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The

SCAT



In This Issue:

Zebra Plecos

Archocentrus spilurus

Rainbowfish - Glossolepis

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, and 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 May 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 presented by Catharine Salmon on Bettas

2010 – 20011 Executive

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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 2 cm long Badis badis
Photo © by DAVE Unruh

Jar Show

**The fish of the month is :
Dwarf Cichlids**

President's Message

Only one month left for another year before the summer. Hope everyone had a very Happy Easter. Last months speaker Sue gave us a very informative talk on African dwarf frogs.

The Brantford CAOAC convention is in May on the long weekend it is worth while going to either for one day or for the whole weekend. There will be lots going on with speakers and ongoing events. This is a great place to meet people interested in the same hobby and to learn new things of what is up and coming.

May is our month for nominations for the executive of our club everyone is welcome to nominate whom they would like to see on the executive. Tom Bridges will be in charge of this and will ask the members at our May meeting. The voting will take place at our June meeting

Pam, Heather and Bob will be our reps for the C.A.R.E.S. program. If you have any questions they will be very happy to answer them and give you all the information you need.

Our show and auction will be on October 23rd. We will need all the help we can get on this. St.Catharines had the biggest show last year of all the clubs and we had a lot of help from Hamilton and Brantford members. We need everyone s help to get sponsors and volunteers so the show an auction will be a success.

The presentation this month is on Bettas by Catherine Salmon .Don't forget the food bank there are a lot of needy people out there with the hard times we are having.

Tom Hillier, President



Jar Show results for the past 3 months

Feb. 11

Fish of the Month – Sharks & Loaches
1 & 2 Joe Krawchuk 6 + 5 pts.
Best in Show – Joe Krawchuk – DoJo Loach

Mar. 11

Fish of the Month – Plants
1 & 2 – Tom Hillier – 6 + 5 pts
3 – Ken Brady – 4 pts
Open Class – Senior
1 & 2 – Tom Hillier – 6 + 5 pts
Best in Show – Tom Hillier (Anubias)



Apr. 11

Fish of the Month – Angels & Discus
No entries

Senior Open

Tom Hillier – 6 pts
Ken Brady – 5 pts
Tom Hillier – 4 pts

Other – Ken Brady – 1 pt

Best in Show – Tom Hillier – Blue/Red Betta
Pat Shriner, Jar Show Chairman

Editors Notes

This month we are continuing with the Rainbowfish feature. When I was going through Durham's newsletter the article on the Zebra Pleco caught my eye & since this is a favorite fish of mine I decided to print it. I remember being at a Brampton auction many years ago where the zebra pleco was donated to their event. I just had to have it & I paid a very high price. Since then I have had many specimens, but I was never able to breed it. I might be calling Doug White to see about a few of these beautiful small fish!

Minutes of April 4, 2011

Meeting commenced at 7.35 pm.

President Tom Hillier

- Welcomed Guests Margaret and Chris Dent as well as speaker Sue Buchan
- Margaret and Chris became new members at this meeting
- Club News:
 - o Mops is willing to give us a club day with 10% off and possibly including internet orders.
 - o The cost of sponsorship for one of our show classes will be \$25
 - o We need help from our member in getting donations
 - o Members may sponsor a class individually or as a group
 - o We have already started a sponsor list and will have on hand at the meetings
 - o Still selling CAOAC Convention tickets as well as tank raffle tickets
 - o Last meeting of the month (June) will start at 6:30 for a BBQ. Members are asked to bring salads, desserts etc to share.
 - o We will have an election if needed, & awards will be presented.
 - o CARES support team has been set up, Heather, Bob and Pam have registration forms ready to go
 - o Highlights of last executive meeting were read.

- Upcoming events:

April 10, 2011 Durham Regional Aquarium Society **SHOW & AUCTION**

April 16, 2011 Sarnia Aquarium Society **AUCTION ONLY**

May 20 - 23, 2011 CAOAC Annual Convention hosted by the Brant Aquarium Society
Best Western Brant Park Inn, Brantford ON Canada **SHOW & AUCTION**
Early Bird Tickets by May 1st, 2011 \$80 at the door \$100
•Pet Store Poker Run
•Casino Night & Auction

- Karaoke
- Banquet & Award Dinner
- Fish Show
- Public Auction Monday

Secretary's minutes from April meeting can be found in May Scat

Bob Hayslip was absent, so no treasurer's report this month.

