

WET PET GAZETTE

“WHERE FRIENDS AND FISH MEET”



NAS Logo

Greetings from the NAS board of Directors

We know that it has been a while since our last WET PET, but it's finally here. We thank you for your patience.

We hope that everyone is doing well and staying safe during this stressful time.

But we are resilient and have survived wars and plagues before and we will triumph again.

Just remember, as Marie Curie once said... “Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood.

Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.”

Until next time.

Stay safe and be well.

The Board of directors

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A pair of *Neolamprologus similis*

Breeding My Little White Whale

BEN CHALFIN

My love for shell dweller cichlids, specifically *neolamprologus similis*, started back in 2016 when I watched a video by “The King of DIY” on Youtube. There was just something so fascinating to me about this fish and how it lives in a colony and has such a large personality in a small statue. At this time I had not even heard of NAS or Aquabid, so I had no idea how or where to find my (tiny) white whales. A year goes by and my multiple tank syndrome started to grow from just a single 29g community tank to two additional tanks. It was at this point that I stumbled into HOF and met (what I would call) the legendary Pete Izzo. Who blew my mind with the selection of fish they had and his knowledge of the fish. Pete and I talked many hours about the best setup and design of my dream 75g tank and which Tanganyikan shelly I should start with. Unfortunately, when I finally pulled the trigger I could only find *Lamp. Brevis* so I started with those but was not satisfied. Then one day I learned of someone who was selling 6 *Similis* for \$90 and I rushed to get them. When I got them home I decided instead of putting them in my 75g to put them in a 20Long with a TON of shells. They lived in there for a few months and seemed to be ok but never displayed any breeding habits and I was concerned I had done something wrong or had all the same sex. As luck would have it a couple of weeks later I stumbled upon a free 33long tank brand new. Talk about signs from the fish heavens. I immediately ran down to the HOF and told Pete the good news and asked his advice on how he would set it up. We chatted until closing time and I picked up a bunch of rock.

I settled on a substrate of pool filter sand, topped with crushed coral, to buffer the water, a large rock pile/structure in the middle of the tank to break the line of sight and thus creating multiple territories, three bags of escargot shells from Amazon.

For filtration I used a Seachem tidal 55 HOB on the right side of the tank so the output would dispense along the length of the tank. I then built two custom acrylic tops to accommodate this unusual filter placement. I also installed a Eheim Jagger heater with an external heater controller set to 79F.

Mind you I picked up the fish in February 2018, 33long was setup and fish added early March the same year. By the beginning of April 2018, I saw one single tiny FRY. In order to see it you basically needed a microscope but at feeding you would see it poke it's little heads out. I was so excited I messaged Sal and Pete. Sal had the best response of all “Where there's ONE there are 20!” and boy was he right. As the weeks went by I kept seeing more and more, my rough estimates was I had about 23 in the first batch.

This is by far the most rewarding cichlid to breed in my opinion that's because the adults do not eat fry unless overcrowded and each new generation helps to take care of the newest generation. In this way they really build a thriving inter connected colony.

There are three key factors to breeding *Similis*. First is consistent PH. I only used crushed coral to help buffer my soft Stamford water to about 7.5-8.0. Pete gave me the best advice to not chase PH unless you have wild caught fish. The fish will be happiest with a consistent PH rather than always fluctuating. Second TONS of shells. In my experience its better to have more than less. If you put too many in the fish will simply bury them and save them for later. If you have not enough shells the males will fight over them and the females will not feel safe enough to lay her eggs. Lastly, regular water changes and good filtration.

When feeding fry I used First Bites but have now switched to brine. I add fry food daily since you never know when you will have a fry and I have found if you feed them they will come. *Similis* are slow growers but it is fun to just sit and watch them. I have the 33long setup next to my desk at home and get very little work done because I get distracted by my little colony.



Breeding Peacock Gudgeons *Tateurndina ocellicauda*

RICK MARINO

Peacock gudgeons are small, colorful fish that originate from Papua New Guinea. They're also found throughout New Zealand and Australia. In good conditions, the average Peacock Gudgeon lifespan is between 4 and 5 years in captivity

Sexing peacock Gudgeons, females have a black line across the edges of their fins, whereas male don't. Also, males have rounder heads and females have more pointed and angular heads. Beyond those differences, females also have more vibrant coloration on their bellies. That subtle yellow shade is more intense than what you'll see on males, Males tend to be slightly larger than females as well,



Breeding Peacock Gudgeons for me was frustrating. I put a breeding pair together with a small pvc pipe and they spawned in the pvc pipe. The male stayed in the cave with the eggs fanning them. I watched the male in the cave for 6 days, and was just waiting for the male to leave, so I could put the cave into another tank for all the fry I was expecting, The male left the cave and then came a bunch of snails that ate all the eggs Feeding all kinds of live and frozen food because they will not eat flake food. One day I notice while feeding my Peacocks there were 3 fry swimming on the top of the water. Only 3 fry not enough for BAP. I was surprised that the parents did not eat them. Well again fed them well and they spawned again. Well this time I watched the male fanning the eggs for 7 days and on the 7day there were fry swimming on the top of the water, about 20 to 25 fry. Right away I moved the male and female to another tank. I wasn't taken any chances the parents were going to eat the fry. Basically, my water is liquid rock out of the well. My ph. is 7.8 and the temperature was 76 degrees. A lot of 25% water changes and good live and frozen food. This combination worked for me. As far as taking care of the fry, I feed micro worms and baby brine shrimp. Then when the fry was about 3/4 inch size I feed them all kinds of bloodworms and myasis shrimp and brine adult shrimp. In closing very pretty fish and not all that hard to spawn, once you give them the right environment. My tank that I breed the peacocks in was a 5-and-a-half-gallon tank with a sand bottom with a lot of java moss.

