

TANK TALES

September 2010

Volume 39, No. 8

The Official Publication of the Aquarium Club of Lancaster County



*The next meeting of the ACLC is September 18 @
1:00 PM at That Fish Place*

Speaker: Sal Silvestri

*Program: "My Experiences in Maintaining and
Breeding the Genus Apistogramma"*

Inside this issue:

The Least Killifish

Piscatorial Pearls Returns

The ACLC Picnic....in Pictures

And more!

Tank Tales is the official publication of the Aquarium Club of Lancaster County (ACLC). Ten issues of Tank Tales are published annually. Anyone using original material from any issue of Tank Tales must return two (2) copies of the publication in which the article is published to our exchange editor listed below. The views expressed in any material appearing in Tank Tales are those of the authors, and do not necessarily express those of the ACLC.

The ACLC meets on the third Saturday of each month (except July and August) at That Fish Place, 237 Centerville Road, Lancaster, PA 17603. Meetings begin at 1:00 PM unless otherwise noted. Meetings usually are comprised of a program featuring a guest speaker, door prizes, a mini fish auction, with a period allowed for mingling and refreshments. The philosophy of the club is such that our activities are interesting to both the novice and advanced hobbyist alike. An effort is made to keep business to a minimum at the general meetings, with the executive board meeting being held monthly as needed on a pre-established date and time.

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Pedro Sanchez

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David Stephon

Cover: Black Belt Cichlids, *Vieja maculicauda*. Photo by Joel Antkowiak.



President's Message

Fellow Members,

Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting and autumn a mosaic of them all. -Stanley Horowitz

What a great year it has been! I think that our club is very much like autumn. We have a mosaic of members just like autumn is a mosaic of colors. We have members from all walks of life, keeping and breeding all types of fish, and we all come together to share that one common interest---our love of tropical fish!

This year we have had speakers on livebearers, native fish, plants, Australian Fish, Cichlids and the non-native fish of Florida. The best part is, the year isn't over yet! We are still going to hear about Apistos, Oddball Fish, and Killies! We are one of the few clubs around that can boast the kind of program lineup that we have had in 2010 and the reason we have been able to do it is you, our members! Your support through the raffles and auctions is what makes it all possible.

For 2011 we have the opportunity to take the club even further but, without member participation, it won't happen. Think of what autumn would look like if all the leaves turned the same color at the same time. BORING! That's what the ACLC would be like without the opinions and ideas of its members. Our club membership has almost doubled this year and many of the new members have stepped up with ideas and have volunteered their time. This is a great step in the right direction but, I know that we have yet to hear everybody's ideas and opinions regarding things we can do as a club.

Everyone who's ever taken a shower has an idea. It's the person who gets out of the shower, dries off and does something about it who makes a difference. - Nolan Bushnell

See you on the 18th!

Kurt

CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CHANGE

FROM THE EDITOR'S TANK

Well, so far we have had a few people participating in the WAAP. For those of you that are new or have been asleep since the May issue, that is the Writer's and Artist's Award Program. The rules for the program can be found in the June issue or on the website. Or you can request a copy from me at any time at mrkillie@comcast.net.

We still need more people participating by taking some photos of their fish. You do not need to submit an article with a photo. I can use stand alone photos for several things - the front cover, to supplement someone else's article, or if I get a backlog I can do a collage in an issue. That goes for artwork as well.

WRITER'S AND ARTIST'S AWARD PROGRAM

OVERALL STANDINGS

Writer's Award

Joel Antkowiak	190 points
Michael Steffen	125 points
Jay Stephan	80 points
Bob Kulesa.....	70 points
Debbie Rubin	60 points

Other Participants

Kurt Johnston.....	35 points
Lonny Langione.....	35 points
Wayne Calender.....	35 points
Suze Glesky	30 points
Stephanie Cornell.....	30 points
Matt Shaffer	20 points
Geoff Graff.....	20 points

MIGHTY FIN STANDINGS 2010-2011

Michael Steffen.....	105 points
Joel Antkowiak	45 points
Jay Stephan	20 points
Bob Kulesa.....	20 points
Suze Glesky	20 points
Debbie Rubin	10 points

Standings as of September 7, 2010

The Board of Directors of the ACLC met prior to the June meeting and one of the decisions that was made involved your membership renewal. Prior to this year, everyone's membership would be due in January. The decision was made to make a change beginning with those members who have joined in 2010. If you were a member of the Aquarium Club of Lancaster County in 2009 or you joined during January of 2010, your anniversary date is January and your membership will need to be renewed by January 31st of each year. If you joined the ACLC as a **NEW** member beginning February 2010, your renewal date will be the last day of the month that you joined each year. For example, if you joined at our April meeting, your membership dues will need to be renewed by April 30th 2011. Another way of saying it, if your membership number is 575 or lower, you will renew in January. Those with a membership number of 576 or higher will renew in the anniversary month of your joining. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Board of Directors.