Tom Bridges presented Breeders Award to:
Dave Furness x 2

Joe Krawchuk had no Horticultural Awards to present this month

Our program this meeting was on Frogs presented by Sue Buchan, who is a member of the Hamilton club. Sue gave a very enjoyable and informative talk on her favorite aquatic creatures. The honorarium given to Sue was donated to AARG as well as proceeds from items enter by her in the auction.

Patrick Shriner presented the Jar Show awards to:
Tom Hillier and Ken Brady
Door Prize
Regular Evening Raffle
Evening Auction

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:00 pm

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Archocentrus Spilurus

The Blue- Eyed Cichlid

by *DAve Furness* All photos by *Dave Furness*

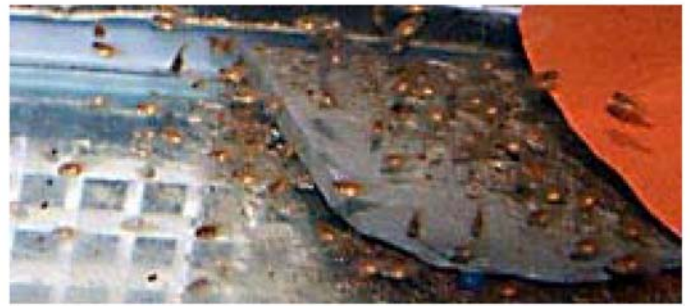
This is a very nice little cichlid which grows from 4 to 5 inches, with the male sometimes growing to 7 inches. This peaceful cichlid hails from Central America, - Guatemala, Honduras, & Belize.



The recommended PH of the water is 6.7 to 7.6 , the hardness (dgh) is between 7 and 21, and the recommended water temperature should be between 69 and 77 degrees Fahrenheit .



Sexing of the Blue-eyed cichlid is not too difficult to tell. Males are larger and have a more extended and pointed finnage . Feeding this fish, did not seem to be very difficult. It happily accepted flake food and pellets. They also like some vegetable matter as well. As for treats, or conditioning, you can feed them some blood worms and brine shrimp.



I had purchased a pair of Spilurus at our show and action, and took them home and put them in a long 20 gallon aquarium. The tank was furnished with some slate and ceramic dishes to form some caves, for this fish is a cave spawner, and it was filtered with an outside filter. The PH was 7.6 and the water temperature was 76 degrees Fahrenheit.



The pair laid their eggs in one of the caves that was prepared for them. The female tends to the eggs which can number up to 300. After the eggs have hatched, the fry are large enough to start off on newly hatched brine shrimp. For the first two to four days, I fed them some micro worms as well.



Year of the Rainbowfish



Glossolepis multisquamatus

Photo by Gunther Schmida

A monthly column about Rainbowfish by Derek Tustin
Reprinted from the April 2011 issue of “Tank Talk”,
the newsletter of the Durham Region Aquarium Society

Glossolepis

As mentioned last month, the *Melanotaenia*, *Chilatherina* and *Glossolepis* families are all closely related with the key difference to telling them apart being body shape. *Chilatherina* are very streamlined, *Melanotaenia* tend to be in the middle, and *Glossolepis* are rounded.

Looking at *Glossolepis* in regards to the Latin meaning of the genera name, well if “Lip Silverside” (*Chilatherina*) makes sense but sounds unwieldy, then the Latin translation for *Glossolepis*, literally “Tongue Scale” (glosso = Latin “tongue”, lepis = Latin “scale”), is both unwieldy and makes no sense. Seriously, while I have never had the chance to look at a *Glossolepis*'s tongue and therefore can't confirm if it is scaly, I think there may have been a better genus name.

About Glossolepis

The *Glossolepis* family consists of nine species, once again all from northeastern New Guinea. While they can come from both riverine and lacustrine habitats, in all cases they are found in still waters, either lakes or calm areas of rivers. *Glossolepis incisus* was the first species described by Max Weber back in 1908.

As mentioned last month, *Glossolepis* are more rounded than either *Melanotaenia* or *Chilatherina*, and the lower jaw tends to protrude past the upper lip. Another interesting characteristic of some *Glossolepis* species is the long and sometimes ragged dorsal and anal fins.

