

# Wet Pet Gazette

Volume 50, Issue 1  
January – February 2000

The Journal of the Norwalk Aquarium Society

*Greetings from "Da Prez"*

## The View From Up Front

*by Kenneth Balog  
President, Norwalk Aquarium Society*

I would like to welcome everyone to a new year in the Norwalk Aquarium Society. The Board of Directors is already hard at work planning for the coming year, and we would welcome any ideas from the membership. We have spent the last several years building a strong treasury and we hope to see the benefits from that effort in the coming year. Foremost, we plan to stress the social aspect of our club. We are discussing different trips we can take, famous speakers for our monthly meetings, social nights, and the like. This is your club as well as ours and your ideas can help us to make this year a memorable one. So, please let us know what you would like to do.

Another focus for the coming year is increasing our membership. The first step forward in this endeavor was to design and construct our website. This has produced several new members already and has been highly complimented by aquarists nationwide. The next step is publicity, and our publicity chairman, Ed Katuska, has been doing a terrific job of getting meeting announcements published in newspapers and magazines across the region. However, we cannot succeed without your help. It is hard to believe, but most people do not even know that aquarium societies exist. We all need to talk to people, bring friends to meetings, and generally let the world know that we are here. In the long run, this is probably the most important thing we can do to insure the future of our hobby.

I look forward to seeing you at our meetings!

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U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
Office of Information and Public Affairs  
Washington, DC 20207  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE November 10, 1999

## CPSC, Perfecto Manufacturing Inc. Announce Recall of Aquarium Lights

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Perfecto Manufacturing Inc., of Noblesville, Ind., is voluntarily recalling about 23,400 SHOlights aquarium lights. Sharp edges on these lights could cut the

insulation on the wiring. If the wires become exposed, consumers could suffer shocks or electrocution.

There is also a risk of fire. In addition, some of these lights could overheat and cause the same problems.

CPSC and Perfecto are not aware of any incidents involving these aquarium lights. This recall is being conducted to prevent the possibility of injuries.

The plastic body of the SHOLights are black or oak-colored, and are 24, 30, 36 or 48 inches in length. All 36-inch SHOLights that hold two bulbs, and all SHOLights lights manufactured in July 1999 or earlier are part of this recall. The manufacturing date is located on a white label on the metal reflector. The label shows a picture of an anchor, and reads "cleaned by" or "built by" followed by the date. If there is no label or the label can't be read, it should be considered part of the recall.

Pet stores nationwide sold these lights from August 1998 through July 1999 for a suggested retail price of between \$125 to \$175.

Consumers should stop using these aquarium lights, unplug them, and return them to Perfecto for a free replacement. For more information, consumers should call Perfecto at (800) 241-7485 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST Monday through Friday.

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# Editor's Notebook

*by Douglas De Ment  
Norwalk Aquarium Society*

Well here I am, logging in again as Editor of the Wet Pet Gazette. For those that are newer to the society, it's a position that I've held before.

Somebody once told me, back in my first incarnation as editor, that I was the fifth editor in the history of the society (which was hard for me to believe as the society was, at the time, forty years old). Then I stepped down to do Boy Scouting with my son and buddy, Matthew. There have been (maybe?) four editors since, so if that was true, now I am editor ten. My last tour as Editor (including time as co-editor) was six plus years. I don't want to guess as to the length of this tour. (And there's no guarantee that I'll come back as Editor fifteen, either.)

But things have changed since my last round. We have an 8-1/2 x 11 format now, not a 5-1/2 x 8-1/2. We're publishing six times a year, not nine. But even neater, the NAS now has a web site. Fortunately Mark Broadmeyer has agreed to remain on as Webmaster. I'm really looking forward to learning how to load our articles to the site.

This month we have an article on Anomalochromis thomasi written by our new president, Ken Balog. We have Ed Katuska's regular column "Did You Know?" I also thought that I'd include a golden oldie article from the past. For good luck, I chose a book review from a regular contributor back during my first tour, Walt Stevens Jr. And of course, a reprint: from a great sister society, Frank Greco from the Brooklyn Aquarium Society on the Copper-banded Butterflyfish.

It's going to take me a few issues to get back in stride. I don't even have all the directors and I'm missing phone numbers. But the press deadline is looming, so what I got is what you get. So here goes. Wish us well.

