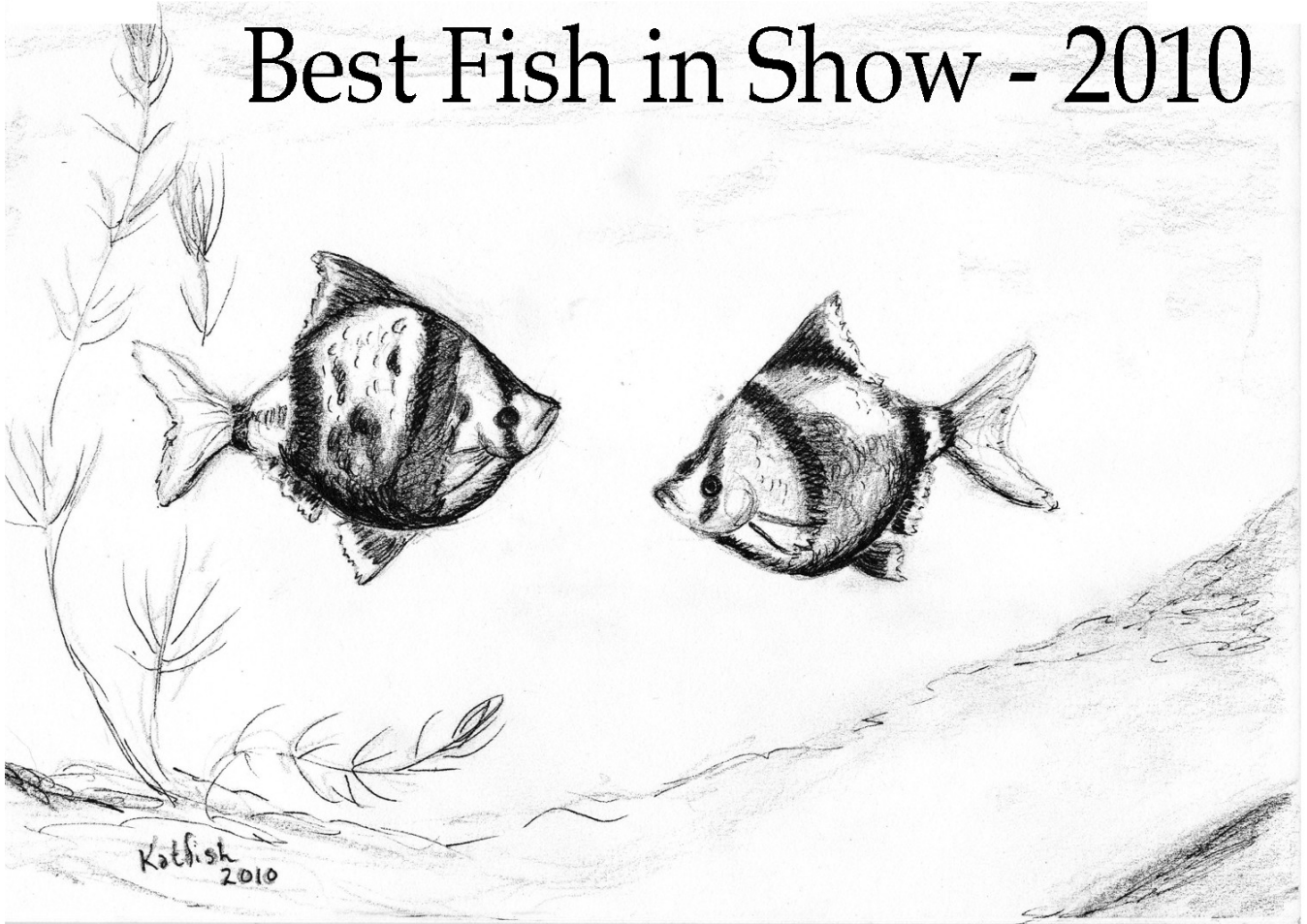


# The Darter

May - June 2010

Best Fish in Show - 2010



**Jim Miller - Tiger Barbs**

**Missouri Aquarium Society, Inc**

**St. Louis, Missouri**

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MASI's official web page: [www.missouriaquariumsociety.com](http://www.missouriaquariumsociety.com)

Join the all-new MASI FishHeads Forum. See web page for instructions.

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# Places to Be / Things to See

SATURDAY May 22, 2010

Executive Council, Host TBD, Pat Tosie's Office

THURSDAY June 17, 2010

General Meeting, 7:30 PM @ Dorsett Village Baptist Church  
Officer and Executive Council Elections

June Executive Council Meeting is TBD.

THURSDAY July 15, 2010

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

SUNDAY August 8, 2010

Auction, 12:00 Start, Gardenville Masonic Hall

THURSDAY August 19, 2010

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

THURSDAY September 16, 2010

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

SUNDAY October 3, 2010

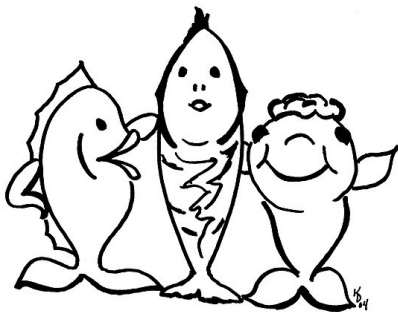
Swap Meet, Gardenville Masonic Hall

SUNDAY November 14, 2010

Auction, 12:00 Start, Gardenville Masonic Hall

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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 Ron Huck, our membership chair.

# Presidential Preamble

By Mike Hellweg

Our 50th anniversary year has now come to a close. Thanks to all of you who helped make it the best ever in the history of our Society. I still see many of you showing your MASI pride and wearing your blue 50th anniversary polos, too. It has been a year of change for all of us, and I hope our next half century will be even better!

Our 50th anniversary show weekend is now history, and spring has sprung with a vengeance! What a rainstorm we had during setup; Gravois Road and Heege Road were like whitewater streams for several minutes, and our car was making huge rooster tails as we brought our speakers back to the show site from dinner. Wow!

Gary McIlvaine and his show committee did an excellent job bringing the show together. The speakers had a great time and in my opinion they all put on great presentations, and from what I've heard from the members, you all enjoyed them, learned from them, and had a great time over the weekend, too. Dinner at Sam's Steakhouse was just as good as it was last year. I hope you had a chance to come by and check out the amazing show entries. Congratulations to Jim Miller for once again taking best fish in show with his amazingly huge tiger barbs – gotta be those R & J bloodworms and brine shrimp!

As always, we'll be looking at what went right and what we could have done better for next year. How did everyone like the certificates and cash prizes instead of plaques or trophies? Do you want to do it again, or see something else for next year? More speakers? Fewer speakers? Vendors? The 2011 show committee will be forming up soon, so get your ideas together and volunteer to help out on the committee. The 2010 show would have been nothing without all of our volunteers, so be sure to thank them, and consider becoming one of them for next year if you aren't already.