Of the nine known *Glossolepis* species, six are available in the hobby. Five of them, *Glossolepis doryti*, *G. kabia*, *G. multisquamata*, *G. pseudoincisus* and *G. wanamensis* should be considered very rare, and one, *G. incisus* can be considered to be common.



Glossolepis incisus

Photo by Hristo Hristov

Chilatherina & C.A.R.E.S

Three species of *Glossolepis* appear on the C.A.R.E.S. Conservation Priority Species At Risk List. They, along with their status, are;

- *Glossolepis doryti* – Critically Endangered
- *Glossolepis incisus* – Vulnerable
- *Glossolepis wanamensis* – Critically Endangered, At Risk In Nature

To refresh;

- Vulnerable means “(a) species facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium term future.”
- Critically Endangered means a “species facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future.”



Glossolepis dorityi

Photo by Gerald Allen

fish, be sure of the provenance and that you obtained your stock from a reputable breeder. (Jeff Burch in London, Ontario, is known to be keeping this species and they are a pure strain. Unfortunately his school is not currently breeding and he has no stock to sell.)

Personal Experience

I haven't kept many species of *Glossolepis*. I did once spend over \$100.00 on three fish that were being sold as *Glossolepis wanamensis*. Unfortunately, when I sought confirmation of identification on the two Rainbowfish boards I participate too, I was quickly told that they were the above mentioned *G. wanamensis* x *G. multisquamata* hybrid. Also, I didn't leave them in my quarantine tank long enough and after placing them in my main tank, I lost four beautiful adult *Melanotaenia boesemani*. You can ask my wife, but the day that I lost those fish, I cried. So I learnt two very important lessons. Be sure of what you are buying before you buy it, and use a quarantine tank properly.

Also, I recently came into possession of some rather unique *Glossolepis*. The Big Al's in Whitby, Ontario recently received a shipment of six albino *Glossolepis* in error, and before the error was rectified, I managed to acquire them. As they are albino, there is no way to identify the species, although I believe them to be *Glossolepis pseudoincus*. It appears (based on finnage) I have four males and two females. It is my hope that I can breed them. I'm working on it now, and plan on writing an article on these strange but attractive fish in October.

Up Next...

Back in January, I informed that there are two families of Rainbowfish, one (*Melanotaeniidae*) with seven genera, and the other (*Pseudomugilidae*) with three genera.

To refresh, the two families with their genera are

- Melanotaeniidae
- Cairnsichthys* (1 species)
- Chilatherina* (10 species)
- Glossolepis* (9 species)
- Iriatherina* (1 species)
- Melanotaenia* (52 species)
- Pelangia* (1 species)
- Rhadinocentrus* (1 species)

- Pseudomugilidae
- Kiunga* (2 species)
- Pseudomugil* (15 species)
- Scaturiginichthys* (1 species)



Glossolepis wanamensis

Photo by Neil Armstrong

As you can see, there are 93 different species of Rainbowfish spread amongst 10 genera. In addressing *Melanotaenia* (February), *Chilatherina* (March), and *Glossolepis*, we have looked at the three genera containing 71 of the species. The remaining 22 species are in seven different genera under two families, and we will take a brief look at them next month.

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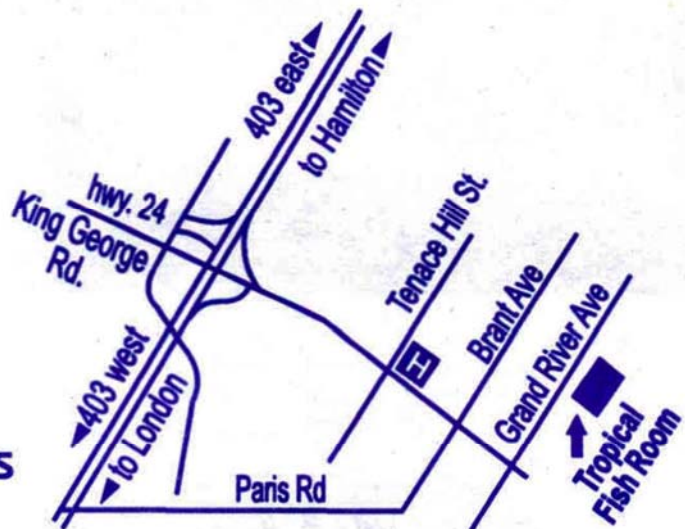
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Hypancistrus zebra L046

