

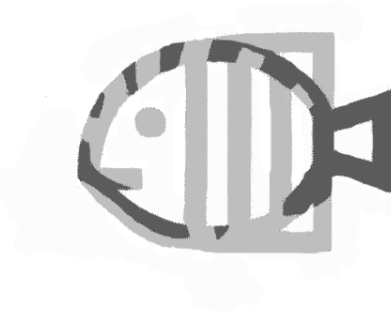
The Darter

July - August 2005



MISSOURI AQUARIUM SOCIETY, INC.
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Aquatico



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Maryland Heights, MO 63043
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Places to Be Things to See

SUNDAY, August 14, 2005

MASI Summer Auction, All Species @ Stratford Inn in Fenton
Check-In at 10:00, Viewing at 11:00, Auction at noon

THURSDAY, August 18, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

THURSDAY, September 15, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

SUNDAY, October 2, 2005

MASI Swap Meet, 12:00 - 4:00 @ Stratford Inn in Fenton
Check-In at 10:00, Viewing at 11:00, Auction at noon

THURSDAY, October 20 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

THURSDAY, November 17, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

SUNDAY, November 20, 2005

MASI Fall Auction, All Species @ Stratford Inn in Fenton
Check-In at 10:00, Viewing at 11:00, Auction at noon

THURSDAY, December 15, 2005

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church

Presidential Preamble

By Mike Hellweg

By now, summer is in full swing. Many of you will be spending time on vacations, and some might even be making the trek to the grand daddy of all fish conventions, the American Cichlid Association Convention. I hope you all have great times and great trips! But don't forget your fish. Before you head out, give them a large water change, clean the filter, and feed them well for a few days before you leave. Some feedings with live foods or extra feeds of good quality frozen foods will do wonders. Then you can head out without worrying about your fishy buddies for up to a week or so.

That's right! Well fed fish can easily go a week or more without being fed. In fact, one of the best practices of public aquaria would help your fish out, too. Give them one day a week without any feeding. In the wild, fish often have one season of the year where food is scarce. It's the seasonal change to abundance that is often a trigger for them to spawn.

The new Executive Council is now in place. Thanks to all who ran – for the first time in a long time we had many more candidates than there were offices to fill. I hope all will continue to help the club, whether they were elected or not. Especially surprising was the race for Treasurer. Where just a month or so before the election we had no one, we wound up with TWO volunteers to run for Treasurer! And both were interested in holding the office! Thanks to both Marlon Felman and Steve Edie for running. As many of you know, Steve won the race, and is our new Treasurer. Marlon has volunteered to be our workshop Chair for next spring. We won't be doing a show next spring, but we'll still have an annual weekend. This coming year will feature a Weekend Workshop with speakers on Saturday, a banquet on Saturday evening, and our traditional gigantic auctions on Sunday.

Speaking of the auctions, some changes are coming. As many of you have noticed, our auctions have been growing by leaps and bounds! The last two auctions have both been over 900 items, lasting well into the late evening. That's great for the club, but it's also hard on our volunteers. Putting in a 10 – 12 hour day on what is supposed to be a Sunday off work is a bit much to ask of anyone (or their families!). While it is fun, it is also a lot of work. For the past several months the Executive Council has been working with ideas to try and cut the size of the auction a bit. Not too much, but at least back to the point where we could all be home for dinner.

After much heated discussion, we've decided that it's time to cut back a bit on the split. The folks who register early will receive a 60/40 split and those who register the day of the auction will receive a 50/50 split. To offset the change in the split for those who bring high dollar items, we'll also reinstate the 10% bonus for items that sell for more than \$20. There will also be a bonus for MASI members who work for the club. Here's where your service points come in handy. This bonus will go to anyone who has earned 10 or more service points in the last 6 months. See Points Chairman Ed Millinger if you want to find out how many points you have.

How do you earn service points? It's not hard. Literally all you have to do is participate in the club! Show up for the meetings and sign in. Donate things to the club and sign the sheet at the front table. Show up to a Council meeting. Help out with a committee, or to put the Darter together. Help John bag up fish for the auction, or help check in fish the day of the auction. Host one of our speakers, or spend some time picking them up or taking them back to the airport. Write an article, draw a cartoon

or make a puzzle for the Darter. Participate in the BAP or the HAP (or both!). Help out at the auction. Attend the picnic! That's not too hard, is it? You don't have to work hard, just participate. Any member who attends the meetings, brings a pie or bag of chips to the meeting, who does any of the above, who attends an extra meeting or two, or who helps out regularly will have more than enough points to get the bonus. The club will be the better for it, too. And you might find that you're having fun, in spite of yourself!

One other thing we're going to try is to hold another event. Not an auction, though, but something different...

October 2, 2005 will see the first ever MASI Swap Meet! This will be open to vendors from all over, both shops and individuals. Hopefully, this will give local breeders an outlet for their fish unlike our auctions – they'll be able to set the price for their fish and handle all the transactions themselves. Buyers can ask questions of the breeders, too. Tables will be \$20 each. The room will be open to the public from noon to 4 pm. There will be an admission charge of \$1 per person to help us offset the cost of the room. Details will follow in the September/October Darter. We'll also be sending out a special mailing in early September with all the details.

...and for now, 'nuff said...

MASI's First Ever **Swap Meet!**

Sunday October 2, 2005

Noon to 4:00 pm

Stratford Inn in Fenton, MO

Admission \$1 per person, children under 10 free!

Got extra fish? Too much Java Moss? Java Fern growing out of the tank? Sell 'em! Got an extra tank in the attic or basement? Sell it!

Clean out the extra stuff in your fishroom or closet!

You can sell anything "fishy" or hobby related!

Fish, plants, tanks, equipment, books, magazines, foods, decorations, collectibles and more!

Tables are just \$20 each. Space is limited, so sign up early! We'll also gladly accept 100% donations to be sold at the MASI table.

MASI reserves the right to refuse to allow the sale of any illegal or dangerous items, hybrids, Missouri or Illinois native fish or plants, or anything that is not related to the aquarium hobby. Transactions are strictly between the buyer and seller.

See the rules for further details.

A Returning MASI Member

By Gary McIlvaine

We all have some story about how we became hooked on the aquarium hobby. I thought it was time to share mine. The first thing that influenced me into the tropical fish hobby started off innocently enough. We went on our family vacation to visit my Grandma who lived in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio and my Aunt and Uncle who lived next store. I did not know my uncle very well as I was about 10 years old and did not see my grandma that often so I did not realize the kind of special treat I was in for. My uncle had a good sized fish room in his basement. He maintained about 50 tanks and I remember being in total awe at the time. I spent the whole week watching my uncle's fish every spare minute not being spent with grandma. I got to see some Bettas spawn that week along with various livebearer species. My uncle taught me a lot about keeping fish that week. He taught me about changing the water and doing maintenance. I remember bugging him about the 125 gallon he had set up with just a couple fish in it and hardly anything else, and he taught me about "cycling" the tanks.