PS. So glad I

spawned these fish because they are a 20-point fish which will not be for long.

Put a Fish in It

BY: BASIL HOLUBIS

Welcome back - this is my first column in a long time. For those of you who are reading this for the first time, my goal is for everyone who can, does put something outside this summer with fish in it. Whether it's Guppies or White Clouds, or even Rainbows, Tetras, Killie Fish or Danios. Get the idea?

Small tubs don't need filters, 20-30 gallons of water- 6 Guppies or White Clouds, some floating plants and you should see fry. The water will stay clear, the more sun the better. Plants can be potted, Water-sprite can float or be rooted, and Hornwort floats. A potted Lily will bloom in a tub also. Will help if you fertilize with tablets. Let your family pick a color and make the pond and/or tub a family project. Happy wife...Happy life!

Beware of Duckweed - it can take over the top of your pond/tub. Great for fry to hide, but will block sun and keep water cool. Water Lettuce is great! Nice long roots for spawning Tetras and Rainbows, but will need to be thinned out. You'll see!

Don't put your fish out too early. Warm days in the 70 degrees area are nice, but 40 degrees at night is too cool for the fish. I have lost fish that are were too cold. Two or three days of rain will make a tub cold also. I dig a hole in the ground so the tub is halfway in the ground. This allows the ground to cool the tub on hot days and helps insulate the tub in the cooler weather.

Please email me with any questions or go see Pete Izzo at House of Fins in Greenwich, CT for suggestions to stock your tub and /or ponds.

I have spawned lots of Cichlids outside too. Maybe someday a Discus Pond? Don't gasp - nice warm water they would love it!

Till next time ...

Basil

Email: BasilFish@yahoo.com

Keeping & Spawning *Betta Macrostoma*

BY: BASIL HOLUBIS

Let's start by saying.. I never wanted this fish. They came to stay with me when Sal Silvestri moved and had to breakdown his fish room. Since I keep soft water fish with rainwater being my secret weapon and I live closest to Sal, I guess I was the easy choice to "babysit". So Sal gave me a trio with instructions to keep them in at least a 29 gallon tank with lots of cover and plants and a tight lid! I got them home in May after Sal gave them to me at our Norwalk monthly meeting. I forgot I had even said yes to take them. Home we go to a 20 long with lots of plants, tubes to hide in, a temperature of 75° and a tight glass canopy.



Not really interested in the fish, I gave them the same live foods as all my other fish. Lots of mosquito larvae, earthworms and my other secret weapon - live black worms.

Now about the fish... this fish reminds me of a snakehead big mouth. Females are plain with a gray color and the males have all the color. They can be nasty and I'm surprised they are not extinct! As I had a trio, 4" male and two 3" females, there was constant bickering between the females resulting usually with the smaller girl hiding in the plants till feeding time.

The plants and tubes are really for the male's protection after spawning. Male Macrostoma are mouth brooders. After spawning he retreats into cover to incubate his eggs and fry. Removal of the females removes pressure on the male to spawn again.

The more you feed them, the more alert they become to your presence. They're best with meaty foods but they will eat flake. Flakes for breakfast and worms for dinner.

Water quality is key. They want clean water with a 6-6.5 PH range. Lots of food equals lots of water changes. They need clean water. I kept them at 80° all summer. The result was the male disappearing and hiding for almost 21 days. Then one morning I was feeding and I saw little black fry. They were just released and were about the size of baby guppies.

I always have live baby brine shrimp on hand. I hatch daily for feeding mostly everything in my fish room. I threw in a cup full and watched the clumps of java moss and slowly the little ones came out... I counted 15.

The parents are ok with fry, but after about a week I moved them, easier to catch 2 fish. As I said before, these fish do not like each other. Even at 1/2" they like to bicker. They grow fast and should be split up into groups to raise the most possible. 2" at 6 months is about right.

Betta Macrostoma is from the Island of Borneo, off Asia. This name means "Big Mouth". They are protected and are illegal to export.



Most of these fish come through Thailand. This is not a beginner's fish, but is well worth the effort if you are willing to pay the price! Now that I have "awakened" to all the different Betta species, many of them mouth brooders, many of them small and peaceful

but all interesting to keep. I now keep one or two species full time. Maybe will try Betta Rubra, peaceful mouth brooder who are affordable, available and a good starter Betta. Go online and check 'em out. Bettas - they ain't just fightin fish!