The Famous Zebra Pleco

Text by Doug White & *Derek P.S. Tustin*, Photos by Klaus Steinhaus

“There’s No End To The Things You Might Know, Depending How Far Beyond Zebra You Go”

Derek – The quote that starts this article is from the esteemed Dr. Seuss. We’ve all probably read him at one time, either by ourselves when we were younger, or to our children. It’s interesting, because I went looking for quotes about the zebra pleco (*Hypancistrus zebra*) or zebras in general and there weren’t that many out there. But the more I reflected on the quotation, the more I realized that in relation to Doug White and the zebra pleco, it is absolutely true that “There’s No End To The Things You Might Know, Depending How Far Beyond Zebra You Go.”



Just as the letter “z” is the last letter of the alphabet, and just as “zebra” is indeed one of the last animals listed in the dictionary, so is the zebra pleco the pinnacle of common fish keeping for many aquarists. Beyond that, once the care, keeping, and most importantly breeding of the zebra pleco has been mastered, there is indeed no end to the things you can master, and Doug White is an example of this.

I’m not really sure why I’m writing this article in conjunction with Doug White. The zebra pleco, while one of my personal “golden grails”, has been mastered by him. This is his story, his adventure, his accomplishment. I had the opportunity to sit with Doug over three hours late in February 2011 and listen while he shared his story with me. I’m writing it down, but the words are his.

Doug’s Story:

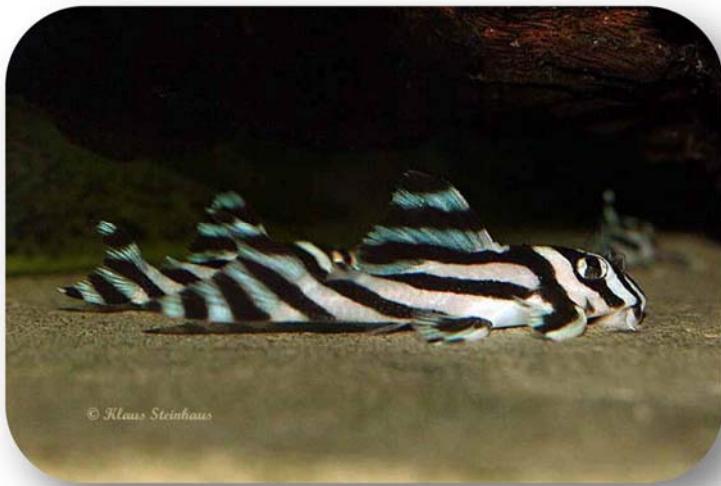
Many of you will remember the late Jim Brown, who was probably one of the most successful and involved members that the Durham Region Aquarium Society has ever had. While many knew and respected him, he held a special place in my life. To me, he was a big brother, both in the aquarium hobby and in life. I was proud to count him as a close friend.

One of the last aquatic endeavors that Jim was working on prior to his passing was an attempt to breed *Hypancistrus zebra*, the zebra pleco. Unfortunately he never realized his goal prior to his passing, and in his memory I set out to breed this exotic species.

Jim had made the breeding of the zebra pleco one of serious goals. Like his other endeavours in the hobby, he was relentless in his pursuit. When he first started his attempt, which would have been in the late 1990’s / early 2000’s, there weren’t many places where zebra plecos could be acquired. However, *That Fish Place* in Tonawanda, New York began to acquire stock. Over the course of several trips there, Jim acquired eight fish.



Jim Brown



After Jim's untimely passing, DRAS held a memorial auction. As part, the eight zebra plecos he had were up for sale. I won't go into the details, but Kevin and Annette Omura acquired four fish, and I acquired the other four. A couple of years passed and neither Kevin and Annette nor myself were having any success in getting them to breed. Eventually Kevin and Annette agreed to sell me their four fish, and Jim's original school of eight was reunited.

I went looking for more fish, and eventually ended up purchasing a group of eleven on Aquabid. I'm not going to go into the specific amounts that I have paid for the fish, but I think it should be understood that at their peak of rarity, people were selling these fish at \$100 per inch. Therefore, a single 3" sub-adult (about three years of age) would sell for \$300.00. Prices have

dropped in recent years. In the fall of 2010 Lucky's Aquarium in Markham, Ontario were selling 3" fish at \$185.00 each. Still pricey, but nowhere near the prices they once were.