ACLC BOD Meeting ACLC BOD Meeting

The Board of Directors of the Aquarium Club of Lancaster County will meet at 10:00 AM on Saturday, September 18, 2010 at That Fish Place, prior to the general meeting. All members are welcome to attend and share their input with the club's decision makers, but remember, only board members may vote on any issues.

AND SPEAKING OF THE BOD.....

At our meeting on November 20th, the Aquarium Club of Lancaster County will elect officers for 2011! The club annually elects a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. We are also looking for an Election Chairperson to run the election and seek nominations. Please consider running for one of these positions and let the Election Chairperson know your intentions.

THE ACLC SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 18TH

SAL SILVESTRI

***MY EXPERIENCES
IN MAINTAINING &
BREEDING THE
GENUS
APISTOGRAMMA***



SCHEDULE FOR 2010

October 16
Spawning Oddball Fish
Eric Bodrock

November 20
Killifish
Greg Niedzielski

December
TBA

**WHAT LIES
AHEAD FOR
2011?**

Sal Silvestri has been an active hobbyist for over 35 years. For Sal, it all started with one goldfish he won at a carnival. This one bowl eventually grew to a 55 gal tank which housed two 14 oscars. Even though he has kept and bred a variety of fish, cichlids are still his favorite.

Sal's tanks grew along with his breeding skills, and 35 years later he currently has twelve running tanks, which range from 10 to 75 gallons. Four tanks house several varieties of Apistogramma species, Two are devoted to communities of Lake Tanganyika and Malawi cichlids, another of Sal's favorites. The remaining tanks contain a variety of cichlids from West Africa to tetras, loaches and catfish (including zebra plecos).

Sal joined and became very active in the Norwalk Aquarium Society in 1975, where he has held various positions on the board and presently serves as president and program chairperson. He traveled the show circuit extensively, his fish winning many awards. He then went on to become a certified NEC judge, for which he is high in demand during the show season. Sal's notoriety has spread far and wide, as he has generously shared his knowledge and wisdom during many speaking engagements throughout the northeast. He has also written many articles and been honored with reprints in the ACA's Buntbarsche Bulletin and society magazines across the country, Japan and Europe. His author awards include numerous FAAS as well as NEC recognitions.

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The Least Amount of Trouble

By Bob Bock

Bob Bock is a member of the North American Native Fishes Association.

Information is available at www.nanfa.org.

Photos from ZimmermansFish.com by Brian Zimmerman, used with permission.

After a long, dark, cold, snowy, frozen winter, and a cold, wet, rainy spring, I'm looking forward to warmer weather. And as things steadily warm up during the warm sunny days ahead, I'm hoping to be outside a lot, on some old fashioned angling trips, and collecting trips where I amble for hours in search of nothing in particular, and seining fish that I'll probably let go.



Needless to say, I'll be spending time away from the fish room. That's why I usually stick with hardy little fish that don't need a lot of water changes, that won't starve if I can't manage to get them some live food, and that are happy with just a dash of flake food at the end of the day.

One of the least demanding fish I've ever kept is the tiny least killifish, *Heterandria formosa*. This diminutive fish thrives in weedy backwaters from the Cape Fear drainage in North Carolina,

southward through Florida and southern Louisiana. The least killifish is actually not a killifish at all, but a member of the family Poeciliidae, a group of livebearers. An attractive little fish, the least killifish has the distinction of being the smallest vertebrate in North America—perhaps even the world. Males reach a maximum length of only about three fourths of an inch; females, about an inch and a half.

Both males and females have a dark lateral band, broken up by a series of vertical bars. On the dorsal fin, near the back, both have a dark red spot trimmed with a bright red halo.

Unlike other Poeciliids - guppies or mollies, for example - female least killies don't have one single large batch of fry at a time. Although females store sperm from the males, the fry are released every few days or so, only one or two at a time. Fry are produced by a means known as superfetation, which means that the female incubates them simultaneously along a continuum of developmental stages. At any one time, some will be comparatively mature, while others are only just beginning to develop.