After a little over a decade as auction chairman, John Van Asch decided to step down so he could concentrate on doing other things for our club and for the House Rabbit Society. Thank you John for all you've done to help make our auctions the success they have been. Scott Bush stepped up and volunteered to take over as auction chair. He did this about four weeks before the biggest auction of the year, and got his baptism by fire almost immediately. He stepped up to the task and did an admirable job during his rookie auction! Well done, Scott. Hopefully we didn't scare him away, and he'll stick around for another year to make things easy for the new president and his transition into the position. But I guess that's a decision for the new guy to make.

For those of you who haven't yet heard or who did not receive the email blast regarding our Yahoo eGroup FishHeads, the Council decided to shut the eGroup down on April 24th. The reason this was done was because many members were having issues accessing the eGroup, including me and several Council members. There was no easy fix, and we needed a single stream of information flowing back and forth between members. If we kept the eGroup going and also started up a new communication medium, some people would inevitably miss out on some postings via one or the other medium. So we now have a brand new FishHeads forum on our website, accessed via the front page where it says "join our community". This forum is being moderated by the Executive Council, so BikerChick and HotMomma won't be able to use the forum – sorry.

I know some of you won't like this decision, but it was made in the best interest of the overall membership of the Society. For myself, I'm not a huge fan of forums, but as President, I'm setting example by checking it at least once a day, and posting to it when I have something to say. The rules will be the same as they were for our eGroup, and that includes using your real name in your signature line. The Council is insisting on this since we all meet face-to-face once a month and we want everyone to know each other, and be able to put real member's faces to names at the meetings. You don't need to use your entire name, a first name is fine.

In addition to this, we are also setting up a special email blast account so that we can send news out to the entire membership. This will be a one way email account, and as with all of our other information, we will not sell, lease, rent or share your email address with any other group – it will be used for official MASI business only.

Watch the Darter, the website, the email blasts, and the new forum for news on our upcoming events – the summer auction, the swap meet, and the fall barbeque.

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

## Editor's Notes

The first order of business is to congratulate our Ralph Wilhelm Writing Award winner, Tony McMillan. Tony is new to writing for the Darter, but hit a home run with the first of his "Fish Stories" series – How much is that Channel Cat in the Window. He joins Lawrence Kent (2006 and 2009) and Steve Edie (2007 and 2008) as recipients of this award. Tony has another article in this issue, as do Rick Tinklenberg, Kathy Deutsch, and Ed Millinger, and Pat Tosie contributed a puzzle.

As we have done the last couple of years, the cover is the Best of Show fish, drawn by Kathy Deutsch, and we have show photos from Gary Lange and Charles Harrison. The color photos add to Charles work in printing the Darter and the club members who collate the various sections, so if you haven't thanked Charles or the back table crew in awhile you might – as with every position in the club they are all volunteers.

Sometimes it is feast or famine. As far as Darter Articles go, it was a 'feast' month. I had more than I could print in this issue, so I already have a few sand-bagged for the next issue. If yours is one of them it be assured I plan to publish everything I have – nothing was rejected, just set aside for a rainy day. I don't have enough yet for a full issue, so I still need your article, which could be next year's award winner. You'll never know unless you write that article.

The deadlines for the rest of this year's issues will be June 15, August 15, and October 15.

# Spawning *Aspidoras eurycephalus*

By Rick Tinklenberg

As everyone knows, catfish from the family Callichthyidae are among the most popular in the aquarium hobby. Included in this family are the genera; *Aspidoras*, *Brochis*, *Callichthys*, *Corydoras*, *Dianema*, *Hoplosternum*, *Lepthoplosternum*, *Megalechis* and *Scleromystax*, the so called “armored catfish.” Forming the Aspidoradini tribe are the closely related genera *Aspidoras* and *Scleromystax*. The genus of interest here is *Aspidoras*. First established by Iherning in 1907, for type species *Aspidoras rochai*, this genus contains 19 species and an additional 6 that are undescribed. (Note: Number of species is fluid and changing regularly) All species are small, less than 2 inches, and endemic to Brazil.

When comparing *Aspidoras* to the other Callichthyidae, they most closely resemble the *Corydoras* species. I know there are internal, physiological differences between the two, but I can't observe these and keep the fish alive. Externally, I can observe the facts that, (1) the *Aspidoras* appear to have a longer, more flexible body, (2) that *Aspidoras* eyes appear smaller and less mobile than those of the *Corydoras*, and (3) that the *Aspidoras* have an overall more primitive appearance compared to the *Corydoras*. Once you have kept both, you will have no trouble sorting them out.

*Aspidoras*: *Aspis* = shield *doras* = skin

*Eurycephalus*: *Eurys* = broad *keplale* = head

*Aspidoras Eurycephalus* was first described by Nijssen & Isbrucker in 1976 and is found in the upper Tocantins River Basin in Brazil. I found them on a fish list several years ago and was excited to add them to my fish room. Any species of *Aspidoras* is of interest to me and this was an unusual find. I have maintained my original group for over 5 years now and they are still as active as ever, showing no signs of slowing down. Because many *Aspidoras* species are similar, I think by strictly keeping them in one place helps ensure less chance of mixing species. I find Callichthyidae catfish to be generally healthy and very long lived if given good foods and living conditions.

My group of 4 males and 2 females are in a fifteen gallon tank with bare bottom and a sponge filter. Furniture includes half of a small strawberry jar and is well planted with java fern, java moss and water sprite. Water changes are 30% biweekly for regular maintenance and twice a week when being encouraged to spawn. Water from my tap is on average 600 micro seimens (medium soft) with a ph of 7.4. The buffering capacity of the water is low, so a day or two after water change, the tank water tests out at 6.5 to 6.8. The *Eurycephalus* enjoy water changes and play in the new water stream while it is available. The tank is unheated and near the basement floor, so temperatures range from the mid 60's to the high 70's over the course of a year. Feeding is important and enjoyed. They receive a diet of frozen bloodworms and flake food in the morning, then pellet food in the evening.