Soon after my acquisition of the fish from Kevin and Annette, and soon after my obtaining the eleven fish from Aquabid, they started breeding for me. It took me a long period of trial and error, and the realization that they took a long time to reach sexual maturity, but in the end I accomplished breeding the zebra pleco in honour of my friend, Jim Brown. As the final step, and again in his honour, I'm going to share what I know about them.

Introduction:

Sometime in the late 1980's pictures of a new pleco, a striking black and white striped one began to appear in various publications. This caught the interest of the aquatic community, and soon these beautiful fish, commonly nick-named the zebra pleco, began to appear in various stores. Unfortunately, the price was incredibly expensive. After several years more began to be imported, and the price correspondingly dropped.

However, this wasn't necessarily a good thing. It was soon found that the zebra pleco, along with other *Hypancistrus* species, were being over-caught, resulting in severe decreases in native populations. In response the Brazilian government banned the export of all *Hypancistrus* species. This resulted in saving native populations, but also resulted in a shortage in the aquarium hobby along with an increase in price. However, even with the actions of the Brazilian government, the zebra pleco remains at risk. As with progress in all countries, Brazil has undertaken various infrastructure projects, one of which is the proposed construction of the Belo Monte Dam. If completed, and if no corrective actions are taken, the dam could result in the drying out of the entire known distribution range of the *Hypancistrus zebra*.

Derek – You know me, I love my research. Wikipedia actually has a rather lengthy article on the Belo Monte Dam, and I think one part is of particular interest to us as aquarists:

*"The fish fauna of the Xingu river is extremely rich with an estimated 600 fish species and a high degree of endemism, with many species found nowhere else in the world. The area either dried out or drowned by the dam spans the entire known world distribution of a number of species, e.g. the Zebra Pleco (*Hypancistrus zebra*), the Sunshine Pleco (*Scobinancistrus aureatus*), the Slender Dwarf Pike Cichlid (*Teleocichla centisquama*), the plant-eating piranha *Ossubtus xinguense* and the Xingu Dart-Poison frog (*Allobates crombiei*). There has been no assessment of how the dam will impact these unique species."*



Latin Name

As mentioned *Hypancistrus zebra* was first discovered in the late 1980's. At the time it was given the provisional L-Number of L046, with a variation being given the name L098. In 1991 Dr. Issac J.H. Isbrucker and Dr. Han Nijssen, both of the Zoological Museum in Amsterdam, determined that the zebra pleco differed strongly from all other known species of loricariids. As such, they determined that it required a new genus, and accordingly erected the genus *Hypancistrus*, with the *Hypancistrus zebra* being the first described species.

Derek – *Isn't it amazing how much changed in twenty years? Planetcatfish.com currently lists six described Hypancistrus species, as well as thirty-one Hypancistrus species only identified by L-Number.*

As Latin names go, the “zebra” part makes sense, but the other part, “*Hypancistrus*”, isn't quite as evident. “Hypo” is derived from ancient Greek and means “less than”, and “ancistrus” is from the Latin for “reduced number of teeth”. With the diet of the zebra pleco (more on this later) the reduced number of teeth makes sense, and saying that they have even fewer teeth than an *Ancistrus* species also makes sense.

Native Habitat

The Xingu River (properly called the Rio Xingu and pronounced “Shin-goo”) is a tributary of the Amazon River in Brazil. Intensive European exploration of this river began around 1884, and a section of the river located in the Brazilian state of Para about one hour downstream from the town of Altamira, is the only known natural habitat of *Hypancistrus zebra*.

Rio Xingu is a river of clear water with few nutrients and little sedimentation. As a result the river is exceedingly clear. The riverbed consists mostly of rocks and stones of volcanic origins, many of which are honeycombed with holes and crevices, and a covering of sand between the rocks.

Derek – *Few nutrients = few plants. No wonder I know so little about it...*



General Description

As both their scientific and common names imply, these fish are white based with bold black lateral stripes – like a zebra. The dorsal fin is actually rather high, and the pectoral fins have well defined and developed rays.