Upon returning to St. Louis I immediately wanted to set up a tank and my mother was absolutely opposed to the idea as my older brother had been allowed to keep mice in his room when he was my age. This of course went terribly wrong as you can imagine and ended up stinking up the whole house. In retrospect and now having a child of my own I understand her concern. My father had kept fish when he was a boy and was in sync with my Uncle Jim's hobby. My dad as I would later find out had thought of some creative ways to circumvent my mother's refusal to allow me to have a tank. My brother who had just turned 16 had gotten his first job at Schnuck's. My father gave my brother the money to surprise me with a 10 gallon set up that he had paid for with his first paycheck (ha ha). (Oddly enough my mother bought it and let me set up the tank, because she did not want to ruin my brothers unselfish gesture). This is how it all began.

I took great pride in the first tank. I set up a community tank with the incandescent lights that heated the tank up every day to 84. Then later cooled down to 78 degrees after I turned the light off. It is amazing that I had the success that I did with this tank. I always changed at least 2 gallons of water out every week and replaced it with water I was aging in my closet in gallon milk jugs. I only siphoned half the gravel of the tank at a time, just as my uncle Jim had taught me. I had two angels in this tank along with some neon tetras, serpae tetras, and some guppies. I bought the angels when they were young and they eventually grew full size in this tank. I know in retrospect it was overcrowded, but the two angels eventually spawned and my older brother helped me again by buying me a second ten gallon tank and we scraped the eggs off the glass and put them in the new tank. This led to my mother eventually breaking down and allowing me to expanding to a seven tank set up in the basement purchased through garage sales. I took great pride in the angels and took care of them very well. I ended up joining MASI then as a young boy. I also had good success at the time selling my angels to local pet stores. It was a different time for Angels then as no one had any and the stores eagerly bought every one. I had a good set up then and was feeding baby brine shrimp and flake food bought in the bulk section at Pet Market Place. I could not keep up! Boy how times have changed. I kept fish for about 5 years and then gradually the water changes became less frequent, and my mother complained about me not taking care of them, I eventually decided to tear all the tanks down after I noticed there had been a lot of casualties that had gone unnoticed and unlashd. I sold the tanks at a garage sale of my own.

I later did hear the call of keeping fish again and set up a ten gallon tank in my first dorm room at college. This tank was nothing special as I was on the really broke college student phase and bought some mollies and let them fill up the tank. I could not believe they lived through the 21 day Christmas break in the dorm!! I later bought a 55 gallon tank when I moved into my fraternity house in college. I kept Oscars in this 55. It was cool to have them in the house as we would have fish sacrifices from other fraternity members' guppy tanks. This only lasted the first month of the year that I had this tank. I became upset with a couple of the guys at the time, because I came back from class one day to find the tank water really cloudy and my Oscar was dead. No one knew anything (Later I found out there had been some bottle rockets in the tank that "accidentally" went off under water). This prompted me to tear the tank down and return it to my parents' house. I did not keep fish again until I lived in a two family flat in Maplewood. I set up two 55's there and did not do anything too special, just your normal community tanks. Eventually I got married, and moved the tanks a couple more times and then before we had our first child. At the time I was listening to all the horror stories about how now I would have a child and not have any time. I tore the tanks down again and sold them to a friend. About two months after my son was born I bought a 29 gallon set up, because I missed having the fish and decided I would make the time to take care of them, and besides I know what I am doing.

I want you to understand at this point I had always thought about fish and enjoyed them, but was never at a place in my life where I could follow my dreams and build a fish room like my uncle Jim's. I can not tell you the countless dreams I have had about if I won the power ball I would set up a fish barn of my own. I had lightly discussed the idea with my wife for the past 8 years I have known her. She surprised me 8 months ago as we were discussing the carpet in our basement. The house we had bought had some "opportunities" when we bought it and the basement was a low priority when we moved in. She made a horrible mistake in retrospect that day as I asked what she would like to do in the basement. I had to take a vacation week, or lose it and I would use the time to fix up the basement. Get ready for this, as you will not believe the next couple lines of conversation I had with my wife. She said "you let me pick what I wanted to do on the first and second floor and as far as I am concerned the basement is all yours to do whatever you want"!! I could not believe my ears at this point so I checked for clarification before I proceeded as my excitement level hit an all time high as I realized I could be coming close to realizing a long term dream of having a good sized fish room. My next question would be the key as I gathered the courage to blurt it out and said, "so....., if I fill up this half of the basement with fish stuff it would not be a problem." I again did not believe my ears as she said "I would not love it but I know you have always wanted to do it and we have always had fish tanks as long as I have known you and if it makes you happy go for it!" Needless to say I pulled that carpet out of there two weeks later and put in ceramic tile, so I would not have to worry about water and still have a decent look for my wife. I am lucky as I already had a sink, fridge and freezer all in the basement. I did have an electrician drop in two new 20 amp circuits and currently have 27 tanks, I am waiting until the fall to surprise her with a new rack system I have drawn out to put on a wall in my basement. I rejoined MASI in March and am having a lot of fun in my fish room. I am truly happy these last few months and I feel as though a missing link has been restored in my life. I have noticed some changes in the hobby though that I have noticed since my return.

The first of course is the fish stores today, while there are some exceptions what has happened to the rest? It seems like the friendly neighborhood pet store owner/ fish enthusiast is gone and been replaced by the big chain stores. As I have mentioned I used to have my angelfish snapped up by the fish stores when I was a kid, now when I call the fish stores with angels I hear "We get ours from Singapore or Vietnam". I was also shocked when I called Petsmart and they said they will and do not buy fish from anyone. Even though they have very few angels in their stores and the ones I do see are not really hobbyist grade in my opinion. I really do not understand this direction the stores are going in.

It seems to be the exact opposite way it should be and used to be. I don't want to brag, but I keep my fish in excellent water quality and feed a wide variety of food both frozen, flake, and live. What happened to the good customer service? The knowledgeable staff? The owner saying "Sure I will take 50 I really had good luck with the last ones you brought". I have trouble getting waited on at some stores. I am not trying to get rich selling angelfish, I really just enjoy them. It is a hobby for me. I enjoy watching them grow; however I do have a finite amount of space in my fish room though. I am not looking to make a profit, but I would like to be able to subsidize my hobby/addiction a little more. I currently have 4 breeding pairs of angels with what I believe to be another two in one of my 55's. I have been watching spawn after spawn of some of my black veils from angels plus go to waste. I do like some of the changes that have come about like aqua bid. I see myself selling fish on it someday soon, but have not figured out how to download a picture yet. I do work 50 hours a week I worry about finding time to actually package them up and mail them off though. Does anyone have any suggestions for a returning MASI member? I am grateful for the club though and everything I have learned there so far. I also am happy about the more frequent auctions since I was last a member. Any suggestions a member has would be appreciated. My email is gmcilvaine@msn. Com and my home phone is 314-352-3334. I am also happy to give some of my angels to any members that would like some in fact you can come over to my fish room and pick some out!! It gives me a good feeling to be able to share them with fellow enthusiasts (besides I have too many) and I am looking at two spawns this morning that I really wish I had room to save.

