

B-106 Present status and future prospects of ornamental fish trade in Sri Lanka

D A M de Silva, Oscar Amarasinghe

Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Kamburupitiya

The aquarium trade industry in Sri Lanka has grown into a relatively large and profitable economic sector. The international aquarium trade has boosted Sri Lanka's ornamental fish exports. The major objectives of the study were to find out the present status and future prospects of the ornamental fish trade in Sri Lanka and to identify the problems that hinder the progress of this industry. This study is mainly based on secondary data which was subjected to appropriate, statistical analysis.

Approximately 150 species of marine fish and 65 species of fresh water fish are exported from Sri Lanka to nearly 25 countries. Japan is the major buyer in the Sri Lankan ornamental fish export market. Sri Lanka's hand-caught, disease and drug-free fish are preferred by many international buyers. The value of ornamental fish imports and exports have a fluctuating pattern.

To ensure that Sri Lanka will both maintain and increase its market share, it must improve the overall quality of the traded fish. Water quality, nutrition, handling, packing and shipping procedures have contributed to the present status. Sri Lankan exporters should be directed towards promoting exports through advertising, participating in trade fairs, in order to secure a firm position in the world market. Proper regulations are required to protect the ornamental fishery resources from heavy exploitation while incentives are required for the promotion of the ornamental fish exports.