While the colouration is actually very striking by itself, it can also be used to determine the health and well being of the fish. If the white sections are bright, and the black stripes are dark, the fish is healthy. Another indicator of health will be a slight blue tinge, especially in the dorsal fin. If the white sections of the fish show any indication of red, then the fish is stressed and steps should be taken immediately to determine the cause.

Gender Identification

Males:

- First pectoral ray is thicker
- First pectoral ray will develop spine-like odontodes when in breeding condition
- Broader head when observed from above

Females:

- First pectoral ray is thinner
- Rounder head when observed from above
- Pectoral fins are more of a crescent shape



One of the key factors that was unknown during everyone's initial attempts to breed *Hypancistrus zebra* is that they are not sexually mature until they are about four years old. The fact that there were so many juveniles and so many mature specimens available in the hobby is why so many people were becoming frustrated in their breeding attempts.



Care

People can and do keep zebra plecos as solitary specimens. However, I strongly recommend against this. I have one that I acquired at the Durham Region Aquarium Society Annual Auction two years ago, and it tends to be a more solitary individual than those that were raised in a group setting. A group of three (one male and two females) is acceptable, but ideally you should keep a minimum of two males and four females. Females should always outnumber the males, who can be quite aggressive and territorial.

I have two tanks devoted to *Hypancistrus zebra*; a 100 gallon tank, and a 110 gallon tank. I personally use Eheim canister filters (with a spray bar attachment sending the water longitudinally along the tank) and Jager 250 watt heaters. Both tanks are glass covered, and I maintain a twelve hour photoperiod. I change 20% of the water every six weeks and only use reverse osmosis (r/o) water. I top up with r/o water as required.

Water Conditions

Maintenance temperature = 28° – 31° Celsius (82° – 89° Fahrenheit)

Breeding temperature trigger = 29.8° Celsius (85.7° Fahrenheit)

pH = 6.4 – 6.8

Water Movement

In the zebra pleco's native habitat the water is deep and fast flowing, but there is not a heavy current. I believe that a high level of oxygenation is necessary, so you do need surface agitation or an air-stone. As mentioned, I have a spray bar placed at one end of the tank sending the water along the length of the tank, and this seems to satisfy both the water movement they appreciate as well as the dispersal of both food and oxygen along the entire length of the tank.

Tank Decorations

Zebra plecos are very shy and retiring fish. It is not uncommon that when you enter a room they will dart for hiding places. As such, it is extremely important that you provide areas where they can seek shelter. As mentioned, the Rio Xingu riverbed is a mixture of rocks of various sizes, many of volcanic origins, with sand spread between them. This is actually very easy to replicate in the aquarium. I use a mixture of slate caves, ceramic caves, and slate "shelves" to provide hiding places. The ceramic caves are used for breeding, but the slate shelves, which essentially are pieces of slate 30 centimetres by 30 centimetres (slightly larger in some instances), placed on top of other slate to provide shallow caves above the substrate. My substrate is aquarium sand.



One thing that should be noted is that the openings to all caves should be perpendicular to the water flow. The zebra pleco does not like water flowing into the cave.

Driftwood decorations are optional and do no damage to the zebra pleco.

As I will explain when I examine the diet of the zebra pleco, they do not eat much algae and do not eat plants. Therefore it is completely acceptable (but not required) to have plants in the tank.

Suitable Tank Mates

Some people keep zebra plecos in a community tank. However, as they do not compete well for food, especially with faster or aggressive tank mates, I highly recommend that they be kept in a species tank. This seems to significantly reduce stress, and is essential if you want to ensure that there is no predation of offspring.

Feeding

One of the common misconceptions of the zebra pleco (and indeed of some other plecos as well) is that they are algae eaters. While classified as an omnivore, the zebra pleco actually eats more meat than vegetation. If you examine the mouth, you will find that it is actually very small with few teeth. An algae eater requires a larger mouth in order to rasp surfaces of algae, and requires many more teeth to accomplish it.

My feeding regime includes frozen rotifer, frozen daphnia and frozen bloodworms. I do caution that I have experienced small fry choking on bloodworms, but this was a rare occurrence. I should also mention that zebra plecos apparently also relish snails. I have placed both Malaysian trumpet snails (*Melanoides tuberculata*) and ramshorn snails in my zebra pleco tanks, and in a very short period of time they were completely eradicated.

