	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3
17	<i>Gambusia affinis</i>	1	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
18	<i>Ictalurus furcatus</i>	2	2	100.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
19	<i>Ictalurus melas</i>	6	3	50.0	3	50.0	0	0.0	2	33.3	1	16.7
20	<i>Ictalurus natalis</i>	16	5	31.2	11	68.7	2	12.5	2	12.5	3	18.7
21	<i>Ictalurus punctatus</i>	35	13	38.0	31	86.1	2	5.5	3	8.3	4	11.1
22	<i>Ictiobus bubalus</i>	8	2	25.0	6	75.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	25.0
23	<i>Labidesthes sicculus</i>	16	3	18.7	13	81.2	2	12.5	0	0.0	1	6.2
24	<i>Lepisosteus osseus</i>	6	3	50.0	3	50.0	0	0.0	2	33.3	1	16.6
25	<i>Lepisosteus spatula</i>	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0
26	<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>	11	11	100.0	0	0.0	4	36.3	0	0.0	4	36.3
27	<i>Lepomis humilis</i>	13	12	92.3	1	7.6	8	61.5	0	0.0	3	23.0
28	<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>	415	348	83.8	67	16.1	265	63.8	62	14.9	116	27.9
29	<i>Lepomis megalotis</i>	46	27	58.7	19	41.3	16	34.8	1	2.1	9	19.5
30	<i>Lepomis microlophus</i>	290	217	74.8	73	25.1	118	40.6	19	6.6	82	28.3
31	<i>Lepomis punctatus</i>	67	59	88.0	8	11.9	43	64.1	25	37.3	12	17.9
32	<i>Lepomis spp.</i>	2	0	0.0	2	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
33	<i>Lucania parva venusta</i>	1	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
34	<i>Micropogon undulatus</i>	21	19	90.4	2	9.5	5	23.8	0	0.0	11	52.3
35	<i>Micropodus salmoides</i>	153	96	62.7	57	37.2	71	46.4	26	16.9	66	43.1
36	<i>Minytrema melanops</i>	3	1	33.3	2	66.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3
37	<i>Mollisenesia latipinnis</i>	1	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
38	<i>Moxostoma poecilurum</i>	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0
39	<i>Mugil cephalus</i>	2	0	0.0	2	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
40	<i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i>	27	2	7.4	25	92.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	7.4
41	<i>Notropis amabilis</i>	5	1	20.0	4	80.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	1	20.0
42	<i>Notropis maculatus</i>	1	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
43	<i>Paralichthys lethostigma</i>	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	1	100.0
44	<i>Polydactylus olivaris</i>	1	0	0.0	0	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
45	<i>Phanacis mirabilis</i>	12	0	0.0	12	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
46	<i>Pimephales notatus</i>	3	0	0.0	3	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
47	<i>Pimephales vigilax</i>	24	0	0.0	24	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
48	<i>Pomoxis annularis</i>	50	26	52.0	24	48.0	19	38.0	3	6.0	15	30.0
49	<i>Pomoxis nigromaculatus</i>	138	42	30.4	96	69.6	13	9.4	2	1.4	38	27.5
50	<i>Roccus chrysops</i>	2	2	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100.0	0	0.0
51	<i>Roccus mississippiensis</i>	52	38	73.1	14	26.8	31	59.6	5	9.6	6	11.5
52	<i>Tilapia mossambica</i>	25	1	4.0	24	96.0	1	4.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
TOTALS		1807	1093	60.4	714	39.5	694	38.4	182	10.0	446	24.7
											385	21.3
											27	1.4

present study more than doubled the number of collection sites used in the Miller and Bennett survey. These collection sites, fifty-four (54) in number, are shown in Plate I, while Plate II shows the incidence of parasitism by collection sites.

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SUMMARY

This survey of the parasites of the freshwater fishes of Louisiana was undertaken in 1960. Field collections from fifty-four (54) localities were continued until 1962. Eighteen hundred and seven (1807) fishes belonging to seventeen (17) families and fifty-two (52) species were included in this study. One thousand and ninety-three (1093), or 60.4%, were found to be parasitized. An analysis of this group showed the following degrees of parasitism—six hundred and ninety-four (694) fishes with trematodes—38.4%; one hundred and eighty-two (182) fishes with cestodes—10.0%; four hundred and forty-six (446) fishes with nematodes—24.7%; three hundred and eighty-five (385) fishes with acanthocephalans—21.3%, and twenty-seven (27) fishes with such forms as leeches and arthropods—1.4%.

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SOME FISHES FROM THE UPPER MISSOURI RIVER SYSTEM IN COLORADO

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Fishes present in tributaries of the upper Missouri River system in Larimer County, Colorado, were studied during the summer of 1961. Going out from Colorado State University at Fort Collins, it was possible to visit streams, observe the fishes in their natural habitats, and obtain specimens from the area.