Tidbits

by Maureen Green

Over the years, I have heard that Bristlenosed Plecotomus had to be mated pairs before they would breed. I have found out that this is a fallacy. You can put one male in with a bunch of females, condition the water, set the temperature a little higher, add heavy filtration, and he will breed with all the females.

With honey gourami's, you are always told not to put more than one male in each tank. (I like to play mad scientist). I had more than one, and when they reached breeding age, they pushed their nests together and guarded all of the eggs. (They could put armed guards to shame.)

On TV I watched a documentary about corals, saying that that no one could ever see them spawn in captivity, but in a doctors waiting room, I saw it happen.

Do you know that you can keep tropical water lilies asleep for years? I do this, because I like to do different color coordinated ponds each year.

Finally, if you have a power outage in the winter, tape layer of newspaper around the aquariums. Fish and plants will come through it beautifully.

The Goodeids

by Roger Fischer, MAS

reprinted from the Sept/Oct '98 *Aqua News* of the Minnesota Aquarium Society

I have now spawned and raised twenty species of Goodeidae and should have learned much more than I have. During my early years of fishkeeping, Goodeids were virtually unknown in the hobby. The 1971 discovery and subsequent importing of *Ameiops splendens* changed all this quickly. Vastly different from any livebearer aquarists had yet encountered, *A. splendens* matures into a fish impressive in size, glittering beauty, and deportment. Most amazing to fishkeepers were the fry, as much as 2cm at birth and capable of quadrupling body mass in a month in pristine, uncrowded conditions with copious feedings of flake and live foods. Other Goodeid imports soon followed, rarely found in fish stores but increasingly popular among livebearer specialists.

All known species of Goodeids are native to Mexico, with the heaviest concentration in the west-central region from just south of Mexico City westward to just south of Guadalajara. Habitat ranges from the swift streams of the uplands to the ponds and ditches of the low country, with temperatures ranging from the low fifties to high eighties and a wide variance in water conditions. Goodeids are distinguished from other livebearers primarily by the male sex organ, a notched anal fin rather than a gonopodium, and the female's internal nourishment of her fry before birth by means of a process somewhat akin to the umbilicus in mammals. Indeed, in some species fry are born with an umbilical cord that drops off after a day or two.

It is lucky that fishkeepers discovered Goodeids when we did, for in recent decades Mexico has begun to diversify its once primitive economy, with disastrous consequences for its environment. Countless streams, ponds, lagoons and ditches have been polluted into dead zones by refineries, tanneries and the like. It is thought that the lovely little Goodeid *Skiffia francesae* survives only in the aquaria of hobbyists and the status of such other species as *Allotoca dugesi* and *Characodon lateralis* is precarious. In some cases, it is thought that some species have evolved to try to adapt to these worsening conditions. James K. Langhammer has theorized that some Goodeids do poorly without a steady diet of brine shrimp because their digestive tracts have had to adapt to a diet of small crustaceans, the only food source able to survive in the toxic waters of many Mexican ponds and streams.

My experience with Goodeids began at a club auction nearly a decade ago, when I won a colony of *Xenotoca eiseni*, a pretty fish with a blunt nose reminiscent of an over-the-hill boxer with a weak defense, a blue sheen, and (especially in males) a brilliant orange caudal band. *X. eiseni* is reputed to be a terror toward tankmates, but I never found it so, except with *Corydoras* catfish. My two females were prolific and I soon found myself with an exploding population. I was then selling fish to an all-purpose strip mall petshop here in Duluth. Although the proprietor rarely had trouble with any other species, *X. eiseni* I could not kill with battery acid invariably died on her in a day or two. Yet she reported that those sold right away almost always did well for their new owners. It was a mystery we never solved.

My most enjoyable experience with Goodeids came soon afterward. Mike Evans had picked up six *Ilyodon furcidens* at an auction in Chicago, put them in a floor level tank, and forgot all about them. By the time he rediscovered them and gave them to me, there were three left, a female that looked salvageable and a skeletal pair reminiscent of old photos of Union prisoners-of-war at Andersonville! I put them in a tank with juvenile guppies I was feeding several times a day on fine flake food and baby brine, an old 80-liter Metaframe that caught bright late afternoon sun. As they matured into robust, active fish with brilliant buttercup yellow finnage, they made a beautiful sight cavorting in the sunlight. Two years later, I was proud to cast a dissenting "best of class" vote when Jim Mathis entered the surviving pair in a club show.

My proudest accomplishment with Goodeids though, came with the delicate and endangered *Skiffia francesae*, a species I had failed with (both adults and fry) under optimum conditions. I was given another pair soon after being banished from my fish room to a small main floor study with space for only a few 80-liter high tanks and a 40-liter cube made for me by Anchor Sarslow and no capacity for a shrimp hatchery. I put the *S. francesae* by themselves in a larger tank, fed flake and frozen brine, and was rewarded with 21 viable fry which I removed to the small cube. I was not optimistic that I could raise four or more on flake alone, but managed to twenty.

This gets back to what I wrote at the outset, that I have really learned precious little about Goodeids. With most types of fishes, the basic questions can usually be answered with a "yes" or "no". With Goodeids, the operative words are "perhaps," "sometimes," and "it all depends." They are reputed to be fragile. Well, yes and no. Goodeids do not travel or transplant especially well, gravid females in particular. Often when transporting Goodeids, experienced fishkeepers bag them separately, lest one die, pollute the bag, and kill the others. When first acquired, Goodeids should be pampered. For larger species I favor a planted tank with a Whisper II power filter and for smaller Goodeids a smaller bare tank with hornwort and sponge filter, with siphoning and 25% water change every few days. But once established, I have found Goodeids very hardy and tolerant of crowding, with concomitant deterioration in water quality.

Breeding is also an "it all depends" proposition. Even with the same species, some females bloat mightily and square off at the vent, while others barely fatten. I once gave a large trio of *Illyodon lennoni* to Mathis with an opinion that they were over-the-hill as breeders; less than a week later Jim harvested a nice batch of fry! Similarly, although Goodeids are reputed to not cannibalize their fry, such is not necessarily the case. My *Allotoca goslinei* were consistently cannibalistic (although their parents were not for Mathis) and other species occasionally so. I encountered so little cannibalism in *Characodon lateralis* that I was using my surplus as feeders, while Randy Carey (with my stock) had to resort to a funnel contraption as a breeding trap. Since gravid females are so fragile, what works for me for a first brood is to fill a 20-liter tank two-thirds with water from the species tank, add the female and hornwort, fill with fresh water, then do a one-third water change on the species tank. That way new fry stay put and their mama is moved back into nearly identical water chemistry. When crowding becomes a problem, I empty a 10, move fry and water into it, and slowly top with water from the species tank and new water. With subsequent broods, I let nature take its course unless I really need more fry.