Write up a few articles! I'll take them in any format, by e-mail, on disk, typed ... even "old fashioned" handwritten on paper, sent by "snail mail" ...

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## Did you know?

by Ed Katuska  
Norwalk Aquarium Society

Happy New Year to all. Hope everyone had a happy and safe holiday season. This month we are bringing you some unusual fish facts to ponder. After a brief discussion with Scully and Mulder they agree these are tidbits should be logged as X-files. We also have another addition of "This Wacky Fish World" featuring wacky related fish headlines clipped from newspapers around the world. I must say to all NAS members that you scored poorly on answering the trivia questions last year. I hope everyone does better this time around. Good luck.

### Did you know...

#### They should use the side of fish food cartons

Forty species of North American fish have disappeared since the turn of the century, nineteen of these in the last thirty years. The greatest losses were in the Great Lakes, The Great Basin, the Rio Grande, the Valley of Mexico, and the Parras Valley in Mexico. Of the 24,000 fish species that have been named worldwide, it is estimated that 20% are threatened with extinction by the year 2050 that's 4800 species.

#### Amazing Creatures

All freshwater on earth contains tiny wheel-like creatures called Rotifera. If you take them out of the water they dry up into a speck of dust that can survive indefinitely in any condition including outer space. If the dust lands on freshwater it turns right back into Rotifera.

#### Jellyfish mystery

A population explosion of *Craspedacusta sowerbii*, a freshwater jellyfish can completely take over a lake in one day and just as fast completely disappear the next day leaving no trace they were ever there. It did this on Oct. 7, 1998 in Spring Lake, Santa Rosa, California.

#### The Wacky Fish World

##### Mo- The Millennium Mossbunker

Point Pleasant, NJ.- Monday, Dec. 20, 1999 (AP)--The fishing community of Point Pleasant has adopted a 10-foot wooden replica of an Atlantic bait fish, covered with 1,500 Mylar scales, as the centerpiece of it's New Year's Eve celebration. The Times Square festivities

will have nothing on Point Pleasant when Mo is lowered down a 40-foot scaffold outside a bowling alley, after being taken a mile out to sea aboard a fishing boat, returned to land and paraded through the streets. "We fully expect this to be the epicenter of the millennium," said Mo's creator, Gene Bissey.

##### A case for Ace Ventura, Pet Detective

Kingston, Ontario, Canada- Dec. 1999 (AP)—A women (whose name was not mentioned) serving a life sentence for stomping another woman to death broke down in tears as she told prison authorities how a fellow inmate had killed her two pet fish.

##### One from the past

Maidenhead, England (AP)—A man who left his tropical fish home alone was cleared of abandoning them, but was swimming in legal bills after the case. David Sharod criticized the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for bringing the charges, calling it "a total waste of time and money." Legal experts put the cost of the two-day hearing at more than \$12,000. Sharod said his legal fees topped \$3,000. The 31-year-old electrician walked free after he produced a book written by one of the society's own experts that said it was safe to leave the fish home alone for up to two weeks. (This story is around ten years old but I thought it was worth while to mention again when I ran across the article. If I remember correctly the fish in question was a pleco species from the family Loricariidae.)

##### Last Month's Trivia Question

In the 1991 comedy movie "What About Bob" Bill Murray played a pesky psychiatric patient that not only traveled with his pet goldfish but also talked to it as well. Bob called his goldfish by name. Name that goldfish.

##### Answer

His name was "Gill"

##### This Month's Trivia Question

What is the main ingredient in a pack of frozen brine shrimp? (This is the easiest question I have printed yet, I expect some of you rocket scientists to answer this one.)

Well that's all for now. Remember to keep me in mind for all your bachelorette party needs. Until next month, see ya.

## Breeding the African Butterfly Cichlid

# Anomalochromis thomasi

by *Kenneth Balog*  
*Norwalk Aquarium Society*

The African Butterfly cichlid is a small riverine cichlid from western Africa; specifically Sierra Leone, southeast Guinea, and western Liberia. It rarely grows to more than four inches in total length and it has a temperament quite similar to that of the kribensis - relatively peaceful, rarely digs in the substrate, and it seldom bothers plants. They form pairs and tight family groups which allow them to breed successfully even in a mixed species aquarium. Hence, it is a acceptable candidate for the community tank.

