

The official publication of the St.Catharines & Area Aquarium Society since 1958
Volume 21 no.6 February 2009

The

SCAT

In this issue :
Fishes in the Desert
Spawning Banggai cardinals

scaas.info

Club Notes

Our Mission Statement: Meetings of the St. Catharines & Area Aquarium Society are held on the first Monday of each month, 7.30p.m., at the Seafarers & Teamsters Union Hall, 70 St. Davids Rd. E. Thorold, Ont. No meetings are held on Mondays that are holidays. Those meetings are held on the second Monday. There are no meetings during the months of July and August. *The Society, established in 1958, is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to the task of promoting interest in the breeding, raising, maintenance and study of tropical fish, both at the beginner and advanced levels.* The St. Catharines & Area Aquarium Society is a charter member of the Canadian Association of Aquarium Clubs Inc. (CAOAC) www.caoac.ca . SCAAS is also a member of the Federation of American Aquarium Societies (FAAS). More news and information about St.Catharines & Area Aquarium Society can be found at <http://www.scaas.info>

Our next meeting will be held on February 02 at the Seafarers & Teamsters Union hall, 70 St. Davids Rd.E. Thorold. Start time is 7.30 pm ALL ARE WELCOME
This month's program will be 'Invasive Species' presented by Emily Funnell

2008 – 2009 Executive

President – Ken Brady - - - - (905) 935-4716 kbrady2@cogeco.ca
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Auction Coordinator – Tom Bridges
Auctioneer – open
Breeder Awards – Tom Bridges
CAOAC Representative – Tom Bridges
Jar Show – Pat Shriner - - - - (905) 354-1367 gpshriner@sympatico.ca
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Membership & Exchanges – Pat Bridges (905) 735-3352
Programs – open
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Raffle & Draws – Priscilla Heus - (905) 988-9741
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Membership Dues:

Family :\$ 25.00
Single - \$ 20.00
Junior - \$ 10.00 (under 16)
Seniors - \$ 10.00 (over 65)

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Cover photo of a wild-caught brown Discus

Photo © by DAve Unruh

Editors Notes

This month we have our usual monthly features – Jar Show on page 3 and member bio (by Pam Danyluck) on page 4. The anagram for February is also on page 4.

Make sure you read Scanning the Exchanges by Tom & Pat bridges on page 5. Tom & Pat have included the CAOAC Events Calendar on their page this month. Here you will find a list of events such as auctions & shows hosted by fellow CAOAC member clubs.

We are featuring two articles this month, the first by Rein Breitmaier on his travels in Tunisia. You will have to consult a map or read the article to find out where to find Tunisia! The article starts on page 7.

Lastly, on page 10 you will find an article on keeping & breeding *Pterapogon kaudemi*. What fish is that you say? You will have to read the article to find out! By the way, these fish have been added to the IUCN Red list, which means that they are now considered to be an endangered species.

Hope you enjoy this issue of The SCAT!

Dave

Presidents Notes

were unavailable at the time of printing so here are a few things to remember.

- next meeting is on the 2nd of February
- the program will be on “Invasive Species, presented by Emily Funnell of Ontario Streams
- our annual auction will be held on May 2nd
- we need your help to make it a success so please don't book anything on this date

Photos from the January Meeting



JAR SHOW

Here is a Fish of the Month list so you can plan ahead to have an entry each month.

Fish Of The Month
September-----Corydoras & Catfish
October -----Guppies & Tetras
November-----Cichlids over 4”(old & new world) Not including Angels & Discus)
December-----Swords, Platies, Mollies
January-----Barbs & Anabantids
February -----Loaches & Sharks
March -----Plants
April -----Angels & Discus
May -----Dwarf cichlids (old or new world)
June -----Goldfish & Koi

Jar Show Results

Point structure – 1st – 6 points, 2nd – 5 points, 3rd – 4 points. 1 point for showing

Fish of the Month - Barbs & Anabantids

1st Ernest Biktimirov 6pts - cherry barb (female)