When spawning is encouraged, water changes increase and are timed if possible to occur when storms bring barometric pressure changes. Live black worms are added to the diet a week or so before increasing water changes. Many Callichthyidae catfish can be “triggered” to spawn using cooler water changes prior to rain storms and *Aspidoras Eurycephalus* is no exception. Normally, they place their eggs close to the surface on the front glass of the aquarium. When I find them, I use a single edge razor blade and move them to a “plastic shoe box.” Two dozen eggs is normal and the fertilization rate is

usually 90% +. I use methylene blue as an antifungal and an air stone to keep O2 levels up. The eggs hatch 3-5 days post spawning, depending on temperature and I wait another 2 days before first foods. Microworms are my first food of choice because the worms go to the bottom where the fry live. Also, the worms remain alive for a relatively long time, there by increasing exposure to the fry. I also use live baby brine shrimp because of its excellent nutritional value and because you can see the orange bellies of the fry and be assured they are eating. Of utmost importance are “diaper changes” as my wife calls them. Everyday, I change 25 to 30 % of their water and change their “plastic shoe box”. I change the box because unused foods contaminate the bottom of the box where the “little cats” live and breath. If you wait too long, ammonia and fungus can develop and adversely affect the gills and fragile bodies of the fry and even “unexplained death” will occur. Once the fry reach ½ to ¾ inch, I move them into a small aquarium with 3-4 inches of water. Then over the course of a week, I increase the water level to approximately 6 inches. This allows them to slowly become accustomed to deeper water. Now it is time to think about selling or trading them, so other aquarists can enjoy this fun fish.

## Can you find the Xiphophorus?

Patrick A. Tosie, Sr.

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monticolus  
nezahualcoyotl  
pygmaeus  
signum  
variatus

xiphidium



# Shop Review: Frandeka Pets and Feed in Soulard

By Kathy Deutsch

1601 S 7th St  
Saint Louis, MO 63104  
314-241-4389

These days I am all about Soulard Market. There are foodstuffs there I can find nowhere else. During a winter ramble in the market, I wandered into an old friend-Frandeka's Pet Store. I met the owners during my time of employment at Beldt's Aquarium Hatchery. They knew what they were doing, were friendly and honest. The question was: had any of that changed?

Nope. Frandeka's is just as I remembered it, and the shopkeepers were just as I remembered them. It was a step back in time and I enjoyed it.

The shop is near the front of the market, right front corridor, on the left hand side of the corridor. It is small, very small. Claustrophobes will not be able to handle the one aisle that usually has a stream of lookers and buyers. The whole selling space is maybe 20 feet long, and it is jam-packed with animals and their related items.

There is a wall of fish tanks completely full of fish. I don't know what filtration they use, but it is a sight to behold. Elephant noses and dragon gobies share tanks with swordtails and mollies. Every time I go in, there seems to be every available color of common livebearer.

They do stock seasonal fish, so spring will bring a collection of common koi. Other bread-and-butter fish like corydoras and tetras are often available there when other shops are out.

My most recent visit to Frandeka's was a quick one. But the dozen cardinal tetras in an upper tank seemed healthy and eager, with good colors. Hundreds of mollies were milling about in a lower tank, and platies appeared well-fed.

Any fish bought from any pet store should be quarantined for two weeks. I thought the fish at Frandeka's looked great, but I would be as cautious with them as any other store's fish.

The owner is in the shop, with various young people to help out. It was nice to have people interested in waiting on me, and answering my questions. Best of all, when they did not know something, they admitted it and found someone who could answer. Everyone was knowledgeable and enthusiastic about what they had in stock.

There was a basic assortment of aquarium supplies and food. They seemed to have supplies for many other species of pet, as well. It could be a place to grab water conditioning chemicals while you are out getting vegetables from the Market: one-stop shopping.

It's not big and flashy, but it satisfied my craving for an old-time pet store visit. They are local and in business for many years. They had what I needed at fair prices. I was pleased.

# 2010 MASI Annual Show Results

By Gary McIlvaine

Class 1	Aquascaping	4 entries 2 entrant2
	First Aquascaping 1	Derek Walker
	Second Aquascaping 2	Derek Walker
	Third Eden	Harold Walker
Class 2	Novelty	4 entries 3 entrants
	First Soccer	Derek Walker
	Second placidochromis milomo	Jim Miller
	Third Baseball	Harold Walker
Class 3	Family	3 entries 3 entrants
	First Guppy Family	Harold Walker
	Second Red tailed goodeids	Derek Walker
	Third belontia signata	Jim Miller
Class 4	Domestic and Fancy Egglayers	4 entries 3 entrants
	First Calico Goldfish	Steven Hoffman
	Second Orange Fantail Goldfish	Steven Hoffman
	Third goldfish	Jim Miller
Class 5	Domestic and Fancy Livebearers	5 entries 3 entrants
	First Rusty Swordtail	Harold Walker
	Second Albino Lemon Swordtail	Karissa Walker
	Third Red Wag Platy	Harold Walker
Class 6	Guppies	1 entry 1 entrant
	First Half-black Delta	Harold Walker
Class 7	Betta splendens	8 entries - 2 entrants
	First Betta splendens	Jim Miller
	Second Betta splendens	Jim Miller
	Third Halfmoon Betta	Harold Walker
Class 8	Wild Livebearers	2 entries 1 entrant
	First f. nomorhamphus ehrarbilis	Jim Miller
	Second m. nomorhamphus ebrarbilis	Jim Miller
Class 9	Goodeids	3 entries 2 entrants
	First Chapalichthys pardalis	Derek Walker
	Second skiffia multipunctata	Harold Walker
	Third Xenotoca variata Jesus Maria	Derek Walker

Class 10	New World Dwarf Cichlids	2 entries 2 entrants
	First        Apistogramma cacatuoides	Kurt Zahringer
	Second      Peluicachromis sp.	Keaton Walker
Class 11	New World Cichlids	6 entries 4 entrants
	First        Geophagus altifrons	Ed Millinger
	Second      Pterophyllum leopoldi	Cory Koch
	Third        heros severus	Jim Miller
Class 12	Old World Cichlids	5 entries 3 entrants
	First        aulonocara walteri	Jim Miller
	Second      Male xystichromis sp.	Derek Walker
	Third        Male Hap "ruby coleen"	Derek Walker
Class 14	Discus	7 entries 3 entrants
	First        Symphysodon aequifasciatus	Cory Koch
	Second      Symphysodon aequifasciatus	Cory Koch
	Third        s. aequifasciatus (Blue Diamond)	John Stolhans
Class 15	Anabantoids	3 entries 2 entrants
	First        betta pulcher m	Jim Miller
	Second      Combtail Paradise Fish	Steven Hoffman
	Third        betta pulcher f	Jim Miller
Class 16	Characins	7 entries 2 entrants
	First        Neon Tetra	Harold Walker
	Second      Ember Tetra	Harold Walker
	Third        Black Neon Tetra	Harold Walker
Class 17	Cyprinids	11 entries 4 entrants
	First        Barbus tetrazona	Jim Miller
	Second      Barbus tetrazona	Jim Miller
	Third        Trigonostrogna Espei	Tony McMillan
Class 18	Corydoras	1 entry 1 entrant
	First        Corydoras Paleatus	Harold Walker
Class 19	Catfish, All Others	4 entries 2 entrants
	First        synodonits eupterus	Jim Miller
	Second      synodonits multipunctatus	Jim Miller
	Third        synodonits multipunctatus	Jim Miller
Class 20	Killies Old World	1 entry 1 entrant
	First        Nothobranchius rubripinnis	Kurt Zahringer
Class 22	All Other Fish	1 entry 1 entrant
	First        Dwarf Puffer	Harold Walker

