

Charles Marcus Breder, Jr.

1897—1983

Dr. Charles M. Breder, Jr., the ichthyologist who conducted a series of field and laboratory studies on the blind cave form of the fish *Astyanax fasciatus mexicanus*, died October 28, 1983, in his home at Englewood, Florida.

Born June 25, 1897, in Jersey City, Dr. Breder's formal education was interrupted by World War I. He obtained a University degree in 1938 when he received an honorary doctorate by Newark College, today part of Rutgers University. By that time Dr. Breder was already a prestigious biologist within the scientific community, not only because of the huge number of papers he had published, but also because of the impact of his publications in ichthyology.

Between 1919 and 1921 Dr. Breder worked as a science assistant and fisheries

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expert at the U.S. Bureau of Fishes in Washington. From 1921 until 1940 he worked at the New York Aquarium where he started as aquarist. He left as Assistant Director after being Acting Director from 1937 to 1939.

While at the N.Y. Aquarium he planned an expedition to Mexico, auspiced by the New York Zoological Society, to study a cave fish recently described by Carl L. Hubbs and Williams T. Innes as a new genus and species (*Atrypichthys jordani*), later recognized as a blind cave population of the eyed surface fish *Astyanax fasciatus mexicanus*. As a result of this expedition and the live fish brought back to New York, Dr. Breder published about twenty papers on this cave fish, most of them in the period between 1942 and 1947. This made this species one of the better known cave fishes of the world, still a subject of study in universities in the U.S. and Europe today.

It was during this period of intense research that Dr. Breder took a job at the American Museum of Natural History in New York where he remained as Chairman and Curator of Fishes and Aquatic Biology

until his retirement. After that he continued an active research program in marine fishes, mostly at the Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Florida.

In addition to his important contributions to the study of cave fishes, Dr. Breder was regarded as an international authority on fish schools and his book *Modes of Reproduction in Fishes*, written with Donn E. Rosen and published in 1966, is still the most comprehensive reference on the subject.

Dr. Breder left two sons, nine grandchildren and thirteen great grandchildren. He is survived by his widow, Priscilla Breder, formerly P. Rasquin, who collaborated with him in the study of *A. fasciatus* and who also made important contributions to the biology of this species herself.

Despite his contributions to biospeleology, Dr. Breder is little known among the speleological circles of the United States, partially because he was not a speleologist *per se* but rather a biologist who found cave fishes a very interesting subject of research, and also partially because his subject of research was outside of the United States.

Aldemaro Romero, NSS 22734