2nd Claudia 5 pts - betta

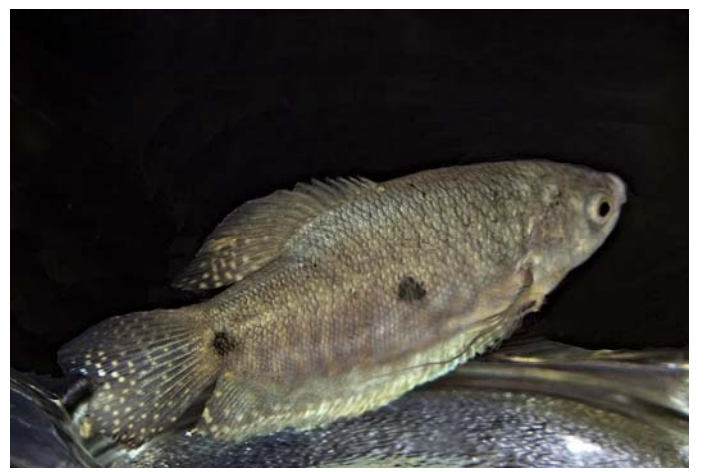
3rd Dan Slingerland 4 pts - gourami

**Others - Richard Carthew 1 pt - blue gourami
Open Class Senior**

1st Gary Phelps 6 pts - Anubias Barteri

Best in Show

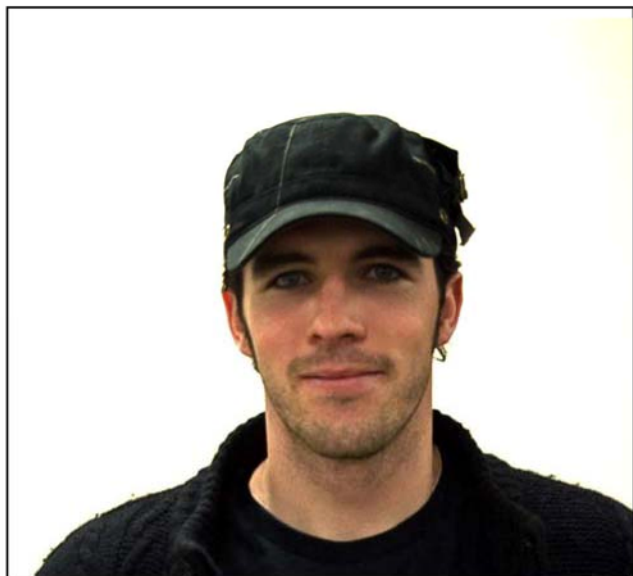
Gary Phelps - Anubias barteri



Member Profile

By Pam Danyluck

This month's member profile is on one of our newer members Dan Slingerland. Dan was born in St. Catharines at the General Hospital. He spent the first four years in St. Catharines and then his family moved to Jordan until he was sixteen. He now lives a ten minute walk from our meetings in Thorold, very convenient! Dan just became engaged on Sunday January 4th to Jessica Gabel "an awesome" girl.



Dan Slingerland — photo © by DAve Unruh

Dan is a baker at a very nice bakery in Beamsville, which just happens to be my favorite.

He joined our club December first of last year. Dan says he has been interested in fish as far back as he can remember around three or four years of age. He has two tanks running at the moment and has thirty to spare. Dan does not have a fish room as of yet.

Some of the fish he keeps are Gouramis, Flying Fox, Kuhlii Loaches, Corys, Chinese Algae Eater, Black Tetra, Albino Bristlenoses, Plecos and Hendrickson Catfish. Dan has a special interest in Plecostomus. He grew up believing there were only a couple of kinds, but when he began to learn and see with his own eyes just how many shapes, colors and sizes there are, he was amazed.

For filtering Dan uses Fluval and Magnum canisters, Aquaclear filters and learned how to build his own filters out of acrylic.

Dan's family enjoys his hobby, but participates very little.

Thank you Dan for letting us get to know you a little better.