I can only report two absolutes. The first is to never put them with *Corydoras*, in particular albino varieties. Harmless Goodeids go postal and blind them by plucking out their eyes, leaving them to die in a day or two. Second, never over-heat a Goodeid. They experience wide fluctuations in nature, but do not do well in aquaria above 24C. They seem to do best from 18C to 24C, with such species as *Girardinichthys viviparus* favoring even cooler water. This suggests compatibility with such fishes as Zebra Danios and White Cloud Mountain Minnows in unheated community Aquaria.

Spawning the Japanese Marsh Shrimp

by Heather Candelaria

reprinted from the Jan '99 *Northwest Aquaria* of the Greater Seattle Aquarium Society

Here in Seattle, it seems that I am not the only person who has started a very nice collection of the recently famous "Yamato-numa-ebi" — directly translated as the 'Japanese marsh shrimp', and occasionally known as the 'algae eating shrimp', or the 'Amano shrimp'.

It appears that the animals currently sold by the name AES (Algae eating shrimp) are under the scientific name *Caridina japonica*, but I haven't really been able to find much information about

distinguishing freshwater shrimp species. Until proven otherwise though, I will be calling this little creature by that name.

Why should the scientific name be important? Well, it will be very helpful in communicating with other people in other countries where the common name might be different, and I have been trying very hard to track down information about this animal because I have decided to try breeding it.

I don't know if I'll be successful in getting them to spawn, but I do know that I can now raise baby shrimps from eggs carried under the parents tail (presumably the female). I've been able to purchase, from a wholesaler, egg-carrying shrimp which had spawned (released and fertilized eggs) prior to my receiving them. These egg carrying shrimp were then cared for until they released their hatching eggs. I've been able to raise 8 of the young shrimp, to the age of 35 days (and counting). These shrimp currently range between 4-8mm in size and look and behave exactly like the adults.

The first time I attempted to raise baby shrimp, they were released as the parent shed its exoskeleton and they were very tiny, free-floating larva. They only lived about 7 days. In those 7 days they did grow, however they remained free-floating larva. They never reached the phase where they would crawl along a surface.

From this initial experiment, I guessed that there was probably some sort of mineral supplement that I would have to add to the water. I guessed that for a shrimp to grow, it would need to be shedding its exoskeleton and forming a new one. In order to form a new shell, the shrimp would of course need the materials with which to do so... minerals.

I did a little research on freshwater shrimp, and found out that most of them are actually from brackish areas. This makes sense, in that the majority of the animals known as shrimps come from salt water. That is probably where shrimp first evolved. Some of them would probably then have migrated up streams, into brackish or freshwater areas.

Guessing that they would be biologically similar to their saltwater cousins, and with a hint from a diagram I found at a Japanese website, I knew that the minerals they would need in order to form their shells would more than likely be found in sea salt.

When I purchased a shrimp carrying eggs early in February, I started adding sea salt to the water. I started off by adding 2 tsp. per gallon to the rearing tank. This was a 10-gallon tank with a sponge filter and lots of Java moss and hornwort. There was also one small crypt growing in a one-inch bed of mid-size dark gravel and a handful of crushed coral. In this tank I had a breeding trap filled with Java moss, which is where I put the parent shrimp so that I could keep a close eye on it and see when the eggs had been released.

Day 1: When the shrimp was first purchased, the eggs were about the size of its eyes. The shrimps coloring was unusually dark, and almost blue-black. It was about 1 inch in length and seemed to be carrying somewhere between 18-30 eggs.

Day 2: After one day in the salted water, there were some very dramatic changes. The eggs seemed to have become more ovoid in shape, and the adult was still very dark in color, but much closer to a red color than the day before. I added more salt bringing it up to a total of 3 tsp. per gallon.

Day 3: The shape of the eggs seemed to be less regular.

Day 4: The eggs were now noticeably larger than the parent's eyes, and possibly showing signs of the shrimp inside of them (possible eyes seen inside the eggs).

Day 5: The eggs were released in the parent's shell; one fuzzy egg was left behind on the old exoskeleton. The baby shrimp were fully formed! They could be seen clinging to the Java moss within the breeding trap, and appeared to be about 2.5mm in length. I removed the parent shrimp, and started feeding the babies. I fed them a variety of foods; powdered krill, baby brine shrimp, powdered fry food, powdered Serran 0-nips, and a product sold as a brine shrimp enhancement food (to gut load brine shrimp before feeding them to other fish) called "Omega 3".

Day 6: I was able to find 5 fry in the breeding trap.

Day 7: I was able to find 3 fry in the breeding trap. The shrimp's antennae seemed disproportionately long, possibly longer than their bodies, but it is hard to say because they were so small. I could only really see the antennae as movement of food and debris in the water, as the shrimp moved the antennae about in search of food.

Day 8: I was able to find 6 fry, as I carefully siphoned out excess food from the bottom of the breeding trap.

Day 9-10: I was able to find 4 live fry in the breeding trap, and I found the first dead ones. A total of nine dead shrimp were found. I was able to measure them and confirm a size of about 3mm body, and an additional 3mm length in the antennae. I added another 10 tsp. of salt to the tank. After this, my estimate of the total salt content would be at about 4-5 tsp. per gallon (based on water changes, evaporation and possible addition of salt when adding in baby brine shrimp).

Day 11: I was able to find 3 fry in the breeding trap. I found the first off-cast shell; it was the same size as the dead shrimp from day 9.

Days 12-20: I was always able to find at least two fry in the breeding trap. There was no noticeable growth in this time.

Day 21: I was able to find only 1 living fry in the breeding trap, and one dead one.

Day 22: I released the final remaining shrimp from the breeding trap into the main tank, and started to look in the main tank for additional shrimp which escaped from the breeding trap (there was nothing really keeping them in the breeding trap, they could have escaped any time but I believe that most of them did not because of the lack of hiding areas between the Java moss inside the trap, and the other vegetation on the bottom of the main tank). I was only able to find one additional shrimp in the main tank, and it was about 6mm (significantly larger than the one from the breeding trap). I suspect it was able to grow larger due to its access to more food in the form of dead/rotting hornwort on the bottom of the main tank. The Java moss in the breeding trap did not seem to be affected as adversely as the hornwort was. I suspect the high salt level caused some of the hornwort to die-off.

Day 23: A total of 8 shrimp remain. Water temperature is 70F, pH 8.6, KH 4-5, and nitrates > 140 ppm. The shrimp are moved from the 10-gallon rearing tank into a smaller tank, which has a bare bottom. I will be bringing the salt content down, and trying to reduce the nitrates by better cleaning of the bottom.

Day 35: I still have 8 shrimp, and have seen at least one off-cast shell indicating that they are still growing. They are currently 5-8mm in size and I will now be bringing the salt content in their water down, so I can move them into a larger community tank (a planted 60 gallon tank holding other shrimp, Endler's live bearers and a couple of Borneo sucker-mouths).

Based on this most recent experience in raising baby shrimp, I've been a little less sure of exactly which shrimp I've been dealing with.

The first time I attempted to raise what I thought was baby *C. japonica*, they hatched and were tiny free-floating larva. This most recent time, they were actually little crawling shrimp when they hatched. Were they really the same species? Maybe so, maybe not.