In the aquarium, least killies don't demand very much care. They seem happiest in a well planted tank, with lots of vegetation to hide in. Least killies are found in the alkaline - and sometimes brackish - waters of the southeastern coastal U.S., so you'll probably have the best luck keeping them in slightly hard to hard water. Although they can withstand temperatures in the high 90s, they'll also do well at about 70 degrees.



They're happy to get all matter of live, frozen, and prepared foods. All of which, of course, should be suitably small, so as to accommodate their tiny

mouths. As with many species, newly hatched artemia will be readily accepted.

Least killies don't need much room, and are a good choice for an aquarist who doesn't have much space. They can be kept and bred successfully in the smallest of containers, of only a gallon or two. A sizeable breeding colony can be maintained in a five gallon tank.

Of course, least killies will also appreciate a larger tank as well. They're extremely peaceful, and can be kept with other species - provided that their tank mates aren't overly aggressive, or large enough to make a meal of them. I've kept them with other aquatic denizens of the southeast - sailfin mollies and bluefin killies. They can also be housed with other peaceful livebearers, like guppies and platies.

Because least killies are so small, it's important to avoid overfeeding them, especially at first, before they've had a chance to multiply and increase their numbers. Snails and even cory cats (if the tank water isn't too hard) can help clean up uneaten food.

Because they're so small, you need to be careful

not to siphon away the fry and smaller males during water changes. Likewise, I fit each of my power filters with a small sponge, to keep them from being drawn up through the filter intake.

Like other livebearers, they will soon overpopulate their quarters, if left unchecked. Because females store sperm for such a long time, one female can give birth to an entire colony over the course of a few months. Eventually, excess fry will need to be removed from the colony, and either offered to larger fish, or distributed at your local fish club meetings.

For the ultimate in low maintenance fish keeping, you can put least killies in a well planted back yard tub and essentially forget about them. Each year, I put one or two in a well planted back yard tub holding about 30 to 50 gallons of water. They feed on the larvae of aquatic insects, and multiply prodigiously. One year, I put one female outside in the late spring, and brought in more than a hundred fish in the fall. This is perfect timing for me, as I'm ready to stop my summer wanders and once again start spending time in the fish room.

Word Search: The Family Cyprinodontidae

A P H Y O S E M I O N A B C D K I L L I F I S H
 A P H Y O S E E M I O N K I L L L I F U E S P P
 P I T U N A I G X A P H A N I U S X N V N X L A
 A V O N E R P A S N O R E T P A I D A N N Z A C
 F U N D U L L L U U S N O T H O U L B O E R T H
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 C A H C E P I S E M I O N X A L L E N A D R O J

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|--------------|------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Adinia | Cynolebias | Fennerbahce | Lucania | Plataplocheilus | Valencia |
| Aphanius | Cyprinodon | Fundulopanchax | Megalebias | Rachovia | |
| Aphyosemion | Diapteron | Fundulosoma | Nothobranchius | Renova | |
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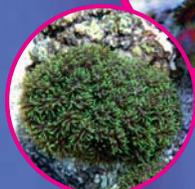
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Julidochromis marlieri

BAP Article by Michael Steffen AKA Twisted Fisher

I received these fish in February of 2010 when they were but small juveniles and placed them into a 20 gallon tank with lots of rock work and a sand substrate. The water was maintained at a ph of 7.8 with 0 ammonia and nitrite and less than 10 ppm nitrates. The hardness was kept "very hard" as per a jungle test strip with a temperature of 77 degrees. I did weekly 40% water changes and bi weekly sand siphoning.

These fish have an elongated body with a torpedo like shape and are extremely fast swimming fish. The iridescent blue dots along their dorsal fin are quite a sight to behold and but one of the reasons I was drawn to these beautiful fish. The mouth is down turned almost goby like but opens a lot bigger than you would expect it to if need be. The sexes are dimorphic with female being the bigger of the two at around 4" and the male being smaller at about 3" in length.

These fish hail from lake Tanganyika in the rift valley of Africa. They inhabit the rock coasts of the lake often being in less than 3 feet of water.

The fish were conditioned on high quality flake, freeze dried brine shrimp and live micro worms prior to spawning. I started the enticement to spawn by doing large water changes of 70-80% daily for a week and feeding an excess of micro worms and crushed freeze dried brine shrimp. The lighting was set to a 12 hour long day cycle. On the 7th day of large water changes and mass feeding I refilled

the tank with water that was 73 degrees to once again try to entice them into spawning. And it worked. Within 30 minutes of the cooler water hitting the tank the male was displaying and shaking in front of the female and trying to push her to a crevasse to spawn. She did not go to the chosen cave right away and the spawning happened at first light the next morning.