Anagram for February

Example:

*An anagram for this creature is: **alpine alps***

*The creature is: **applesnail***

An anagram for this fish is: **Nachos**

Fill Few

The creature is:

Answer will be in the next newsletter.

January's anagram answer: Arch Timber = Hermit Crab

Fishy Anagrams provided courtesy of



SCANNING THE EXCHANGES & etc.

... with Pat and Tom ...



GOOD READING IN THE S.C.A.A.S. LIBRARY ...

▶ ... in the Hamilton and District Aquarium Society's bulletin -

January, 2009

*Spawning *Tatia perugiae* & Searching for the Perfect Infusoria by Charles Drew

*The Open Aquarium by Claus Christensen
Reprinted from Aquarticles.com & www.tropica.dk

▶ ... in The Central New York Aquarium Society's newsletter – Reflector –

January, 2009

*Aphyosemion pascheni festivum 'Nkolbonda HLM 99/2' by Eric Bodrock reprinted From the September 2008 Finformation, the newsletter of GPAS – The Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society.

▶ ... in the Sarnia Aquarium Society's newsletter – Aqua Antics -

January, 2009

**Steatocranus casuarius* – The Buffalohead Cichlid by Peter Melady

*Hydra by Jack VanderAa

The newsletters listed on this page will be at the sign-in desk at the start of the next meeting, then in the club library.



CAOAC Events Calendar

to June 28, 2009

Jan. 18, 2009, 10:30 p.m., CAOAC Executive and General meetings in Waterdown

Note:

CAOAC Newsletter Award Nominations Due

Memberships Accepted

Club websites judged between Jan 1 & Jan 31

Feb 8, 2009 10:30 a.m. CAOAC Executive and General meetings in Waterdown

Note:

Second Sunday of the month

All other Award Nominations/Applications Due

Mar 15, 2009 10:30 a.m. CAOAC Executive and General meetings in Waterdown

Note:

Awards Meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Registration of Club Websites for Web Award in 2009

Mar 22, 2009

Hamilton & District Aquarium Society

Auction & Flea Market

Mar 29, 2009 All Day

Brant Aquarium Society

Show, Auction & Flea Market (reserved date)

Apr 18, 2009 All Day

Sarnia Aquarium Society

Auction only

Apr 19, 2009 10:30 a.m. CAOAC Executive meeting in Waterdown

Note:

Annual Reports for each committee due

Apr 19, 2009 All Day

Durham Region Aquarium Society

CAOAC Sanctioned Show & Auction (reserved date)

May 2, 2009

St. Catharines & Area Aquarium Society

All day auction

May 15-17, 2009

50th Annual CAOAC Convention

Note:

Annual General Meeting & Election of Officers

Fanshawe College, London, Ontario

June 28, 2009 10:30 a.m. CAOAC Executive and General meetings in Waterdown

NOTE:

Fourth Sunday of the month

President's BBQ at 12 Noon

The Minimalist Aquarist

'Doing more with less and keeping it simple'

Fishes in the Desert...TMA visits Tunisia

By Rein Breitmaier **KWAS** mrrrein@gmail.com

So what happens when an aquarist ventures into the areas surrounding the Sahara Desert in search of fishes? Firstly there isn't a lot of water and where there are rivers, largely they are Oueds, which are seasonal rivers, dry throughout most of the year. We were not to be so easily deterred however. The bulk of fishes known to countries in the north of Africa are in either the Mediterranean Sea or the Red Sea; both of these are marine environments.

Firstly there is the desert itself, stretching over 9 million square kilometres through 10 countries and choking everything within and beyond its perimeter with blowing sand. We witnessed only mild 'brown-outs' (similar to our snowy white version) where sand drifted by, obscuring the view of the mountains and filling itself into the crevasses of our camera lenses making them inoperable.



This mid-morning view across a giant salt lake in southern Tunisia on a cloudless day shows to what degree visibility can be affected.

