# Collaborative Research of Mekong River Fishes

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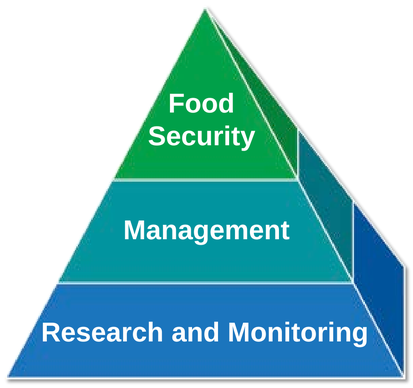
## Background

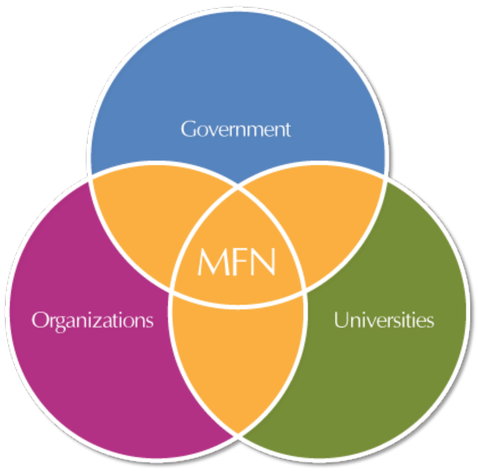
- The Mekong River in Southeast Asia:
  - Shared resource for six riparian countries
  - Supports one of the world's most productive inland fisheries, providing food and income to > 60 million people
  - One of the world's most diverse freshwater fish assemblages, with more than 850 species
  - Many species (> 30%) make long distance, transboundary migrations
- Infrastructure development along the river and climate change are anticipated to have substantial effects on river hydrology and productivity
- Making informed decisions about the management of the river in the face of these changes will require considerable information about the fish resources



## Mekong Fish Network & Data Bank

- Workshop held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2012:
  - Explore potential for coordinated fisheries monitoring in the Lower Mekong River Basin
  - Consider standard sampling methods that could be implemented for short-term and long-term monitoring at a broad spatial scale
  - Discuss capacity needs for fisheries monitoring programs
- ***Mekong Fish Network*** established to:
  - Facilitate sharing of ideas and information
  - Provide needed tools and capacity building
- ***MFN Data Bank*** created to provide secure data storage and management tools




MEKONG FISH NETWORK

MEKONG FISH NETWORK
- Capacity
- Connections
- Resources

MFN Data Bank
- Secure Storage
- Data Management
- Communication

FISHBIO USGS

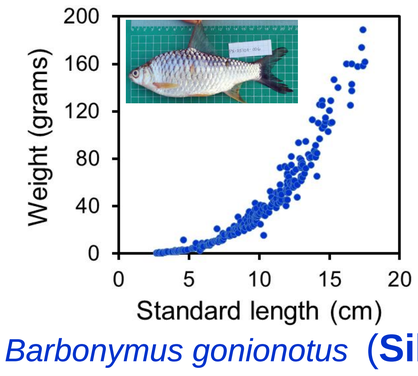
mekongfishnetwork.org

## Pilot Project for Standard Sampling Methods

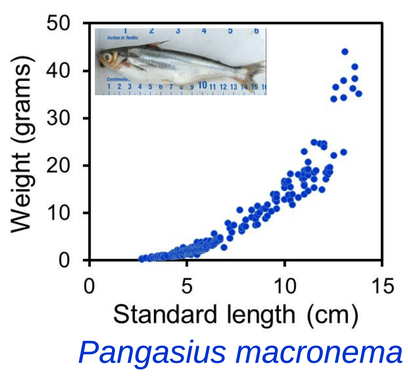
- Conducted in the Mekong Delta, Viet Nam, by Can Tho University
- Two gears with potential to be used widely in the Mekong River and its tributaries
  - Small trawl, mouth 3.5 m wide and 0.5 m tall
  - Anchored and drifting gill nets, 1-2 m deep, 2-10 cm stretch mesh, 2 hr soak
- Six sampling sites, 2 in each of 3 provinces, from border with Cambodia to the coast
  - Included mainstream locations and tributary locations at each site
- Year 1: July 2011 – June 2012, monthly sampling, trawl only
- Year 2: August 2012 – June 2013, bimonthly, trawl and gill nets


### *Results*

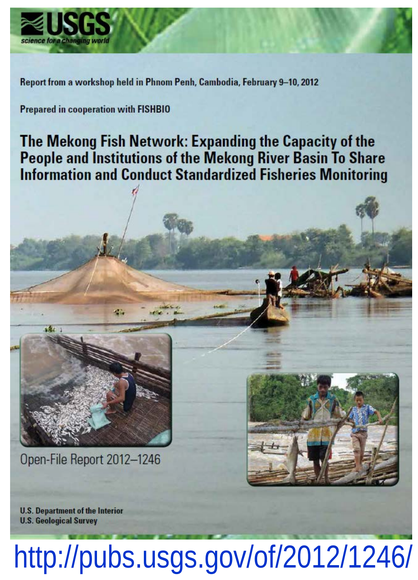
- More than 175 different species captured
  - Trawl samples included > 21,000 individuals:
    - 154 species, 64 not captured in gill nets
    - Average size = 6.76 cm standard length
  - Gill net samples included > 3,000 individuals:
    - 125 species, 34 not captured in trawl
    - Average size = 9.22 cm standard length
- Length-weight curves developed to reduce need for weight measurements in the future (streamline processing)




*Barbonymus gonionotus* (**Silver barb**)




*Pangasius macronema*




http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2012/1246/

## Acknowledgments

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Global Conference on Inland Fisheries, FAO Headquarters, Rome, 26-28 January 2015 Theme: Biological Assessment