The two sexes are difficult to distinguish when they aren't spawning. Both sexes are amber in color with blue spangling across the lateral scales from the eye to the caudal peduncle. Further, both the male and the female possess a forward-pointing black cheek stripe, a black opercular blotch, and red and white edging on their dorsal fins. Additional random black blotches appear with changes in mood, and appear intensely on the female during spawning. Also, the sexes show no discernable difference in finnage. Thus, the only observable differences between the sexes are the female's rounded abdomen just prior to spawning and the male's larger size- four inches vs. three inches in the female.

A group of six young fish was acquired from a local dealer and placed in a well-planted 30 gallon tank with several corydoras catfish and South American cichlids as tankmates. A number of flat stones were added to the tank as potential spawning sites. Local tap water was used and the temperature was maintained at 78 degrees. Fifty percent weekly water changes and a good diet ( various flakes, pellets, and live and frozen foods ) resulted in rapid growth and the fish reached adult size in less than six months.

At this point, the males began to stake out territories around the tank. Fighting was minimal as heavy plantings of water sprite and java moss broke up sight lines and offered refuge to the losers. Spawning occurred immediately after a large water change and recurred at roughly ten day intervals. The female would begin to clean several stones within the male's territory. The male would soon join her and one stone was selected as the spawning site. Spawning occurred

in the usual manner- the female would lay a line of eggs across the stone , move away, and the male would follow to fertilize the eggs. This sequence was repeated until a clutch of approximately 250 eggs was deposited. The first two spawns disappeared overnight, but the third was hatched successfully with both parents tending the eggs and fry. Post-hatching, the parents moved the fry to shallow pits away from the spawning site. The fry were moved several more times before they were free- swimming, at which point they began to feed on microorganisms picked from the plants. Micro worms and baby brine shrimp were added several days later as the fry grew rapidly. Losses were few even in a community tank, as the fry proved quite hearty and their parents were fearless in their defense.

Thus, *Anomalochromis thomasi* proved to be easy to breed. It is a beautiful, peaceful, and worthwhile addition to any aquarium.

A GOLDEN OLDIE:

*From Wet Pet Gazette, February 1993....*

## A Review of: "The World Of Catfish"

by *Walter D. Stevens Jr.*  
*Norwalk Aquarium Society*

"The World Of Catfish" is a (1991) TFH translation of a Japanese book written by Midori Kobayagawa. The book is divided into basically three sections with the first being an excellent collection of color photographs of approximately 365 different catfishes. Each photograph is accompanied by the fish's scientific name. The second section is a description and illustration of each part of a catfish's anatomy, a listing of thirty one catfish families, their range, number of genera and species. The third section "Care and Breeding" is an easy reading discussion of how to raise and breed Corydoras, Doradid, Loricariids, Synodontis and a number of catfish from Japan. Most discussions are accompanied by an illustration of how to set up a typical aquarium for each catfish family. Included in this section is a number of very good suggestions that should be considered when raising catfishes, such as selection and protection of the equipment in the tank, planning a layout so as not to harm the catfishes, why not to mix nocturnal and diurnal fishes, and many more.

When purchasing catfish it is important to know something about their ultimate size, food requirements, whether they are nocturnal and compatibility with other fish. If you don't know the answers and the pet shop dealer doesn't either, don't purchase them. Most catfish require alternate ways of handling, transportation, transferring from one container to another, ailment treatment, and landscapes than other varieties of fish. Before treating some sicknesses of other community fish or raising the water temperature to elevated levels it is sometimes necessary to remove some catfish or the cure for some fish can mean the death of some catfish. The importance of reading and knowing about what you are purchasing, especially with catfish cannot be over emphasized. Before ordering a catfish through a pet dealer, know the cost. Some catfish are not widely available either due to demand or scarcity and can be very expensive.

The book would be an excellent reference for identifying catfishes and raising them except for the lack of one very important item, approximate size of the catfishes shown in the photographs. Selecting the proper size of the aquarium is emphasized through out the text and tank sizes are recommended for some families, but specific's on the size of the approximately 365 catfish shown is not included.

If the scope of your interest is in purchasing a reference book for identification of most readily available catfish and to get a general overview of their requirements, this book will meet your needs. It will definitely help in selecting catfish for community aquariums. Supplemental articles or books with more in-depth information will be necessary if you are considering breeding catfishes.