The salt surface should reflect as brightly as snow with mirages hovering in the distance. There is a barely perceptible band of mountains on the horizon which ought to be floating above the mirages as the light plays tricks on your eye, but not this day. Of interest, when TMA visited China last year the government there was planting millions of trees in a program to create a 'green' Great Wall to halt the Gobi Desert's

expansion into their arable lands. Nothing so dramatic is underway here in the Sahara. Recent satellite shots viewable on the web, suggest that huge Saharan sand clouds travel thousands of kilometres, even over the Atlantic Ocean. It is there the sand finally falls and is being blamed for killing off the pelagic organisms which are the foundations of the food chain in our oceans. This is not good news. Meanwhile back in Tunisia, not surprisingly there were no fishes in the shallow brine puddles on this lake. Beyond the salt and between the mountain ranges the sandy desert might seem lifeless but a closer look reveals that insect and animal life abounds even here.



This nest had a 1cm by ½ cm rectangular opening and perfectly round bb sized pellets of sand had been expelled out of the cave. The tenant never poked out his head but even the ants scurried warily around the entrance. We left him be, whomever it was. Another desert dweller made him self known by following us around even in the heat of the afternoon.



Beetles coloured an iridescent blue, left oar-like alternating tracks in their wake neither fearing nor avoiding us. They stopped only long enough to

determine that our shoes weren't food before carrying on about their business. Clearly what we needed for fishes was a watery environment and a few of these do exist in oases, fed either by underground wells or by waterfalls that abruptly cascade from a rocky outcropping. These islands of life within the sandy surround typically support a small pocket of humanity, a few thousand palm trees from which magnificent dates are harvested, and even some wildlife.



We found our first little friend *Rana ridibunda* in just such a location. Thanks go to Tom Mason for kindly identifying these species for TMA. Frogs were plentiful here which suggests an absence of predators. Hundreds of visitors herded by their tour guides scurried past their pond daily barely giving them a look.



The next two, a tortoise (*Testude graeca*) and a lizard (*Uromastyx maliensis*) had been caught by a local lad who proudly offered them for photo-ops with the tourists (for a fee of course). Again most skirted the critters to be first in line for the kitsch, tat and postcard vendors. TMA chatted up this lad and soon

created quite a stir by walking about with the lizard in hand. Neither of these moved too fast which made them great photo subjects. By the way, TMA measured the afternoon temperature the next day. Forty five degrees Celcius (which translates into one hundred and thirteen degrees Fahrenheit) was the reading and this was mid March not the height of summer. So far we have found life in the desert, but by my count still n no fishes.



The Mediterranean Sea has always played an important role in the North African landscape, and fishes were an important and known commodity going back before Roman times. It is difficult to know the exact species but we often found fishes carved, drawn or even mosaic'd into the floors of a residence.



This fellow appears to have the downturned mouth of a catfish or scavenger yet the teeth of a predator lurking for his next swim by meal, as well as the bright finnage and scales characteristic of neither. His tile work comes from a dining-room floor of the second century A.D. and perhaps a little artistic licence overplayed scientific accuracy in his creation.

We even encountered an Ichthyocentaur. Head and torso of a man, a horse's fore legs like the centaurs of Greek Mythology, and a fish tail sprouting from his back? Fanciful all, but still no real fishes were found. We turned to the Oceanographic Museum near the capital city, Tunis, where our guidebook gave the following reference: "downstairs is an aquarium with some disconsolate fish".

With this glowing analysis in hand would you bother dropping by? We had the place almost to ourselves. The 'one aquarium' turned out to be several dozen tanks split between freshwater upstairs and marine on the lower level and try as I might I couldn't find that one disconsolate fish in the midst of the dozens and dozens of fishes happily doing what fishes do.

Okay, maybe our first fellow looked a little disconsolate but I'm sure that was just his disappointment at the lack of camera toting tourists venturing through. *Epinephelus guaza* grow to a metre and a half in length and can afford to give any look they chose.