The eggs could not be seen for they laid them deep back in the rocks and were both standing guard in front of their chosen breeding site. The eggs took 5 days to hatch and I saw the first tiny fry trying to slip out of the rocks and being pushed back in by one or both of the parents and then being blocked from exit with their tail. They are perfect little copies of their parents straight from the egg. The fry are being fed micro worms, walter worms, banana worms and golden pearls first bites. The parents are still keeping them tight in the rocks for now but I am happy to see that they are giving great care to their first brood.

In conclusion, Julies are a great little fish with a big personality so long as you are patient and willing to take your time they should not be hard to breed. They can sometimes be shy or even elusive but all in all they are a beautiful fish with a big personality.

So until you peek behind the shell and catch me again I bid you happy fish keeping ☺

Breeder's Award Program Monthly Report - September 2010

There are no changes to report in the Breeder's Award Program at this time. For the current standings, please refer to the Summer bonus issue of Tank Tales.

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AQUATIC WEEKEND 2010

Friday, Saturday & Sunday

October 15-17, 2010

Lyndhurst Elks Club, 251 Park Avenue, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

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Show Setup Friday 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Show Judging & Viewing Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Auction Registration Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Auction Viewing Starts @ 11:00 a.m.

Auction Starts @ noon until all items auctioned

For more information on NJAS event and directions, visit us on the web at www.njas.net or call our hotline 732-541-1392, or Kevin Carr (201-724-9460).

This year NJAS is hosting The Philadelphia Area Betta Society's (PABS) 12TH IBC INTERNATIONAL SHOW

October 15 & 16

Show Setup Friday @ 9:00 a.m.

Show Judging & Viewing on Saturday

Auction on Saturday @ 6:00 p.m.

For additional information on Betta show, contact Clayton Crawford (908-674-0557), or at ClayCrawford56@aol.com

"It's Betta With Us"



PISCATORIAL PEARLS

A Review by Debbie Rubin

I hope everyone had a great summer. With all the heat and dry weather we had, I'm looking forward to the cool breezes of fall.

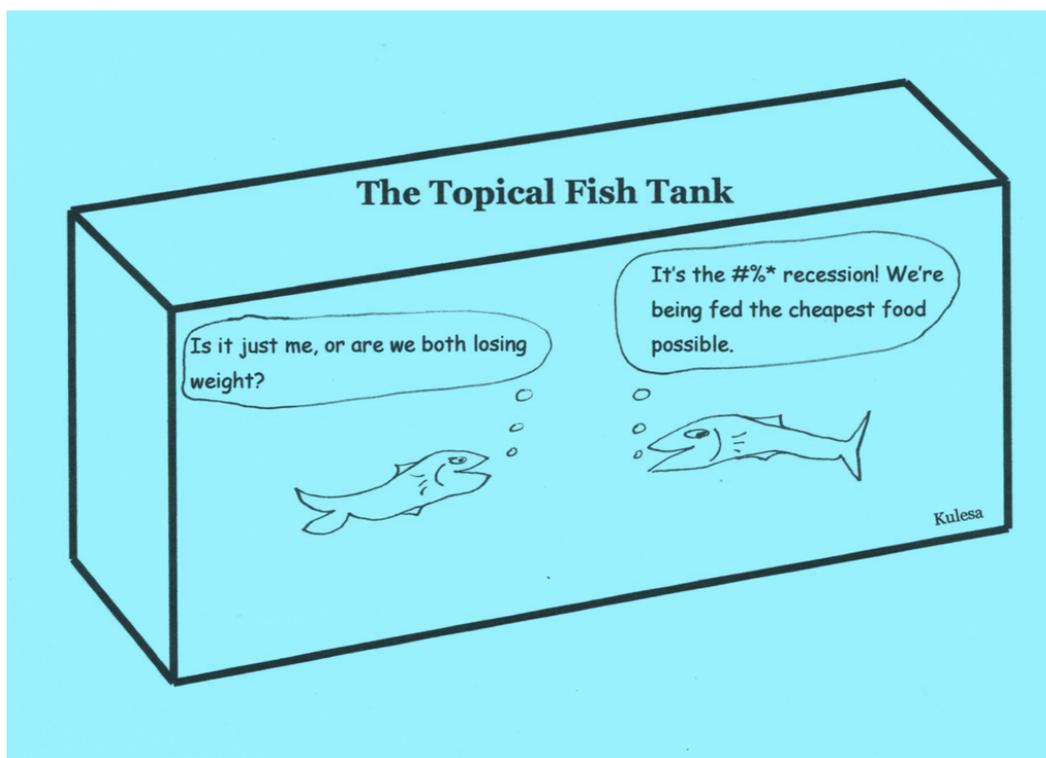
Why breed fish? Obviously, there are many rewarding reasons why members breed fish. An article in the March 2010 *Pisces Press*, Nassau County Aquarium Society (author not identified) talks about spawning livebearers, egg scatterers, mop spawners, egg-layers, open substrate spawners, and substrate spawners. The article is not all inclusive. There are many fish that are atypical, bizarre, eccentric, or nonconforming (to the spawning rules) and present more unique spawning traits to set them apart from the others. But, that's why we do it!