They could have been the same species, but hatched in two different environments very similar to the way brine shrimp will either give birth to live young, or young in an encapsulated cyst form (brine shrimp 'eggs'). The brine shrimp will create cysts when the environment becomes unsuitable, in the hopes that the dormant young will live through whatever ecological threat might be occurring which could possibly wipe out all living non-encysted animals.

There is a possibility that the young shrimp which hatched as free-floating larva, did so because of the lack of salt in the water. If the young hatched high up in a freshwater stream flowing towards the ocean, the free floating young would then be pulled downstream towards the ocean and the vital minerals they would need in order to grow. On the other hand if there was already salt present in the water, maybe the eggs were actually able to somehow absorb the minerals to help give the young shrimp

a head start. This seems to be the only reasonable explanation as to why the already formed eggs could actually grow in size, as they seemed to do after the addition of salt to the water.

I am the first to admit that I am still baffled as to how to distinguish a male from a female shrimp. I have been staring at these things for many hours, of many days, and I do see some individual differences, but I couldn't say with any certainty whether these traits are sexual dimorphism or not.

They seem to range in their colors, and some of the smaller ones have been observed displaying a beautiful dark reddish-brown color with an almost white stripe down the center of their back-side, and occasionally a cross stripe about half-way down their tail. The larger ones never seem to get this vivid in their color. Another difference I've noticed is in the structure of the 'face' of the shrimp. The smaller more vividly colored ones seem to have a more pronounced shell ridge between their eyes.

A few last observations about raising these baby shrimp would be in regards to their rearing tank. I really do think that the partially decaying hornwort was a valuable nutritional supplement, whereas the Java moss seemed to grow with no die-off problem in the salted water. I think if I were to attempt to raise another batch of these shrimp, I would dispense with the breeding trap, load the tank with hornwort and just accept the fact that the shrimp will be very hard to find in the tank during the first month or so. I would not feed them the brine shrimp, or the powdered krill, and would instead rely on the hornwort, Sera 0-nips and just a bit of the Omega 3. The Omega 3 would always cause a flurry of activity in the shrimp when it was added to the water and I would guess that it was a very attractive food to them. The Sera brand 0-nips seem to be the food that the adult shrimps prefer.

Next I will be trying to get them to actually spawn, and I will be trying to do this by increasing the salt content in their water, and maybe playing around with the temperature a bit.

Hopefully another article outlining spawning of this animal will be written soon!

Postscript: As this article went to print (85 days) I have seen at least 3 of the shrimp, which have been moved to my large community tank. The largest ones are over 15mm.

Editor's Notes

Steve Deutsch

I guess begging really does work - we have another new author this month, Gary McIlvaine. Gary writes us about his start in the hobby and his return to MASI. We also have articles from Maureen Green and Lawrence Kent. It is great to have new voices, and we're always looking for more. We also have four exchange articles this month. Various criteria are used in selecting exchange articles to publish. First, our exchange editor, Steve Edie, selects articles from all over the hobby that he feels are worthy of reprinting. This gives me a stock to work from. When I put the Darter together, I first include all of the original MASI articles and reports that have been submitted. The remainder of the issue is filled from the exchange articles. I look to balance what is already included - if we have all breeding articles, I look for some other aspect of the hobby. If all of our articles are about collecting, shows, etc. I look for fish articles. And finally, the length is a consideration, as the aim is to always have 32 pages including covers. If there is a specific topic you would like to see covered, let me know and I will see if Steve has anything in the exchange library we can run.

Article deadlines for the rest of the year are:

September-October - August 15

November-December - October 15

So You're Going to a Fish Auction!

by Margaret Cekis

reprinted from March '04 *Fish Talk* of the Atlanta Area Aquarium Association

What Should You Expect?

When you arrive on the morning of the auction, you will be surrounded by a scene of organized chaos. Everywhere you look are people with Styrofoam boxes and bags of fish:

- Milling around the registration table to get Seller and Buyer Numbers,
- Filling out labels and fish lists,
- Labeling bags of fish and other items for sale and putting them on the preview tables.
- Saving seats with their styros and jackets.
- Greeting newcomers and friends.
- Selling raffle tickets, refreshments, or t-shirts.
- Examining the fish and equipment on the preview tables and writing down item numbers.
- Talking about fish, about feeding them, keeping them, breeding them, and raising them.

If You Plan To Buy Fish

Come early to examine bags and record item numbers you want to bid on. Items are brought up randomly by the "Runners", the volunteers who carry the fish up to the auction table, then deliver them to the winning bidder. If you want specific items, you can listen for those numbers to come up for auction.

Bring a "styro" [a styrofoam cooler-like box that fish are shipped or transported in] to protect your fish on the trip home. You can buy a cheap disposable cooler, or buy a carton from a pet store, or from another fish club member. Some extra ones are often sold during the auction.

You should be prepared to rebag the fish you buy in fresh dechlorinated water if you get a bag that leaks, or have a long distance to travel home. Bring a few fish bags, some rubber bands, and some dechlor.

Research the fish you want to buy before you come to the auction, so you'll recognize both the common and scientific names of the fish when they come up for bid, and so you'll know how to care for them when you get them home. Some people bring their reference books to the auction with them to refer to before or during the auction.

If You Plan To Sell Fish

Get actual fish shipping bags. Buy them from a pet store, another fish person, or order them on the Internet. Do not use baggies or zipper food storage bags!

If you have not gotten your tags and seller sheets before the auction, come early to get your number and label all your bags.

Bring waterproof tape to put over labels, or put numbers on bags in waterproof marker, in case the tag gets wet or comes off.

After the fish, the most important thing to put into the bag is plenty of air or oxygen. Use enough water to cover the fish, then fill the rest of the bag with air. (Use an air pump to pump air into the bags.)

Minimize waste and pollution in your fish bags by not feeding the fish the day before and the day of the auction.

Do not crowd the fish in the bag. If fish are aggressive, put each fish in its own bag, then put them all in a larger bag that will keep all of them together.

Do not sell very tiny fry, unless you are selling them as feeders for bigger fish. About one inch is a good minimum size, unless the full-grown fish will be less than 2 inches long, and in that case they should be about 3/4 inch.

Give buyers all the information you would like to have if you were buying the fish. Not everyone gets to see all the bags before the auction. Club members and volunteers are busy setting things up and registering visitors. Provide:

- Both the common and scientific names (common names vary widely).
- The number and size of the fish in the bag/item (such as 4 1-inch fry, or 3 2-inch fish). Indicate whether the fish are a dwarf species, or get unusually large.
- Sex(es) if known: A male and a female is a Pair. A male and two females is a Trio. A female and two males is a Reverse Trio. Any other combination of two or three fish in a bag is two males, two females or three unsexed juveniles! A buyer who already has three females and no males wants to know what he is bidding on!
- Spawning Status: A Mated Pair have engaged in pre-spawning activity or spawned. A Spawning (or Proven) Pair have spawned and produced fry.
- Geographic location where the fish originated: the Amazon, the Congo, African Rift Lakes (Tanganyikan or Malawi), etc., so the buyer will have an idea whether they could be housed with the fish he already has.