Class 23	Aquatic Critters	2 entries 2 entrants
	First Crayfish	Kayla Lenz
	Second Ghost Shrimp	Harold Walker
Class 24	True Aquatic Plants	3 entries 1 entrant
	First Narrow Leaf Java Fern on driftwood	Harold Walker
	Second Red Rubin	Harold Walker
	Third Anubias on Driftwood	Harold Walker
Class 25	Photography	7 entries 3 entrants
	First Melanotaenia fredericki "harlequin"	Gary Lange
	Second Glossolepis multisquamata "Paro Village"	Gary Lange
	Third Photography	Andy Walker
Class 26	Arts & Crafts	1 entry 1 entrant
	First Victorian aquarium	Kurt Zahringer
Class 27	Collectibles	3 entries 3 entrants
	First Aquarium fish cards	Harold Walker
	Second memorabilia	Andy Walker
	Third Oaxacan folkart - fish woodcarvings	Kurt Zahringer
Class 28	White Elephant	2 entries 2 entrants
	First Seahorse Lamp	Harold Walker
	Second crucifix fish post card	Derek Walker
Best Junior Entry		
	Lemon Yellow Swordtail	Karissa Walker
Reet Thomas Outstanding Livebearer		
	Labeled as Chaplichthys pardalis	Derek Walker
Ralph Wilhelm Outstanding Catfish Award		
	Synodontis eupterus	Jim Miller
Best Egglayer		
	Barbus tetrazoma	Jim Miller
Best Cichlid		
	Geophagus altifrons	Ed Millinger
Judges Award		
	Guppy Family	Harold Walker
Best Fish in Show		
	Tiger Barbs	Jim Miller



Left to Right, Top to Bottom:

Best of Show, Tiger Barbs, Jim Miller – Photo by Gary Lange;

Jim Miller Receives Show Champion Award – Photo by Charles Harrison;

Best Cichlid, Geophagus Altifrons, Ed Millinger – Photo by Gary Lange;

Kurt Zahring Receives Novice of the Year Award – Photo by Charles Harrison;

Show Speakers Pat Hartman, Jeff Cardwell, Steve Edie, and Ray (Kingfish) Lucas

– Photo by Charles Harrison; Setting Up the Show – Photo by Charles Harrison

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# Fish Stories...*The Case of the Unidentified Paddlefish*

by Tony McMillan

To put it simply I love keeping tropical fish - I always have and always will. I also love *The Rockford Files*, and pretty much any other 70's - 80's era private detective show, as long as it was produced by Stephen J. Channel and had a Mike Post soundtrack. Don't get me wrong - I love a lot of other things in life - those have just been two of my favorite as long as I can remember. Besides getting to 100 points in the B.A.P. my only other dream in life would be to get there while I lived in a beat up blue - green trailer in a Pacific Ocean front lot while I drove around in a '75 Firebird charging people \$200 a day plus expenses for doing nothing. Well, you can't have everything you want in life, right? That said, two of my favorite things in life, tropical fish keeping and detective work, came to a head one recent March weekend.

It all karmaically started on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at the monthly MASI meeting. The March - April issue of *The Darter* was handed out containing my second installment of *Fish Stories...* subtitled *Invasive Fish Species hits too close to Home-Literally*. It seems I recounted my tale of being knocked silly on the Kaskaskia river by the invasive Chinese Silver Carp. I also briefly mentioned in the article the two known species of Paddlefish, *Psephurus gladius* of China, and *Polydon spatula* of North America. I mentioned Karma because China and Paddlefish were the two things that would preoccupy me the following weekend.

I awoke the following morning on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> to run some errands before I headed on in to the Forest Park Dialysis Unit for the last of my tri-weekly dialysis treatments. I was wondering, who would be my dialysis nurse today? It turns out to be none other than everyone's favorite nurse at the unit, Natalia.

Natalia, besides being an attractive, young, dialysis nurse tech also happens to be a recent immigrant of Russian origin. Natalia and I hit it off one day because of my expertise about fish. She was recounting to me how she likes to go to some fish market in University City, because she kept finding a fish there that resembled a Sturgeon, and that sparked nostalgia within her for her Russian homeland. I was able to deduct that the fish in question was actually a Shovelnose Sturgeon, *Scaphirynchus platorynchus*. She was also impressed by the fact I knew, unlike the average American, knew where the Caspian sea was. It turns out she grew up not too far from there.

In a subsequent conversation she told me the Shovelnose was becoming more scarce at the market, and so she instead purchased some "ugly thing with a huge nose" as she made a Pinocchio - like motion withdrawing her hand from her nose. I explained to her that the scarcity of the Shovelnose is being caused by their being poached for their caviar to make up difference caused by the decline of the Russian Sturgeon or Beluga, *Huso huso*, a subject she was all too familiar with. And I also explained that "the ugly thing with a big nose" was none other than *Polydon spatula*, the North American Spoonbill or Paddlefish.

So fate would have it that on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> Natalia was one of my dialysis nurses. She knew I was also a fisherman and it seemed since Paddlefish were never very plentiful at the market, she wondered if I could somehow catch some for her. First off I explained to her that since they are filter feeders they are hard to catch. I also explained to her the precarious situation the Spoonbill itself is in. That because of pollution, Chinese Carp, and the Truman Dam they are only plentiful in Southwestern Missouri and the Dakotas. Because of its rarity the season in my home state of Illinois is very limited. I also shared with her that the last time I anyone I personally knew caught a Spoonbill was 35 years ago and that was my Dad. Dad had snagged two Paddlefish below Carlyle before it was outlawed when I was about 6 years old. Out of some morbid fascination with their odd features my sister kept the heads refrigerated as long as possible. I told Natalia if I would ever snag one I'd let her know.

So I left dialysis to attend another MASI get together, this time at Pat Tosies Sunset Custom

Homes Inc., with David Boruchowitz, editor of *Tropical Fish Hobbyist*, as the guest speaker. David presented a lively open forum where we discussed everything from dispelling common myths, what is a species, water changes, and even what is and what is not Kosher. All of this took place in a log cabin nonetheless. It was one of those events where if people didn't get up and start leaving we would have been there till Easter, or maybe Passover. Needless to say after the forum I was pumped.