Joseph Ferdenzi from the North Jersey Aquarium Society *Reporter*, writes about emperor tetras being double royalty. This is based on an article originating from *Modern Aquarium*, The Greater City Aquarium Society (no author referenced). There are many kinds of emperor tetras of the genus *Nematobrycon*, largely differentiated by color variation. The one thing they all have in common is a very distinctive tri-lobate tail. The sexes are difficult to identify so it is recommended to buy

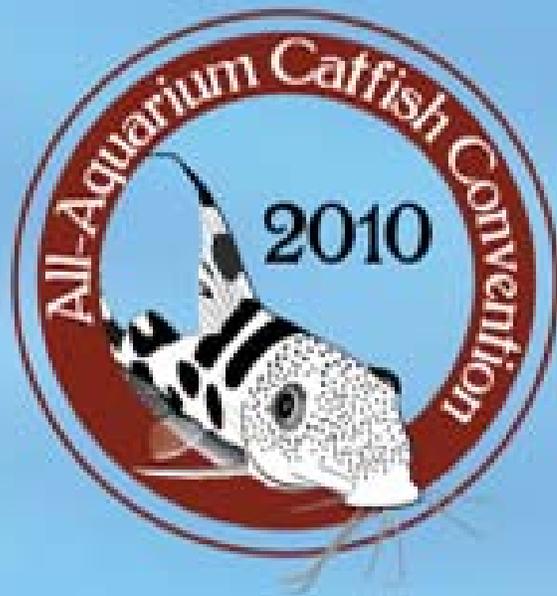
them in groups of five or more. These fish like to school and will feel more comfortable in larger groups. If you want to breed emperor tetras, it's recommended that a separate tank be set up specifically for that purpose. The article goes on to describe how to set up the tank, food for the fry, and their habits. It also delves into the story behind the discovery of Rosario LaCorte's emperor tetras.

Finally a short article of note by John Baad in the *Aquatic Forum*, Stark County Aqua-Life Enthusiasts Society in Canton, Ohio, talks briefly about medication for our fish friends. Many oppose the use of any medications while others over medicate. This article addresses the pros and cons. John also talks about prevention of the use of medications in the first place.

As always, if you find anything in this column that you would like to read for yourself, please notify our Tank Tales editor and he will happily supply you with a copy. Specify the title and date of the newsletter with each request. If you find something that stirs your interest that you've read in any other publication, I invite you to "talk fish" and be included as a guest writer for this column. I will gladly share this space with you.



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Next, we still have our regular raffle, but the prizes are bigger and better. Tickets are now \$1 each, 7 for \$5, and 15 for \$10. And remember, you get a free ticket for wearing ACLC clothing to the meeting, and if you bring a new member to the meeting. The new member also gets a free ticket. Prizes are goodie bags filled with fish food, water conditioners, reptile packages, and decorations. Well worth it if you win, and everyone is a winner because it supports the club!

SHOW SEASON IS HERE!

Get out and support our sister clubs at their events! If we support them, they will support us! Some clubs have already shown support for our club, let's return the favor. There are at least 2 shows (NJAS and PVAS) and 4 auctions (NJAS, PVAS, GPASI, ECC) within a 4 hour drive of us.