When the Auction Gets Underway

When it gets close to (or past) the advertised starting time, the mike is turned on (with a few shrieks of feedback), the sound level is adjusted, announcements are made, and the auctioneer is introduced. The runners line up, the recorders get their paperwork ready, people take their seats, and the number of the first item is announced.

To bid, raise your hand with your bidder number in plain view to the podium. What you buy will be record by bag number, bidder number, and price.

To drop out of the bidding for an item, lower your bidder card. If you have the high bid on an item, show your number to the runner who brings you the fish or other item.

You may stop bidding whenever you wish, take your bidder card to the check-out table, and pay your tab you have sold fish, you will receive a check from the club for 70% of the sale price within a couple of weeks. The club keeps 30% of the sale price of each item, except donations, where the total sale price goes to the dub.

You can leave for lunch, and hope that the items you were waiting to bid on don't get sold while you're gone.

Buy a t-shirt and some raffle tickets, you might win a tank, or other useful equipment, books, or fish food. You'll meet lots of people really into fish, talk about fish all day, get some new fish that you wouldn't usually find in a pet store and have a really great time. Just use a little common sense, and don't buy 50 fish if you only have three tanks!

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Finding Cichlids in Lake Tanganyika Turns out to be... Not-so-Hard by Lawrence Kent

As we taxied up the dirt runway we saw a huge white UN helicopter, bigger than the 35-seat passenger plane in which we had just landed. We had arrived in Kigoma on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and I was excited. Kigoma is in Tanzania but only about eighty miles across the lake lies Congo, with its thousands of Hutu refugees, civil unrest, and UN peacekeepers. The huge helicopter apparently runs supplies to these peacekeepers and refugees, as well as another group of refugees from Burundi about a hundred miles north. But my friend Caroline and I hadn't arrived to see refugees – we had come to see cichlids.

In August 2004 I met Ad Konings for the first time at the American Cichlid Association meeting in Denver, and I grabbed the opportunity to get his advice: “Ad, I may be going to Tanzania for work sometime and I need to know where to go to see cichlids.” The cichlid-guru responded: “I usually go to Lake Tanganyika through Zambia; but I think if you go to Kigoma [in Tanzania] you might be able to see some there.”

Without any information beyond this tidbit of advice, I booked a plane ticket from Dar Es Salaam (Tanzania's capital) to Kigoma, and after finishing a week of work with local regulators of agricultural research, I headed to the airport with Caroline – my friend and an agricultural researcher who recently was stationed in Tanzania.

The unpaved runway and one-tiny-room terminal gave us a clue as to the small size of Kigoma: a typical small African town, but also the most significant one on Tanzania's long Lake shoreline. It has a nice \$70-a-night hotel called the Hilltop, which overlooks the Lake. As soon as we checked in, I grabbed a mask and snorkel and rushed down to a gravelly beach about a half-mile down the path. It was going to get dark in an hour, but I needed to see if we had come to the right place or embarked on an expensive wild goose chase. One minute into the water and I was face to face with *Tropheus moorii* and *Lepidiolamprologus elongatus*. Yes! We had ventured into the unknown but not come in vain!

I snorkeled around the gravelly shoreline for an hour that night and for another couple of hours in the morning. The clown cichlids (*Eretmodus cyanostictus*) were particularly abundant, darting in and out between the rocks nearest to the shore. I saw hundreds of them, and it was easy to get my mask within inches of these comical fish without apparently bothering them. As I swam a few more meters offshore, where the water was about a meter or so deep, I saw hundreds of *Tropheus moorii* – the local race is dark with yellow bars and a yellow spine – flitting between the larger rocks, grazing algae, chasing off intruders, and doing the “shimmy” mating dance. Where the rocks meet the sand and the depths reached two meters, I began to see a few representatives of one of the more familiar hobby fish – the blueish, black-barred *Lamprologus tretocephalous*. These individuals were more brilliant than any I've seen in an aquarium. The edges of their dorsal and ventral fins were a spectacular, glowing neon blue. They contrasted well with the all-black *Neolamprologus toae* that seemed to share their microhabitat. Admittedly, I had no idea what those *N. toae* were when I first saw them, but my copy of Ad Konings' “The Cichlids of Lake Tanganyika in their Natural Environment” (1998) was never far away, lying up on the rocky beach, available for quick consultation (it is consequently water-damaged). On that same shoreline I was also able to find *Altolamprologus compressiceps* – loners cruising the rocks at rapid speed – and magnificent *Ophthalmotilapia ventralis* (feather fins) swimming in the deeper areas over the sand. The regional variant of *O. ventralis* is a dark blue with long black fins edged in white. There were also a few *Tropheus duboisi* showing their trademark juvenile colors: white polka dots on a black background. We had hit pay dirt by coming to Kigoma – it was great.

The next morning we joined two other tourists who were heading to Gombe national park to look for wild chimpanzees. Gombe is where Jane Goodall carried out her ground-breaking studies on chimp

behavior, and we took a two-hour boat ride up the Lake to the park entrance. Luckily the driver dropped us on the beach for a couple of hours while he rounded up a guide and made other arrangements. This provided two hours of snorkeling time in a new micro-environment, and new species abounded. Probably the best was another spectacular feather-fin: *Cyathopharynx furcifer*. Nine-inch long males in bright breeding colors with yellow heads were guarding their adjacent sandcastle nests, sparring at the perceived boundaries and courting passing females. I couldn't believe how lucky we were to be seeing this – something I've read about in numerous books but now was witnessing first hand. There were also shimmering metallic blue killifish (*Lamprichthys tanganicanus*) courting and spawning while other cichlids hovered nearby trying to steal eggs. In the deeper areas off the beach, we also saw yellow and blue *Boulangerochromis microlepis* – the world's largest cichlid. The night before, we ate this species for dinner at the hotel: delicious.

By chatting with one of the workers on the boat (our guide translated into Swahili), I learned about a fish collector at a small hotel called Aqua Lodge only 500 meters from where we were staying. The next day we visited the place and found an adjacent warehouse with cement holding tanks filled with *Cyphotilapia frontosa*, *Synodontis multipunctatus*, various *Tropheus* variants, *Cyprichromis* sp. “leptosoma jumbo,” *Altolamprologus compressiceps* and more. The young Tanzanians working there didn't speak much English and they didn't know much about the business side of things (because they just send the fish to the capital where the owner arranges sales), but they seemed to know a lot about finding and catching fish, so we told them we'd pay \$75 to go fishing with them on their motorboat the following day, and the arrangements were made.