So on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> I decided to stay home and surf the web. I decided to go to the forum [MyFishTank.net](http://MyFishTank.net), which I had been a member of for several months. Mind you, I'm no David Boruchowitz, but if I can help Russian dialysis nurses identify fish from a fish market, I must be intermediate enough help more inexperienced hobbyists along. I had not been on the forum for about three weeks, and I wanted to check on someone I was helping get their timid *Synodontis nigriventis* to be more visible by rearranging their décor. So I noticed a new post entitled "Help identify strange new fish..." by Audjie504.

Usually, when someone makes a post like that, they have a Tiger Barb with one too many stripes, and you have to explain to them that *Puntius tetrazona*, *Punius pentazona*, and *Puntius hexazona*, while being three separate species all have the common name Tiger Barb.

Audjie504 begins "Let me preface this with the fact that I live in China and cannot speak much Chinese. Therefore going back to the fish store and asking for the name of the fish is out of the question. My husband and I got a fish today... cannot for the life of us identify it. The store owner seemed knowledgeable about its care... water temp around 23° - 24° Celsius, Okay with Tetras and Angelfish (its tank mates), and it didn't seem to be a schooling fish so we bought only one. Appears to be a top feeder and is really hyperactive (possibly stressed) in our tank right now. Description: Very distinctive, long, flat, nose, but definitely NOT a Longnosed Gar or a Shovelnosed Catfish. Mouth is underneath the nose, not part of it like a gar. Will post pics below. Thanks in advance for any help you can give!"

My first glance at the pics and it was obvious to me that her fish was a Spoonbill or Paddlefish. I read further on in the conversation, would I be able to give the scoop on the identity of this fish? The first guy guesses Needlefish. Bssstttt! Wrong! The second post guesses Spoonbill/Paddlefish. Right on! Being from Illinois also, he posts a pic of a 17 pounder he caught himself to aid in the identification. But some information is missing. The next few posts ditto it is a Paddlefish.

Audjie agrees it is a Paddlefish, saying the LFS owner told her it would get to "a foot and a half long", being only two inches long currently. She wonders if its "ethical" to keep it in current tank, or if she should move it to a 500L tank. I'm really beginning to like Audjie-shes a good aquarist. But everyone else is leaving out one little bit of information that would go a long way in nailing down *which species* of Paddlefish it actually is.



Everyone was assuming it was a North American Paddlefish, probably because they never even knew there was a Chinese counterpart. As I eventually explained to Audjie, if she had posted from any other country on planet Earth other than China, I would have unequivocally stated, as did the other ditto heads, that it was a North American Paddlefish. Most N.A. Spoonbill are now hatchery raised (because of the construction of the Truman Dam) and exported all over the world. European hobbyists



are fascinated with N.A. species and *Polydon spatula* makes it into almost every European tropical fish guide. There was even a European fish farm that raised them for the hobby, shipping the fingerling juveniles to the pet shops.

And guess what? Just like the Chinese Carp being used for algae control that escaped into the Mississippi during the flood of '93, these European fish farms were flooded in the first part of this decade. Now N.A. Spoonbill are turning up in the Danube. What an ecologically messed up world we live in.

Needless to say I was very excited about this realm of the unknown. Audjie stated in her opening remarks that she didn't speak Chinese so talking to the LFS owner was "out of the question". So despite this I pleaded with Audjie; PLEASE go back to the LFS you purchased the fish from and try find out one of the following:

A.) Was the Paddlefish imported, and if so, from what country did it originate?

B.) Was the Paddlefish bred in captivity? In China?

C.) Was the Paddlefish captured from the wild? In China, or somewhere else?

Audjie and I speculated: Were the Chinese breeding their own species in captivity like we were spawning ours? A check of the National Geographic and IUCN websites revealed *Psephurus* had not been spawned in captivity. So we could deduct that *if* the fish came from the wild, and in China, it was a Chinese Paddlefish (and she should contact the authorities). We could also deduct that if the fish was imported from Europe or North America, or even bred in China, it was probably a N.A. Spoonbill.

I was excited about the pictures. According to my field guides, the caudal fin of the N.A. Spoonbill *is deeply forked*. The Chinese variety has a notch at the bottom of the caudal fin, resembling a sharks, like the one in the pic. Study the snout in the third pic. The snout comes to a point, and *is not spoon shaped* like the N.A. variety. In fact, going by local names, the Chinese "Spoonbill" is not a Spoonbill at all. The Chinese name translates to "sword-nosed Sturgeon" and some common names call it "Elephant nose(or trunk) fish".

The things about the photos that favor it being the N.A. variety are the only pics I could find of adult *Psephurus* show the snout at its base to very thick, but is this a trait it develops as it gets older? Conversely, do N.A. juveniles have the traits of the Chinese adults and grow out these as they age(much the same way juvenile Angels resemble common cichlids because they have a common ancestor)? Also, the fact that it is even a fingerling favor the odds of it being bred from captivity and by deduction, being a N.A. Paddlefish.

So going by the pictures alone, odds seem slightly in favor of its being a Chinese Paddlefish. But "slightly in favor" is not good enough in Ichthyology and identification. So the pictures are ambiguous at best. Other than waiting for thing to get two or three feet long, the main thing Audjie needed to do was to find its origin, and that would go a long way in identifying which species it actually is.

In the meantime, one of the other posters to the forum accused Audjie and I of going too far and assuming it was a Chinese Paddlefish from the photograph, reminding us juveniles do change as they mature. The tone of the post was "just accept the fact this is a N.A. Paddlefish, because that's what the odds say". I reminded the skeptic that Audjie and I were not, in fact, identifying it based on the photos, the photos were just too ambiguous for us to draw any conclusions. So, for the fish to be properly identified, its actual origin must be determined. New, undescribed, species of fish are discovered in fish markets in the tropics every day (some undescribed species make it into dealer and hobbyist tanks). *You are assuming*, I told the skeptic, that just because this fish made it to a pet store (in China nonetheless), that it is a N.A. Spoonbill. &\*\$#@ Forums!

The poster from Illinois who gave the initial I.D. of Paddlefish apparently put up a link to a website that showed pictures of hatchery raised N.A. juveniles about to be released into the wild. I myself did not see this link, but Audjie responded the fish did not resemble hers enough. Also in the meantime we tried to help her feed her charge. I found a website from a university that spoke of raising fingerling N.A. Paddlefish in small outdoors pools heavily laden with *Daphnia* and relayed the

information.

Meanwhile I also did more research on the state of *Psephurus* in the wild. It seems only one has been captured in the wild since 2003. And that was in '07, and that individual died shortly after capture. A massive search was then carried out on the Yang Tse river and failed to turn up any Paddlefish, so it was declared extinct in the wild. The purpose of the search was to turn up a female *Psephurus*, then stimulate her eggs into development via a technique called parthenogenesis. Which led me to wonder - are any even left in captivity? Why did all the news sources and websites say "extinct in the wild" when it might be extinct... period.