Metriaclima sp. Daktari

BAP Report by Jay Stephan

The males of *Metriaclima sp.* Daktari are bright yellow with black on their tails. Females are cream to light yellow with black on their tails. Recently reclassified from *Pseudotropheus* to *Metriaclima*, these fish are mildly aggressive and get along with a wide variety of other African cichlids. However, they should not be confused with or mixed with the more common *Labidochromis caeruleus* (yellow lab). When spawning, males will defend their territory aggressively. Females will also defend the territory, especially against other male Daktari. These fish prefer a temperature of 78 to 80 F and a PH of 7.8 to 8.0. They are a smaller cichlid that only grow to 4 to 5 inches in size.

I got both of these fish from one of my fish farm suppliers a few months ago. They spawned and produced fry on 6/2/2010. I kept the mated pair of these fish in a 20 high tank which is connected to my drip water system. They get water changes twice a week and a major water change and stone cleaning once a month. Spawning occurred shortly after a large water change. The mother holds the eggs in her mouth until the fry hatch in about three to four weeks. When I see that a female is nearing full term, her mouth will show black and I move her to a smaller 15 gallon tank to release the fry. My 15 gallon tanks have dividers with a large section for the fry and a smaller section for the mother during recovery. After the mother spits out all her fry and begins to accept food, I move her to the rear smaller section of the tank. I then feed her well for three days before returning her to her normal tank. Most cichlid mothers then guard their young and will only eat them if they are desperate for food. That is why it is important to feed the mothers after all the fry are released. Mothers are also weak from not being able to eat for three or four weeks while holding the fry. They need a few days time to gather strength before being returned to tanks with their mate.

As the fry grow they are moved first to 12 gallon tubs and then to my 20 gallon high tanks where they are offered for sale. I do not sell fry under 1 inch in size.

Labidochromis sp. Mbamba

BAP Report by Jay Stephan

Males are light blue with dark blue stripes, have black on their lower and top fins, and their top fin and tail have yellow along the edges. Females are brown and may show some yellow on their fins. These mbuna fish come from Lake Malawi. They are mildly aggressive and get along with a wide variety of other African cichlids. When spawning, they will defend their territory aggressively and females especially against other male Mbamba. These fish prefer a temperature of 78 to 80 F and a PH of 7.8 to 8.0. They are a dwarf cichlid that only grow to 3 to 3.5 inches in size.

I both these fish from one of my fish farm supplies a few months ago. They spawned and produced fry on 6/1/2010 and have produced a second batch of fry since then. I keep the mated trio of these fish in a 20 gallon high tank which is connected to my drip water system. The get water changes twice a week and a major water change and stone cleaning once a month. Spawning occurred shortly after a stone and large water cleaning. The mother holds her eggs in her mouth until the fry hatch in about three to four weeks. When I see that a mother is nearing full term, her mouth will show black and I move her to a smaller 15 gallon tank to have the fry. My 15 gallon tanks have dividers with a large section for the fry and a smaller section for the mother during recovery. After the mother spits out all her fry and begins to accept food, I move her to the rear smaller section of the tank. I then feed her well for three days before returning her to her normal tank. Most cichlid mothers tend to guard their young and only will eat them if they are desperate for food. That is why it is important to feed the mothers after all the fry are born. Mothers also are weak from not being able to eat for three or four weeks while holding the fry. They need a few days time to gather strength before being returned to tanks with their mate.

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**18th Annual
New Hampshire Aquarium Society**

AUCTION

(FISH & DRY GOODS)

Sunday, September 19, 2010

**Newington Town Hall
Nimble Hill Rd., Newington, NH**
Directions on back

Auction will begin at 12Noon. Arrive early for viewing.

If vendors would like to set a minimum bid on any of their items, a non-refundable \$1 charge will be applied per item. Bump-ups are \$2.

Preregistering of lots is appreciated. Mail preregistration sheets to Bill Janetos, PO Box 32, Rollinsford, NH 03869 by Sept 10 or email to w.janetos@janco-electronics.com by Sept 17. Less waiting for labels!!!!

Donations accepted or Sell your extra fish & equipment, 60/40 split.

For more information & sheets

Call Bill Janetos (603) 749-2667 or E-mail at w.janetos@janco-electronics.com

Call Norman Brandt (603) 642-5074 or E-mail at fishBRA955@aol.com

Visit NHAS's Webpage at www.nhaquariumsociety.com

REGIONAL AND SPECIALTY CLUBS

Delaware County Aquarium Society

Meets the 1st Friday of each month from Sept. through June at the Springfield Township Building, Springfield, PA.

www.dcas.us

Diamond State Aquarium Society

Meets the 2nd Monday of each month from Sept. through June at William Penn High School in New Castle, DE.