We drove that boat to a rocky shore about five miles south of Kigoma, near Ujiji, and jumped into the water with our masks and snorkels. Idi and Hamis brought hand-nets and a three-meter gill-net. If I saw an interesting fish, for example a *Neolamprologus tretacanthus*, I would just point it out to Idi or Hamis, and one of them would dive down and net it directly or chase it into the gill net where it would get stuck and then be extracted by hand and put into a bucket on the boat. We saw and caught several *Petrochromis* species and the fat-lipped *Lobochilotes labiatus* among the underwater rocks, as well as aquarium favorites like *Neolamprologus brichardi* and gorgeous specimens of *Cyprichromis leptosoma* with bright blue and neon orange tails. We also saw a four-foot long water cobra (*Boulengerina annulata stormsi*) swimming nearby and numerous Tanganyikan eels (*Aethiomastacembelus* sp.). These eels were fairly common, and several of them surprised me by shooting out from beneath the rocks I was looking over for other cichlid species.

After an hour or so, we had a barrel full of fish on the boat to examine, identify, and photograph. There were some unfamiliar faces that we needed the book to i.d., such as *Perissodus eccentricus*. This species is considered eccentric because it has an asymmetric mouth, opening wider on either the left or the right side, depending on the individual. It is a scale-eater and has evolved to be either “right-mouthed” or “left mouthed” to facilitate its attacks on the flanks of its victims (Hori 1993 cited in Konings 1998). Another unfamiliar face was that of *Lepidiolamprologus lemairii*, a big-headed cichlid, disproportionately tapered towards the tail, with the teeth and cryptic coloration of a predator. Idi told me the name of another new-to-me fish in our barrel – *Xenochromis hecqui*. It had a sharply descending forehead and two dark spots on its upper flank, which I learned later are identifying marks. Konings (1998) describes *X. hecqui* as a “cichlid from the depths,” but we found ours at only five meters.

After photographing most of the fish in the barrel, we returned them to the lake, except for about twenty *Altolamprologus compressiceps* that Idi kept to add to his inventory back at the holding tanks. We then took the boat back towards Kigoma, stopping near a beach to try out a new spot. Here we explored the sand, and saw big schools of *Xenotilapia* species skimming over the bottom, sifting sand through their gills to eat microorganisms and insect larvae. Most were *X. sima*, with distinctive yellow eyes, and some were *X. spilopterus*, with tiny blue spangles. We also saw silvery *Ectodus descampi*, an elongated cichlid with a large spot on its dorsal fin encircled by a distinctive light blue ring. A horizontal strip cutting across the dorsal fin is also light blue, and above that is a black stripe, topped by a yellow

frosting. This is a beautiful fish that certainly would be popular if it were available to hobbyists. Other noteworthy sightings (and nettings) were: *Ctenochromis horei*, with its rows of small red dots along the flanks, and *Simonchromis loocki*, a finely barred convict-like cichlid that reportedly feeds on algae growing on water plants.

I also got a chance to witness the cichlids' famous parenting skills in their natural habitat. I dove down to look into a cave that was clearly being guarded by a pair of *Lepidiolamprologus elongatus* and inside I saw what looked like almost two hundred fry, each a half inch long. The big nine-inch male approached me menacingly so I backed off and swam back to the surface (besides I can't hold my breath very long).

After enjoying this excellent fish viewing most of the day, Caroline and I realized we had to get back to our hotel and then to the airport for the flight back to Dar Es-Salaam. Idi and Hamis dropped us off at the beach near our hotel, and we struggled up the path in the very intense sun, lugging our gear, and feeling our skins burn. We noticed a few outstanding African birds along the way – pintailed whydahs, red bishops, and melba finches – and arrived in time for the hotel manager to tell us, frantically, “good to see you, now hurry up and get to the airport – they sold sixty tickets but there are only 35 seats! And there's not a second flight for two or three days!” We rushed, and we made it, leaving the big white UN helicopter and Kigoma behind us as we flew back to Tanzania's capital, fully satisfied with our trip to the Lake.

HAP Report

Mike Hellweg

Member	Species	Common	Rep	Pts	Total
March '05					
Jerry Jost	<i>Cryptocoryne willisii</i>		V	15	565
Jerry Jost	<i>Cabomba caroliniana pulcherrima</i>	Purple Cabomba	V	10	565
Charles Harrison	<i>Ammania gracilis</i>	Red Ammania	V	20	215
Charles Harrison	<i>Echinodoras tenellus</i>	Pygmy Chain Sword	V	10	215
Ed Millinger	<i>Vallisneria asiatica</i>	Jungle Val	V	5	310
Gary Lange	<i>Ottelia ulvifolia</i> *		V	20	1085
John Van Asch	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Dwarf Yellow Water Iris	OB	10	520
John Van Asch	<i>Iris</i> sp. Professor Claude*	Purple Water Iris	OB	10	520!
John Van Asch	<i>Iris versicolor</i>	Dwarf Purple Water Iris	OB	10	520

Reproduction Key: V = Vegetative, OB = Outdoor Bloom, IB = Indoor Bloom, S = Seedling

*= MASI First

BAP Report

Steve Edie

Member	Species	Common	Pts	Total
Mar 2005				
Mike Hellweg	<i>Brachyrhaphis rhabdophora</i> **	Lace Brachy	20	2037
Mike Hellweg	<i>Eirmotus octozona</i> **	8 Line False Barb	25	2062
Mike Hellweg	<i>Trichopsis vittata</i>	Red Fin Croaking Gourami	15	2077
Mike Hellweg	<i>Xiphophorus maculatus</i> "San Miguel #4" *	San Miguel Platy	10	2087
Gary Lange	<i>Danio choprai</i> *		15	1309
Apr 2005				
Diane Brown	<i>Aphyosemion gabunense marginatum</i> *		20	60
Diane Brown	<i>Chromaphysemon loennbergii</i> (HAH '98)		20	80
Diane Brown	<i>Thorichthys</i> sp. "Blue Mixteco" *		20	100
Mike Hellweg	<i>Julidochromis transcriptus</i> "Kalambo"		10	2097
Steven Hoffman	<i>Neolamprologus brichardi</i>		10	35
Jerry Jost	<i>Fundulopanchax gardneri nigerianus</i> Misage		15	40
Jerry Jost	<i>Rivulus xiphidius</i> Bagne dr Anamites		15	55
Charles & Mary Ann Lenau	<i>Pterophyllum scalare</i>	Smokey Angel	2	235
Jim Miller	<i>Skiffia multipunctata</i> **		30	1944
Jim Miller	<i>Tanichthys albonubes</i>	Long Fin White Cloud	10	1954
Ed Millinger	<i>Gymnogeophagus meridionalis</i> *		15	455
Ed Millinger	<i>Neolamprologus leleupi</i>		10	465
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Nanochromis parilus</i> *		20	655
May 2005				
Mike Hellweg	<i>Boraras maculatus</i> *	Dwarf Rasbora	25	2122
Mike Hellweg	<i>Tanichthys</i> "micagemme" *	Vietnamese White Cloud	15	2137