This just shows the inherent weakness of the internet and even news outlets themselves in providing reliable, rock solid information. Some of the photos I saw showed large *Psephurus* specimens in some sort of large, outdoor ponds (are these the ones in captivity?). If these specimens exist, why would they need wild specimens for egg development? Are there only males in captivity? I wish I had a solid answer to give you, but its ambiguous like the photographs. So either *Psephurus gladius* is extinct only in the wild, and some exist in captivity, or it has not been seen in the wild since 2007 and is totally extinct.

Also of interest, the Chinese government, in a "better late than never" move, created a massive "Paddlefish preserve" on the lower and middle stretches of the Yang Tse river. The website warned of "severe penalties" for the illegal removal, capture, harvesting, and slaughter of the Chinese Paddlefish. What's a "severe penalty" in China? A bullet to the back of the head or six months in a Tibetan gulag?

The website also warned of severe penalties for the altering, destruction, disturbance, or unauthorized use of any of the Paddlefishes habitat. This includes the floodplains of the Yang Tse river. Presumably the Chinese government is itself exempt when it comes to Dam construction. But this raised a question: if Audjie504's paddlefish is indeed a *Psephurus gladius* collected from the wild, this means it was de facto collected illegally. And if it was collected illegally, then the LFS owner who sold the illegally collected believed extinct Paddlefish would simply lie to Audjie504 about its collection. Eagerly I awaited the result of her return visit to LFS owner.

March 23<sup>rd</sup> Audjie504 posts "Went back to the fish store this evening. She seemed *horrified* (authors emphasis) when I asked if the fish was from China and said no. I asked if it was from America and she told me to hold on while she called her friend. She said the name of some place of which I'm not familiar so I had her write it down... will get it translated tomorrow." The vendor also wrote down the Chinese name of the fish for translation and donated some bloodworms for food. Interesting word usage in light of the new information I uncovered.

March 24<sup>th</sup> Audjie504 posts the translated name as "Spoon - Lipped fish". This would favor the fish being *Polydon* rather than *Psephurus*, as this interpretation does not match the interpretation for the Chinese species. Still, I'm no expert in Chinese linguistics. And the long awaited origin of this Paddlefish? Brazil. \$#@%&^\* BRAZIL?!

So did the vendor throw out "Brazil", as the origin of the Paddlefish, to throw a nosy foreigner off track, and to protect a natural source for an illegally collected fish (as I speculated could be a possibility)? Audjie504 doesn't believe so. She believes, and I have since come to agree with her, that we are simply dealing with an ignorant vendor whose knowledge of geography is lacking. As Audjie put it, "its freshwater, so it has to be from the Amazon, right?" Just because someone is good at selling tropical fish does not mean they know anything about geography, the wild habitat of their charges, taxonomy, and classification.

And so it turns out, what I thought would be the most surefire method of identifying which species of Paddlefish Audjie504 owned, finding out its collection site or importation source, ended up being as ambiguous, inconclusive, and as much of a dead end as the photographs themselves. I apologized to Audjie504 for putting her on a wild goose chase, I thanked her for her patience, and she thanked us for our information and help. We both agreed we will simply have to wait until this Paddlefish gets a lot bigger to be 100% sure which species of Paddlefish it is.

So like those episodes of *The Rockford Files*, where Jim Rockford fails to get paid his fee of \$200 a day plus expenses at the end of the show, I failed to get any payout on the conclusive identity of this fish. I didn't get any scoop on a possible breeding location of a fish that is either thought to be extinct, or on the verge thereof. I still ask myself, did I do the right thing in raising the possibility that the unknown fish could possibly be *Psephurus gladius*? Or was I simply too eager and arrogant and fooled myself to believe that I could somehow assist in bringing a species back from the brink? Good science is asking the right questions and checking out all the available possibilities, so I guess the former, although I may never truly know.

Some sources of interest:

<http://southasia.oneworld.net/globalheadlines/chinas-giant-paddlefish-on-the-verge-of-extinction/>

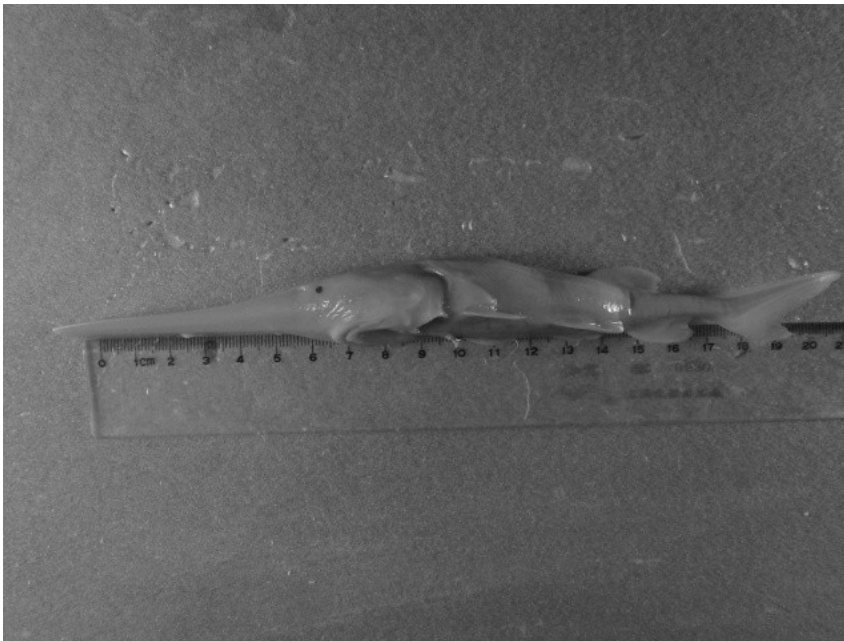
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_paddlefish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_paddlefish)

[www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)

<http://www.uaex.edu/pperschbacher/fish/paddlefish2/htm>

<http://www.shanghai.gov.cn/shanghai/node23919/node24025/node24199/node24278/node24292userobject26ai20744.html>

For pictures <http://www.capachi.com/paddlefish.htm>



**Epilogue:** Towards the end of the completion of this article, in a continuing quest to answer some of the unanswered questions in the above article, I came across some interesting data points. I was able to come across an actual photograph of a preserved juvenile *Psephurus gladius* (above). At first glance, this preserved specimen looks nothing like the individual in Audjie504's photographs. Before jumping to conclusions, keep in mind that Audjie504 saw photos of juvenile N.A. Paddlefish, and felt they were too dissimilar. The caudal fin does appear to match Audjie504's photos, although the head, *at first glance*, looks nothing like the fish in her photos. It does appear to have the "thick base of the snout" that I spoke of the adult fish having, but this could also be from the angle of the photograph being taken slightly underneath the preserved fish. That said, I am now personally in favor of the identity of Audjie504's fish as being a hatchery raised *Polydon spatula*.