<http://dsas.topcities.com/>

Bucks County Aquarium Society

Meets the 1st Thursday of each month from Sept. through July at the Churchville Nature Center, Churchville, PA.

<http://www.bcasonline.com/>

Potomac Valley Aquarium Society

Meets the 1st Saturday of each month from Sept. through June at the Green Acres School in Fairfax, VA

<http://www.pvas.com/>

NJ Tri-State Tropical Fish Association

Meets the 1st Thursday of every month except July and August at the Barrington Municipal Building in Barrington, NJ.

Contact Bill Farrell at 856-428-1431.

Keystone Killy Group

Meets the second Saturday of each month from Sept. through June (except Dec.) at members' homes.

<http://www.keystonekilly.org/>

Capital Cichlid Association

Meets the second Saturday of each month from Sept. through June in Silver Spring, MD.

<http://www.capitalcichlids.org/>

UPCOMING

*****EVENTS*****

Visit the websites for these clubs for more information on their event if you are interested in attending. Support other clubs and they will support ours!

Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society Fall Auction

Sunday, September 26, 2010

North Hampton VFD
5149 North Pioneer Road
Gibsonia, PA 15044

North Jersey Aquarium Society Aquatic Weekend 2010

October 15 - 17, 2010

251 Park Avenue
Lyndhurst Elks Club
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

Potomac Valley Aquarium All Aquarium Catfish Show

October 21 - 24, 2010

Fairfax, VA

www.catfish2010.com

Raising Live Food for Your Fish

Part 1 in a series of articles by Twisted Fisher AKA Michael Steffen

In this the first installment of raising live food for your fish we will discuss the benefits of raising your own live food and the effects it can have on your fish. We will cover different types of live food and will even cover the setting up of cultured worms.

Firstly a few reasons to culture your own foods for your little gems:

- 1) The uneaten food will not immediately decay and load up the filtration system,
- 2) Foods can be raised in controlled conditions and be free of pathogenic (disease causing) bacteria by using inexpensive media and techniques,
- 3) Most importantly, fish *love* grabbing things that try to run away (plus, fish owners *love* watching their fish chase live food).
- 4) Live food will condition your fish for spawning and allow you to see your fish act more naturally.
- 5) Once you become skilled at raising some live foods you can get some of the less common fish that require live food to be kept in the aquarium.
- 6) The biggest bonus of all is that once set up the maintenance is minimal and costs are low to keep a steady supply of live, fresh food for your fish.

I know that this may seem like a daunting task to someone that is new to the hobby and I don't want anyone to feel over whelmed if you don't think you can do it, because one thing that everyone should know is that raising live food is not hard to do nor is it a daunting task! Some live foods are a bit harder to get to take off or will cost a bit more to set up, but on the other side of the same coin some are so simple it's amazing. I have decided to write this set of "HOW TO" articles to clear up a lot of misconceptions about raising live foods and to educate people on just what is available, and how easy it can be to culture them for your fish. I am an advocate of feeding live foods to fish to help with both conditioning for spawning and also to get healthier fish through improved food quality.

As for what determines what is "live food" and

what is not, it comes down to one simple concept: can it move on its own? If the answer is yes then it's live food. If not, then its frozen/prepared food. Next I would like to give a list of what is out there and also what will be coming in future articles I will be writing monthly for Tank Tales covering a few of the different types each month.

Micro worms

Walter worms

Banana worms

Cyclops

Mosquito larvae

Baby brine shrimp

Adult brine shrimp

Grindal worms

White worms

Earth worms

Vinegar eels

Infusoria

Fruit flies

Feeder fish

Daphnia

Green water

Black trout worms

Moina

I will break this down and cover three related live foods in each installment and how to culture them in your fish room to keep a steady supply for your fish.

This month we are going to cover the "dish" worms. Walter, banana, and micro worms can all be grouped into this category and since the culturing of them is the same they are "related" as far as the culturing goes. These worms vary in size from 1mm-1.5mm in length making them excellent fry foods. These worms can be cultured very easily and kept going forever if you choose. The main uses for

these different worms are: first fry foods, spawn inducers, a great source of releasing the natural hunter instinct in your fish.