## Dues are due!

Please remember that March is the cut-off date of the grace period.

Don't miss a single issue of The Wet Pet Gazette.

Any questions, please call Anne Broadmeyer at (203)775-0030.

REPRINT

from the Brooklyn Aquarium Society

## Chelom rostratus The Copper banded Butterflyfish

by Frank M. Greco  
Brooklyn Aquarium Society

The Copper-banded Butterflyfish is a very distinctive and therefore easily recognized species. Its elongated mouth, and copper colored bars on a white background make it a highly unusual looking and colorful fish, and is one of the more popular Butterflyfish for the marine aquarist.

This fish ranges from East Africa in the Indian Ocean through Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and New Caledonia in the Pacific Ocean. The majority of Copper-banded Butterflyfishes are exported from the Philippines where, unfortunately, they are almost always caught with sodium cyanide which greatly shortens their life span in captivity, marking this species as one which is difficult to maintain in captivity although the opposite is true. If given proper conditions, this fish will thrive.

While it is not an obligate coral feeder, the Copper-banded Butterflyfish uses its elongated mouth to pick particles of food from hard to reach areas between coral heads or in the reef proper. In captivity, this fish will feed on a wide variety of foods, although it may need to be coaxed into doing so. A good starter food is enriched adult Artemia, which always seems to start them eating. Another trick is to rough up one end of a freeze-dried tubifex cube, and place it into a coral head rough end up. As the freeze-dried food absorbs water, some of the worms will wave in the water, attracting the fish to start feeding. Once the fish starts feeding, it should readily accept other foods.

The Copper-banded Butterflyfish is generally a shy species, so its tank mates should be chosen with care. Avoid mixing this species with aggressive fishes like trigger fishes (Balistidae) and puffers (Diodontidae), or with overly large fishes like groupers (Serranidae). If possible, they should be kept in small groups (3 or more), and their tank should be heavily decorated so as to provide them with hiding places. The adult size of this fish is nearly 8", so it is a species suitable only for larger aquaria (recommended 75 gallons & up).

### **REGULAR MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS**

Meetings are on the third Thursday of each month except July and December, starting 8:00 PM at the **Nature Center for Environmental Activities**, 10 Woodside Lane, Westport. Meetings are open to members and the public. Each meeting includes a Bowl Show (members enter their fish to be judged), a short business meeting, refreshments, a raffle of new goods, an auction of new/used goods, and a program/event.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETINGS**

Board of Directors' (BOD) meetings are held in member's homes. They are generally but not always the first Thursday of the month. You do not need to be a board member to attend or to host a BOD meeting. Attending a BOD meeting is an excellent way to get better acquainted in the society, it also gives you a chance to see another aquarist's set-up. Just let the host/hostess know if you plan to attend. Hosting a BOD meeting is an excellent way to have some experienced hobbyists review your set-ups. Just let a BOD member know that you are interested in hosting a meeting and when. The BOD will gladly relocate a meeting to a member's home.

### **N.A.S. EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

N.A.S. will exchange its publication with other societies that send their publication to us.

Articles may be reprinted by not-for-profit aquarium societies by acknowledging the source and sending us two copies (one for our library, one for the author).

### **WET PET GAZETTE ADVERTISING RATES**

The Wet Pet Gazette will print a business card size ad and will offer a page on our web site for any business that will display and offer our membership flyers. (We supply the flyers, the business simply provides the space.) For larger ad spaces the cost per issue is

FULL PAGE \$ 25

HALF-PAGE \$ 15

These larger ads must be paid in advance of printing.

### **AFFILIATIONS**

N.A.S. is a member of the Federation of American Aquarium Societies (FAAS), and the North East Council of Aquarium Societies (NEC).

**Norwalk Aquarium Society**  
**P.O. Box 84**  
**South Norwalk, CT 06856**

#### **Dues are due!**

Please remember that March is the cut-off date of the grace period. Don't miss a single issue of The Wet Pet Gazette. Any questions, please call Anne Broadmeyer at (203)775-0030.

### **Next Meetings:**

**17 February 2000**    **Marines - Mark Broadmeyer**

**16 March 2000**      **Ponds**