I mentioned in the above article that I came across photographs of large *Psephurus* specimens swimming in what appeared to be a large outdoor pond. The fact that these photos existed seemed to contradict claims that the Chinese were unsuccessful raising their Paddlefish in captivity, and since no

longer found in the wild, was totally extinct. The below cited *New York Times* article provided the sought after explanation of those photos. It turns out circa 2004, the Chinese government had procured a *Psephurus* specimen of each gender, and were keeping them alive for some time in a large pond in the hopes they would reproduce. As it turns out, the inept government employees charged with the survival of these two vitally important charges tried feeding the carnivorous *Psephurus* rice cakes. Remember what you learned about overfeeding your fish? The uneaten rice cakes fouled the water, killing these last two specimens, destroying any hope of establishing a captive breeding program. I find myself now wishing more than ever that Audjie504's fish is a Chinese Paddlefish. Though its becoming apparent that's just wishful thinking.

For epilogue: Revkin, Andrew C. For the Chinese Paddlefish, a Long Goodbye. *The New York Times* science section 9/30/09

[http:// www.fishbase.org /photos/pictures](http://www.fishbase.org/photos/pictures) summary

# From The Fishroom

By Ed Millinger

When I started keeping fish at a young age I always was aware of the magazine Tropical Fish Hobbyist or TFH as it is commonly know. After joining MASI in 1986 I remember hearing other members talking about Freshwater and Marine Aquarium magazine. I wasn't familiar with this publication but after checking it out I found it to be a terrific resource. I have had the pleasure to meet two of the columnists Dr. Leo Buss and Dr. Gene Lucas, both write the bettas and more column. I just received notification that the June 2010 issue will be the final FAMA issue after 33 years. It will be folded into Aquarium Fish International (AFI) and the balance of subscriptions will move to AFI. They intend to carry over some of the columns and authors though they did not specify which ones.

The syfy (new name, it was scifi) channel recently showed a movie called "Mega Piranha". What a hoot. The premise is that mutated piranhas have become so dangerous that they are considered terrorists and have taken down a ship with an important person aboard. They are making their way towards Florida (not sure how they survive living in the ocean but then they are mutated). Former teen singer Tiffany and Greg Brady star (?) in this campy classic. One of my favorite parts is when the movies hero jumps out of a boat into the Amazon river and the underwater footage show corals. Indeed it's very interesting and leads to the question, why didn't I think of that?

The next time you see John Van Asch be sure to thank him for his years of service to the club as auction chairman. Since I've been in the club we have had only two and both were outstanding. When you consider where a large part of our funds come from you realize just how important this job is. Of course you should also recognize the contributions of Mike and Angela Hellweg. We are very blessed to have had this duo running and recording what happens in our monthly and council meetings. With their departures new opportunities present themselves for someone else to step forward and assume these jobs and continue to lead this great organization.

# BAP Report

Steve Edie

Member	Species	Common	Pts	Total
Mar 2010				
Mike Hellweg	<i>Chapalichthys pardalis</i> @	Leopard Goodeid	30	3619
Mike Hellweg	<i>Xiphophorus mayae</i> "Lago de Izabel" *	Mayan Swordtail	10	3629
Charles Hoppe	<i>Poecilia wingei</i>	Endler's Livebearer	5	117
Cory Koch	<i>Benitochromis nigrodorsalis</i> #@		15	1257
Cory Koch	<i>Corydoras aeneus</i>	Bronze Cory	10	1267
Tony McMillan	<i>Poecilia wingei</i>	Endler's Livebearer	5	82
Tony McMillan	<i>Xiphophorus</i> sp. "Domestic Swordtail" ^	Marigold Swordtail	1	83
Pat Tosie	<i>Aulonocara</i> sp. "Chitande type North" *		15	3237
Pat Tosie	<i>Xiphophorus</i> sp. "PMH" *		10	3247
Derek Walker	<i>Carlhubbsia stuarti</i>	Barred Livebearer	10	1003
Derek Walker	<i>Xenotoca eiseni</i> @	Red Tailed Goodeid	30	1033
Derek Walker	<i>Xiphophorus</i> sp. "Domestic Swordtail"	Sanshoku Koi Swordtail	5	1038
Apr 2010				
Mike Hellweg	<i>Apistogramma resticulosa</i> *	Thin Line Apisto	20	3649
Mike Hellweg	<i>Fundulopanchax gardneri</i> "Lafia" *		20	3669
Mike Hellweg	<i>Lamprologus congoensis</i>	Congo Goby Cichlid	15	3684
Cory Koch	<i>Herichthys carpintis</i>	Green Texas Cichlid, Pearl Scale	10	1277
Gary Lange	<i>Pterophyllum scalare</i>	Pumpkin Koi Angelfish	10	1554
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Pelvicachromis taeniatus</i> "Moliwe"		15	1016
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Poeciliopsis prolifica</i>		5	1021
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Xiphophorus andersi</i>		10	1031
Gary McIlvaine	<i>Xiphophorus</i> sp."Domestic Swordtail" ^	Super Red Albino Hi-Fin	1	1032
Jim Miller	<i>Puntius arulius</i> *	Arulius Barb	20	2289
Pat Tosie	<i>Aphyosemion punctatum</i> "Buong Bai"		15	3262

Pat Tosie	<i>Fundulopanchax gardneri</i> “N’suka”		15	3277
Pat Tosie	<i>Scriptaphyosemion guignardi</i> “Sougueta”		15	3292
Derek Walker	<i>Apistogramma cacatuoides</i>		15	1053
Derek Walker	<i>Poecilia wingei</i> ^	Tiger Endler’s Livebearer	1	1054
Derek Walker	<i>Skiffia multipunctata</i> @		40	1094
Kurt Zahringer	<i>Lamprichthys tanganicanus</i> **	Tanganyikan Killie	30	60

\* = First MASI species spawn (5 point bonus)

\*\* = First MASI species and genus spawn (10 point bonus)

\*\*\* = First MASI species, genus and family spawn (15 point bonus)

@ = C.A.R.E.S Species at Risk (Double base points)

# = Species previously submitted = 0 points, except for C.A.R.E.S. = base point bonus

^ = Species previously submitted, limited points for additional color varieties

Sources:

Cal Academy - <http://research.calacademy.org>

CARES - <http://www.carespreservation.com>

## Member Classifieds

I have bloodworms and brine shrimp. Brine Shrimp eggs \$32 for 16 oz. can. I am looking for a 200 gallon tank. Jim Miller, 314-638-1134.

Wanted: 1 Female Red-Tailed Goodeid *Xenotaca eiseni* and 1 juvenile Male Yucatan Sailfin Molly *Poecilia velifera*. Contact Tony McMillan at (618) 509-3985.