A list of what you will need:

- A small container, butter dish or yogurt container
- Filter floss
- Oatmeal
- Activated yeast
- Starter cultures

- 1) Take the oatmeal and cook it as directed and make it to the consistency where you can stand a spoon in it.
- 2) You then want to put a ½-1” deep layer in your chosen container and smooth the top into a nice flat surface.
- 3) Carefully clean the inside of the container of any oatmeal that may have gotten on it during the placement process.
- 4) Cut or drill a small hole in the lid of the container and insert floss to plug it so that it will breathe; the floss will also stop intruders from entering and fouling your culture.
- 5) Next take your activated yeast and lightly sprinkle the surface of the oatmeal with it until it looks like the poppy seeds on a poppy seed bagel.
- 6) Next introduce your starter culture to the medium by simply dumping / squeezing it into the center of your prepared media.



Figure 1 - Finished culture

After you have “started” your culture place it somewhere that is room temperature or slightly above it at all times. Within 7-14 days you should have a culture that looks like figure 2 with the worms climbing the sides of your container appearing like lightning.

When they have reached this point you are ready to start harvesting them. The worms can be harvested daily or even more often if you so choose.

Harvesting can be done a few ways:

Simply wiping your finger around the inside of the container and swishing it in your tank.

A small wooden or plastic block can be centered in the container and worms can be scraped off it with a plastic spoon.

A cotton swab can be used instead of your finger for the wipe and swipe.

Worm cultures will last 2-4 weeks after you begin



Figure 2 - Thriving culture.

harvesting them. To restart your cultures just repeat the above steps. I usually restart them when the wife or kids tell me that it smells like stale beer in the fish area. Your culture should have a yeasty beer like smell but not be overly powerful. If you find that you need more worms then you are currently producing you can seed multiple cultures with worms from your primary culture.

A few things to remember when working with these cultures are:

Never allow food to come into contact with the worms or their dishes

Always wash your hands after feeding or handling the cultures

The worms can be a never ending source of food for your fish

These tiny worms are the perfect first foods for a lot of fry.

Your fish will thank you for it

I hope that this first installment has shed some light on the culturing of live foods and has cleared up any misconceptions about the difficulty of culturing it for your fish.

And as always until I peek out from behind my shell I bid you happy fish keeping.

The ACLC Picnic - A Great Time for All!

Photos by Joel & Robin Antkowiak, and Chris Cornell



The members and their families start to gather....

The cooking crew begins their work. Wayne & Don have the corn well in hand. Pedro looks on as Joel chooses his weapons.....



You know, I've done this before.

Easy does it there big guy!



Pedro supervises the grilling process.....



Pedro shows some concern.....

Joel doesn't really care.....



Everyone eventually ate...



Then.....

Some folks played bingo.....



A few more wins and
I will be the doilie
KING of Lancaster!!



and some folks, well....



I hope they
remember to exhale.

My back is
going to be
killing me
tomorrow!

Ready! Aim!
Fire!



*Some folks just
played.....*

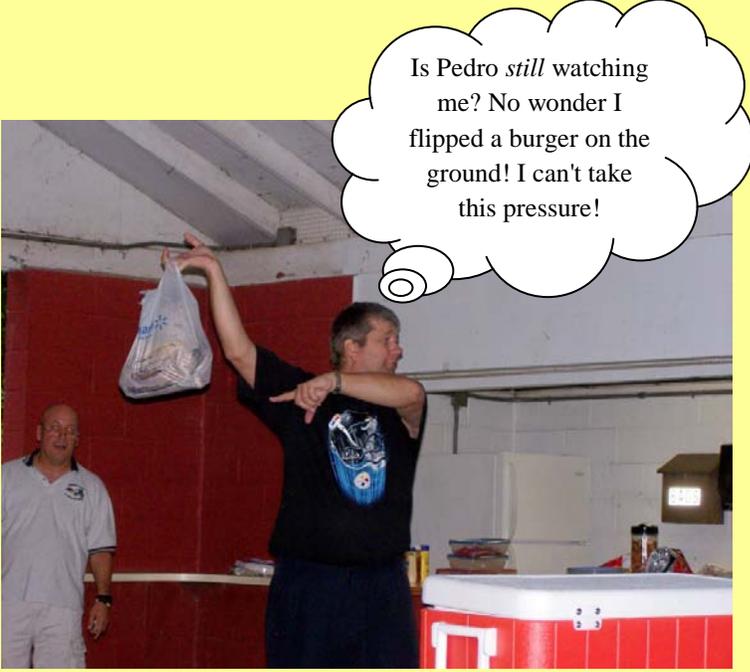




And played.....



Then we found a raffle winner.....



And a new auctioneer....



And everyone went home happy!