The freshwater section had only a minor focus on local fishes most of which were noted as 'introduced' species and not naturally occurring in Tunisia's environment. These included a perch as well as carp and tilapia species. *Stizostedion lucioperca* grows to one and a third metres according to the info panel on their tank and one might wonder why this fish was established here in the first place as it looks leaner and meaner than your typical food fish. They were also a lot harder to photograph tending to dart about their space.



There was one lone 'domestic' fish displayed and it was identified as *Hemichromis bimaculatus*. Growing to 15cm these Cichlids exist in the Bechri Oasis. We spent some time later in an oasis not far from Bechri and while TMA wasn't able to catch any fishes that day, there were both minnows and small cichlids (judging by the body shapes as seen from above) swimming merrily through the shallow irrigation ditches.

Continued on page 13

Spawning Banggai Cardinals

Text & all photos by Dave Unruh

This small marine fish was only recently (1996) introduced to aquarists and has become quite a popular fish due to its hardiness, peaceful behavior, and of course, it's appearance.

Pterapogon kaudemi, the Banggai cardinal fish, will grow to a length of about 7-9 cm SL or 3 inches. Its basic body color is off-white, almost a light beige. A jet-black stripe runs vertically through the eye (which is quite large) and another black stripe runs through each of the dorsal fins. (Yes! That's right! Cardinal fish have two dorsal fins.) The black stripes continue into the ventral and anal fins. There is a black horizontal stripe on the upper and lower edge of the scissors-like caudal fin. A number of white spots are sprinkled on the body and on the fins creating a very attractive fish. On older males the second dorsal fins develops a long filament and is one of the features that separates males from females. The caudal fin of the male will also end in fairly long filaments.



Pterapogon kaudemi photo © by Dave Unruh

The common name "cardinal fish" results from the fact that many other species in this family have quite a lot of bright red in their coloration like that beautiful bird, the Cardinal.

Pterapogon kaudemi is found near Banggai Island, Indonesia and thus you know why it is called the Banggai cardinal fish!

A feature common to cardinal fish is a large mouth and Banggais are no exception. Their mouth seems to hinge downwards and they can scoop up large pieces of food. They have a voracious appetite and will stuff their mouths with food until they look like a chipmunk with a mouthful of nuts. One could never accuse Banggais of being fussy. They seem to enjoy all kinds of food. I give mine live brine shrimp or frozen chunks of shrimp, frozen krill, or just about any frozen fish food. I conditioned my fish on a product by Ocean Nutrition called "Angel Formula", which has a high proportion of vegetable matter. I also occasionally gave them Tetra's "Tetra Bits" (now renamed "Color Bits"). By the way, this is a fantastic food and is eagerly consumed by almost all fish cichlids (as big as *Cyphotilapia frontosa*), livebearers, and even fry (just crush the granules). If your Banggais are not eating, then you have a health problem on your hands - something I did not experience. Banggais are fish that are best kept in pairs even though they live in groups of up to 50 or 60 in their natural habitat. If you are going to keep them in a tank larger than 100 gallons, you may be successful with a group.

Sexing Banggais

As stated previously, males have a longer 2nd dorsal fin which usually cannot be seen in specimens until they are more than 4-5 cm (1.5-2") long and they look chunkier than females. The lower jaw of a male tends to look larger or deeper than that of the female. If you observe a group of fish that are larger than 5-6 cm you may be able to see these differences and be able

to pick out a pair. The surest way is to purchase a group of 6 or so and let them sort it out.



Pair of Banggai cardinals – female on left
photo © by DAve Unruh

Spawning

What makes this fish even more interesting is that it can be relatively easy to spawn and raise the fry. Banggais are mouth brooders and act so much like cichlids that they should be cichlids. If you start out with a group, they will fight amongst themselves and pare the group down to a pair, just like cichlids do. (NOTE: Not all cichlids do this -Ed.) I started with a group of six in August 1997 and by October 1997 there were only three fish left, one male and two females. A month later I began to notice some different behavior, although the actions were familiar. I had seen cichlids acting the same way before they would spawn. Two Banggais would position themselves head to tail, shimmy and shake beside each other, flare their fins, and so forth. Their colors were much darker than normal. The white spots really stood out against the darker body color. I did not see any cleaning of a spawning site and unfortunately I did not see them spawn. However, next afternoon, the bulging mouth was sure evidence that they had spawned.



