

The optimal way fishes are photographed is life or freshly preserved in the field. There, natural colours can still be seen and the specimen is in an optimal condition. Therefore, preserved fish should be photographed as soon as possible after death. Life and dead fish all can be photographed in the same way: fixed by hand by one operator underwater in a field aquarium. Photographing fishes on the ground, in grass or in the hand of one operator always leads to second class pictures often not allowing seeing diagnostic characters afterwards. Also underwater pictures, while being very aesthetic, hardly allow seeing the fish in all details.



Small aquarium to photograph fishes in the field. Note the black tissue used to have a standardized background in the field.

Photographing life fish is more time consuming than photographing preserved fish but pictures of life fish are nicer and you will experience, that there is a wider range of opportunities to use the pictures than only to associate them with the voucher specimen. For example link them to www.arkive.org .



- Choose full grown individuals with complete scale coverage and complete and undamaged fins from the catch.
- Add the reference number to the fish, that it can be unambiguously identified from the picture later on.
- Put the fish alive into the prepared field aquarium. Photograph the left side of the fish if

undamaged.

- One operator fixates the fish by pressing it softly to the front glass of the aquarium. Do not press too much; usually the fish will give up trying to escape the hand after few seconds. Be careful, that the fins are in natural position and that you do not see your hand behind a transparent fin. Fixate the complete body of the fish parallel to the front glass.

- The second operator photograph the fish through the glass. Be careful, that the fish is not slanting and not fixated slightly diagonal to have a quality picture of the lateral body.

- Take several pictures to make sure, that all fins are in a natural position and the mouth is not open for breathing.

- Check the picture on the camera to be sure, that the complete fish is on the picture and in a natural position, the picture is not too dark or bright, no reflections are on the picture or at least not on the fish and the fish is sharp.



Squalius valentinus, photographed life in the field. Note that the hand fixating the fish is not shining through the fins to allow cutting the fish free from the background using Adobe Photoshop.