Charles Harrison (314) 894-9761, [csharrison@inkmaker.net](mailto:csharrison@inkmaker.net) -

Thiosulfate crystals (Chlorine Remover) .....	\$3.00 a half pound
OTO double strength Chlorine/Chloroamine test kits - 4 ounce -	\$12.50
Flubendazole, 5% powder 10 grams .....	\$5.00, 25 grams - \$20.00
Lavamisole HCl Powder - 5 grams treats 100 gallons .....	\$10.00
Methylene Blue 5% solution (2 ounces) .....	\$12.75
Acriflavine Concentrate (4%) solution, 2 ounces .....	\$12.70
Bromthymol Blue pH test solution, 4 ounces .....	\$7

Wanted: Small Styro shipping boxes - 12 x 12 x 12 or a little bit smaller. If your company uses them and throws them away, save them! Bring to the meeting or I'll come pick them up. Mike 636-240-2443

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 it, in which case it will run as requested.

# HAP Report March April 2010

Mike Hellweg

Welcome to new participant Brian Woodrick!

Member	Species	Common	Rep	Pts	Total
Brian Woodrick	Anubias .barteri nana		V	15	15
Brian Woodrick	Microsorium pteropus	Java Fern	V	10	25
Charles Harrison	Lomariopsis lineata	Susswassertang	V	5	745
Charles Harrison	Pistia stratiotes	Water Lettuce	V	5	750
Mike Hellweg	Anubias barteri nana "petite"	Petite Anubias	V	15	2865
Mike Hellweg	Elantine triandra pedicellata	Oriental Waterwort	V	15	2880
Derek Walker 2810	Ceratophyllum submersum	Narrow leaf Hornwort		IB	10
Derek Walker	Cryptocoryne pygmaea	Pygmy Crypt	V	15	2820
Derek Walker	Hydrotriche hottoniaeflora	Water Figwort	V	5	2835
Derek Walker	Hygrophila balsamica*		V	5	2840
Derek Walker	Nesaea pedicellata golden*		V	15	2855
Kurt Zahringer	Rotala rotundifolia		V	15	35
Tony McMillan	Lomariopsis lineata	Susswassertang	V	5	350

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

\* = MASI First \*\* = Already submitted 8/21/96



MASI Logo merchandise is now available from Café Press. Thanks to Bart Kraeger for creating the site and Michelle Berhorst for creating a high-resolution digital version of the logo, you can now purchase logo merchandise on-line. Pick from T-shirts, jerseys, caps, tote bags, coffee cups, and more.

Go to [www.cafepress.com/MOAQS](http://www.cafepress.com/MOAQS) to view and order the merchandise.

# FISHES as DISHES

Patrick A. Tosie, Sr.

We all love our fish! This column will be dedicated to using our fish for something tasty to enjoy. Try it, you may like it. If you have leftovers, bring it to a monthly meeting for others to enjoy.

## Beer Battered Tilapia with Red Chile Mandarin Orange Sauce

### Ingredients

- Olive oil
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour, divided
- 2/3 cup beer
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 4 tilapia or flounder fillets, about 5 ounces each
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons red chili paste
- 1 (11-ounce) can mandarin oranges, drained and chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro leaves

### Directions

Heat enough olive oil, to shallow fry the fish, in a large skillet over medium-high heat

In a shallow dish, whisk together 1/2 cup of the flour, beer, egg, and baking powder. Place remaining 1/4 cup flour in a separate shallow dish.

Season both sides of fish fillets with salt and black pepper. Dredge fish in flour, turn to coat both sides and then shake off excess flour. Dunk fish in beer mixture and turn to coat both sides.

Add fish to hot oil and cook 2 to 3 minutes per side, until cooked through and opaque. Remove fish from oil. Place on a paper towel lined plate.

While the fish is frying, in a medium bowl, whisk together lemon juice and chili paste. Add mandarin oranges and cilantro and toss to combine. Serve sauce over fish.

**EAT MORE**



**FISH**



# Club Hopping 2010

Steve Edie

May 28-30 – Cleveland: American Killifish Association – Annual Convention

June 10-13 – Irving, TX: North American Discus Association -

June 24-27 – Indianapolis: International Betta Congress – Annual Convention

July 10 – Urbana, IL: Champaign Area Fish Exchange - Auction

July 22-25 – Milwaukee: American Cichlid Association – Annual Convention

Aug 8 - St Louis: Missouri Aquarium Society - Auction

Sep 3-5 – Peoria: Tri-County Tropical Fish Society – Annual Show

Sept 17-19 - Iowa: Midwest Cichlid Association – Annual Convention

Oct 3 - St Louis: Missouri Aquarium Society – Swap Meet

Oct 14-19 – Ash Meadows, NV – North American Native Fishes Association – Annual Convention

Oct 16 – East Peoria: Tri-County Tropical Fish Society - Auction

Oct 21-24 – Baltimore: All Aquarium Catfish Convention

Nov 14 - St Louis: Missouri Aquarium Society - Auction

Nov 19-21 – Cleveland: Ohio Cichlid Association – Extravaganza

Jan 14, 2011 – Urbana, IL: Champaign Area Fish Exchange - Auction

July 14, 2011 - Urbana, IL: Champaign Area Fish Exchange - Auction

Note: The 2010 Chicago Cichlid Classic will not be held on Memorial Day Weekend this year. They will be helping with the ACA Convention.

More dates will be added as clubs firm up their plans.

# The Computer Page

Steve Deutsch

MASI's official web page: [www.missouriaquariumsociety.com](http://www.missouriaquariumsociety.com)

MASI's email group: MASIFishHeads Yahoo Group - see web site for joining instructions

Addresses are only printed with permission of the owner. If you would yours added, please email me at [steve@skdeu.com](mailto:steve@skdeu.com). If you would like yours removed, or if it needs correction, also please email me.

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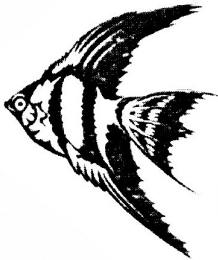


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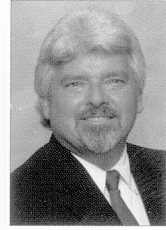
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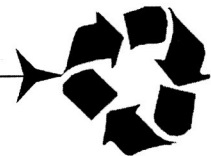


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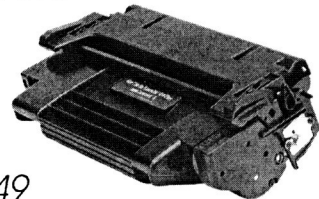
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**Best Fish in Show: Jim Miller**

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**Hobbyist of the Year: Mike Hellweg**

**Ralph Wilhelm Writing Award: Tony McMillan**

**Member of the Year: Andy Walker**