Male (bottom) carrying eggs photo © by DAve Unruh

At this time I had no information about these fish and since I was not positive on ways to identify the males and females, I thought it was the female who carrying the eggs. After seven days, I decided I would catch the female (really a male) and strip the eggs from her. I expected that catching this fish would be quite a challenge since my marine tank is a reef tank with lots of live rock, corals, etc. As soon as the fish saw the net, it would dash into the rocks and hide. Fortunately a friend had a fish trap and I borrowed that. After four or five hours, the fish swam into the trap and it was caught.

I began to strip the eggs from it just like I would do with a cichlid. One egg popped out and since it had not even started to develop, I decided to allow the fish to carry the eggs for a while longer. I set up a 10-gallon tank to be used as a nursery tank with water from the reef tank. A heater set at 25°C (78°F), a seeded sponge filter, and a few pieces of live rock for some cover completed the set up. Six days later I decided to try removing the eggs as I thought they might develop faster than freshwater fish. But I was wrong. They eggs had only developed to the point of having two eyes and a bit of a tail! Only two eggs fell out of its mouth so I decided again to let the fish carry the eggs for a few more days. I placed the eggs in an egg Hatcher (see Fins & Tales October '98) and hoped they would continue to grow in the hatcher.

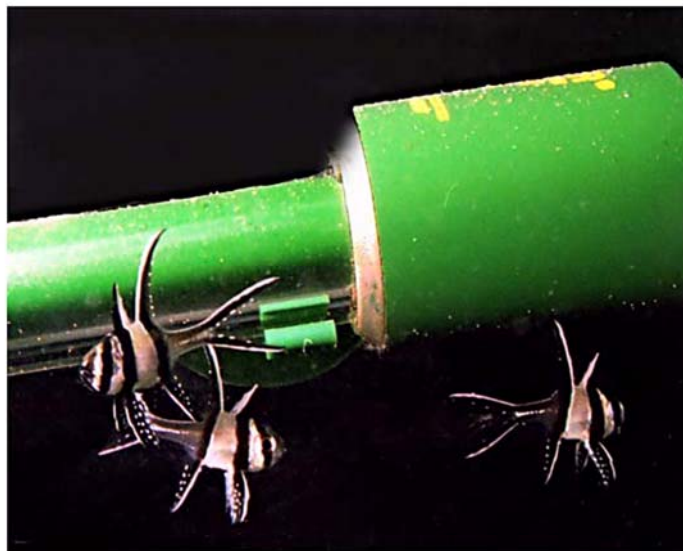
After another four days, I removed the adult and stripped him of all the remaining fry. There were nine more. They still had not entirely used all of the egg but they were well developed. The nine of them went into the hatcher with the previous two eggs and so I ended up with eleven viable fry. After another two days, I released all eleven into a 3-gallon tank that was equipped with the sponge filter and a 50-watt submersible heater. The adult was returned to the reef tank and was accepted by the remaining two Banggais.



1 week old Banggai fry The heater is a 75 watt Ebo-Jagger. (for size reference)
photo © by DAve Unruh

The fry were really cute. They were just like their parents except that they did not have any white spots on the body or fins. I fed them newly hatched brine shrimp. Every other day I let the brine shrimp swim in water with Dick Boyd's "Vita Chem" and the water and shrimp were added to the tank in the hopes of supplying additional vitamins to the fry. They were fed the live baby brine shrimp twice a day for the next month. After this I began to give them finely crushed Tetra Bits in place of one of the brine shrimp feedings.