Ed Millinger	<i>Nomorhamphus ebrardtii</i>	Red Fin Halfbeak	10	475
June 2005				
Jack Berhorst	<i>Apistogramma trifasciatum</i>		15	75
Mike Hellweg	<i>Labidochromis chisumulae</i> *	Blue Lab	15	2152
Mike Hellweg	<i>Xiphophorus birchmanni</i> "Rio Orizatlan" *	Sailfin Swordtail	15	2167
Cory Koch	<i>Neolamprologus brichardi</i>		10	10
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Pterophyllum scalare</i>	Koi Angel	10	10
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Pterophyllum scalare</i>	Gold x DD Angel	2	12
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Apistogramma borellii</i>		10	665
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Characodon audax</i> *	Bold Goodeid	20	685
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Dermogenys siamensis</i> #	Golden Wrestling Halfbeak	10	695
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Inpaichthys kerri</i>	Kerri Tetra	15	710
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Melanotaenia parva</i> *		15	725
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Nomorhamphus celebensis</i>	Harlequin Halfbeak	10	735
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Sturisoma aureum</i>		20	755
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Xiphophorus birchmanni</i> *	Sheepshead Swordtail	15	770
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Xiphophorus malinche</i> "Rio Claro" *	Highland Sword	15	785
Rick Tinklenberg	<i>Xiphophorus variatus</i>	Variable Platy	5	790

- * = First MASI species spawn (5 point bonus)
- ** = First MASI genus spawn (5 point bonus)
- *** = First MASI family spawn (5 point bonus)



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Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc.



Come join us at a meeting, or contact our membership chair, Kathy Deutsch for more information
(314) 741-0474 fishfan@i1.net

Club Hopping

Steve Edie

Aug 6-7 – Akron, OH: Greater Akron Aquarium Society – Annual Show

Aug 14 – St Louis: Missouri Aquarium Society - Auction

Aug 20-21 – Youngstown, OH: Youngstown Area Tropical Fish Society – Annual Show

Sept 17 – Denver: Colorado Aquarium Society - Auction

Sept 18 – Arlington Heights, IL: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association – All-Species Auction

Oct 2 – St Louis: Missouri Aquarium Society – Swap Meet

Oct 14-16 – Indianapolis: Circle City Aquarium Club – Fall Workshop

Oct 15 – Milwaukee: Milwaukee Aquarium Society - Auction

Oct 21-23 - Maryland: Potomac Valley Aquarium Society – Annual Show

Oct 21-23 – Sacramento, CA: Sacramento Aquarium Society – Annual Show

Oct 23 - Arlington Heights, IL: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association – Swap Meet

Oct 29 – Cincinnati: Greater Cincinnati Aquarium Society - Auction

Nov 4-6 – New Jersey: North Jersey Aquarium Society – Annual Show

Nov 18-20 - Cleveland: Ohio Cichlid Association – Cichlid Extravaganza

Nov 20 – St Louis: Missouri Aquarium Society - Auction

Nov 20 – Milwaukee: Milwaukee Aquarium Society – Fish-O-Ramma

Dec 4 - Arlington Heights, IL: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association – Swap Meet

March xx, 2006 – Hartford, CT: Northeast Council – Annual Convention

July xx, 2006 – Chicago: American Cichlid Association – 2006 Annual Convention

Oct xx, 2006 – Laurel, MD: All Aquarium Catfish Convention

Member Classifieds

MASI Members can place a classified ad in the Darter for free. Ads may be up to 30 words in length. Send your ads to the editor. The ad will run for one issue unless you specify how long to run in, in which case it will run as requested.

The Computer Page

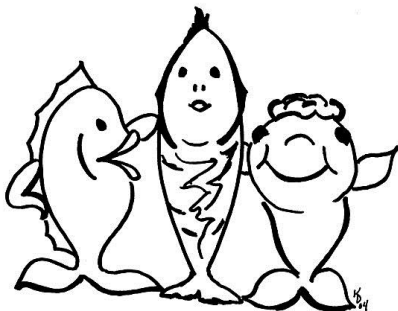
Steve Deutsch

MASI's official web page: www.missouriaquariumsociety.org

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Membership

Yearly membership in the Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc. is \$20 per calendar year. Membership includes the Darter subscription for the year, which is currently 6 issues. New memberships and renewals can be submitted at club functions such as meetings and auctions, or by contacting our membership chair, Kathy Deutsch at 314-741-0474, fishfan@i1.net, or 9 Old Jamestown Ct. Florissant MO 63034

Apistogramma honguie

By Charley Grimes

Reprinted from April '03 *Fancy Fins* Of the Circle City Aquarium Club

Apistogrammas, dwarf cichlids, may be small in size, but are big in contradictions. The main thing to consider in the term, "Dwarf Cichlids", is the word cichlid. Most cichlids are territorial, some aggressively so, and *Apistogrammas* are no exception. I figure Dwarf Cichlids are popular for a couple of reasons, they are good looking (or at least cute) and they present enough of a challenge to intrigue aquarists.

By far the biggest challenge with my particular *A. honguie* was in actually obtaining the fish. Within limits (the female was a killer), the darn things wouldn't stop spawning. The ones I had were wild fish that came to Indianapolis via Canada. To state that actually getting these fish to Indianapolis was a big hassle takes understatement to a new level. This was the sort of experience that was so negative, that only super cool fish like these Apistos would make it all worthwhile.

The fish were exactly as advertised—Wild adults, full grown, and three males paired with three females. The importer had said that the fish were some of the nicest he had ever seen—and they were dandies. Naturally, I was a little short of tank space so I had to 'plunk' all six fish into an existing heavily planted fifteen gallon tank that already had a 18 or 20 tetras as dithers. I tossed in a handful of small flowerpots for cover with the intention of setting up three 15-gallon tanks for the three pairs of *Apistogramma honguie*.

By the next day, the new fish were living up to the sales pitch - all three males were fabulous with allsorts of color including red bars in their tails. By the second day, one of the females was guarding a flowerpot full of eggs. Apparently the fish were in pretty good condition!

I didn't want to disturb the brooding female and was clueless as to which one was the male, so, like a ninny, I didn't do anything. Result: The following day, the eggs were gone and I was down to two females. Figuring that a 15 was too small, I upsized to a couple of planted thirty gallon breeders - a pair in one and a reverse trio in the other.

As I really had the plants packed in both tanks, I was surprised a few days later to find that two males had been driven out of the tank and the female was guarding eggs; by the way, she turned out to be an excellent mother and raised about 30 fry. Learning my lesson, I covered the tank with the remaining pair and really lavished all sorts of care on them.

A couple of weeks later, I discovered a murdered male laying on the gravel and a bright yellow-colored female guarding eggs

In two months, I went from having three pairs of wild Apistos (including three beautiful males) to having two females (that I could never expect to find males to match with) and about sixty fry.

Success ??? - kind of !! However, since Apistos grow so darn slowly, it will be a while yet before I can see if the fry grow up to be as attractive as the parents.

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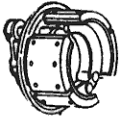
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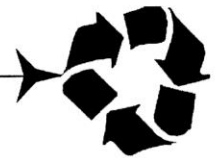
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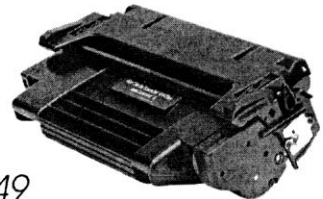
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