Water changes were done daily. At least 50% of the water was changed for the first two weeks. After this I performed a 50% water change every three days until the fry were two months old. After this point, they received weekly 50% water changes



Four week old Banggai fry. The heater is an Ebo-Jagger 75 watt heater (for size reference.) The fry have grown a lot in 3 weeks.
photo © by DAve Unruh

On this schedule the fry grew quite rapidly and after three months they were approximately 2 cm in length. The parents spawned again after 8 weeks but I did not remove the fish this time. None of the fry survived from this spawn. I think the male did not carry the eggs to full term. They spawned several times after this & each time I removed the male, stripped the fry & raised them apart from the parents.

The Banggai Cardinal is a fish that should definitely be considered if you have a marine tank or are thinking of setting one up. It is still a bit on the expensive side but it is certainly worth the investment.

Editor's note – This article was first printed in the Kitchener-Waterloo Newsletter "Fins & Tales", in November 1998. It was originally printed without the photos. The photos were shot on film & have been scanned to present them as a DNG (Digital negative).
This article is printed here with the author's permission



Back in the Oceanographic, three angled tanks displayed invertebrates in much better fashion than trying to examine them in a normal aquarium. Good job with that! They also mixed shellfish, anemones and inverts throughout their tanks where possible, giving each a natural feel. Curiously some of the marine tanks also had what appeared to be Jungle Vallisneria thrown in. TMA has kept these plants successfully in brackish water tanks before but marine seems a stretch.

There were flaws of course; TMA isn't fond of specimen jar displays of preserved fishes and Peacock Cichlids made a curious addition to any oceanographic exhibition. These issues aside we spent a memorable few hours and that's what counts. We had finally found fishes in the desert. TMA ■

All photos by *Rein Breitmaier*

Wanted ☺

Club members for newsletter profiles! I am still fairly new, so I don't know all of you yet. It would be a big help if anyone willing to have his or her profile done would contact me. You do not need to be an expert fish keeper just interested in fish.

Please contact me at: pjdanyluck@sympatico.ca or 905-562-3290

SCAT ADS SCAT ADS SCAT ADS SCAT ADS SCAT ADS SCAT ADS

Wanted – Jungle val plants (wide variety) that are over 24" tall.

Contact DAve Unruh @ dunruh@cogeco.ca or 905 684-9860

There are no changes to “What SCAAS Members Are Keeping” If you would like to add your name to the list , or make changes to your list please contact Pam Danyluck at pjdanyluck@sympatico.ca or 905-562-3290.

Presidents Message February 2009

Last month we had the final installment of the saltwater program we first saw 2 months earlier. There are many newer programs like this one that we will be looking at for future program. While the tried and true programs of the past are still and likely always will be valuable for the hands on proven time tested information it's nice to see what's new and test the new ideas we see. If we weren't looking for these new fangled methods then likely Angelfish would still be impossible to breed.

This month we need to look at one of the potential risks our hobby creates to our own environment. The introduction of non native species, both plants and fish, to our local environment can cause havoc for our already pressured native species. This month's speaker Emily Funnell's presentation is a powerpoint and question and answer of course, on invasive species with an emphasis on the aquarium and water garden trades. Emily is Program Coordinator, Ontario Stream, Aurora. The program is presented from the standpoint of species of concern to the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and pathways of invasive species spread, with an emphasis on the aquarium and water garden trades. This is a very generous gesture for someone to spend their time and visit our club. I am looking forward to this as I hope we will have a great turnout and good discussion

We are fast approaching our auction and have a list of items to be completed. We will be looking for volunteers to cover many of these activities. Most of the task can be done for a short period so if you are coming to the auction you can easily lend a hand. It's always a great day for everyone who participates and is a great way to get to know other members, even members from other clubs and is attended by huge collective of hobby knowledge. It's also a great way to break the ice and feel even more involved with the club and the hobby. More on this later but keep in mind May 2nd.

May your pets be wet and your pumps running

Ken

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Nutrafin Max Plus is a unique 3 in 1 fish food that contains a combination of freeze dried bits, flakes and multi-vitamins. Only the highest quality ingredients are declared special enough to be called "PLUS."

100% Satisfaction Guaranteed!

Nutrafin Max Plus

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