The zebra pleco tends to eat at night and I feed mine then, but with a regimented feeding schedule, they will come out to eat when the lights are on.

Finally, zebra plecos do not roam about the aquarium searching for food. As mentioned, they are very territorial, and as a result wait for food to come into their general vicinity prior to eating. This is another reason that a water flow that pushes the water past the caves is extremely important.

Breeding Conditions

Everything I've written so far can be applied to any person keeping zebra plecos in general. However, the ultimate goal with these fish is to breed them in order to ensure their survival as a species. There are various sources that will provide information on breeding the zebra pleco, and some of it is contradictory to what I'm about to share. All I can say is that I've been fairly successful in breeding them and have paid very close attention to the circumstances and environmental factors surrounding the numerous breedings.

As mentioned, the caves for the zebra pleco must be perpendicular to the water current in the tank. If it is not, the caves will not be used.

I gave a brief description of slate shelves earlier, and mentioned both slate caves as well as ceramic caves. The slate shelves will not be used for breeding as they are too large and roomy. They are meant solely to provide havens for the general population in a tank.



The other two types of caves are slate caves (basically a slate box silicone together with an opening on one end) and the ceramic caves. The ceramic caves, and which I usually refer to as “bell cones”, are actually ceramic lighthouse aquarium ornaments. When turned on their side, they form an “A” shaped box that narrows towards the enclosed end and is such in height that the male can fully extend his dorsal fin. There are two versions of these, one made entirely out of ceramic and one made with a rubber stopper at the apex. For some reason (I personally suspect an aversion to something in the rubber), my zebra plecos refuse to breed in those with the rubber stopper.



While others have recorded breedings in slate caves, the bell cone is the cave in which all my zebra plecos have bred, and after watching how they actually do so, it is understandable why this is their preferred location. While they will breed in other locations, they will actually search out the most suitable locations, and use that to the exclusion of all else.

If you populate the tank as I recommend, that is with several males and at least two females per male, you will find that the males will establish a hierarchy. One male will become dominant, and he will select a preferred breeding cave. One of the remaining males will become the prime sub-dominant male and will select the next best breeding location, and so on. If enough space is provided, multiple breeding territories will be established.

The first step to initiate breeding is to establish and maintain a temperature of exactly 29.8° Celsius or 85.7° Fahrenheit. Once this temperature is maintained the females will begin to show an interest in commencing breeding.

As mentioned, the males will have established territories including their preferred breeding caves. At this point, the male will usually be found with-in his cave. The female will approach the entrance to the cave and the male will entice the female to enter the cave, where he then traps her. This captivity can last anywhere from one to three days. During that period the female will lay several eggs and the male will fertilize them.

Once the eggs are laid, the male will then evict the female from the breeding cave and begin to care for the eggs himself.



The eggs will usually take about seven to eight days to hatch. It is unusual to see the fry at this stage, but for the first three days, they will still have their yolk sac visible. The males will guard the fry, keeping them in the cave for most of the time. Once the yolk sac is fully absorbed, the male will begin to escort the fry out at night to feed. The fry will still be extremely small at this point, and frozen or live brine shrimp are required. After feeding, the male will herd the fry back into the cave where he continues his care.

The male will continue his guardianship of the fry for anywhere between six and eight weeks. At this point they will have reached about 2 cm or ¾” in length, and will now be allowed to leave the cave permanently.

I haven't seen mention of this anywhere else, but in my experience I believe that the fry

recognize their mother, who then forms nursery for the fry. Multiple generations will gather around the eldest females where they seem to be cared for.

The average number of eggs in a clutch will be around fifteen eggs, but I have also noted that there is a development cycle in the females spawning. I have found that the first clutch of eggs will usually be between six and eight, the next clutch will be slightly larger (around nine to twelve), and the third clutch will be largest with around fifteen eggs. After the third clutch the number of eggs will decrease slightly and remain in that range.

I have also noted that it is imperative that the fry remain in a tank with their parents. I am unsure of why these needs to be, but believe that there may be some chemical released by one or both of the parents that is essential for the fry development.

One time I separated a clutch of eight fry from the parents and into a fully cycled tank. Over a four day period each and every fry died. Prior to death there were no symptoms of disease or distress, but still they all died. I have not experienced this sudden death when the fry remain in the same tank with the parents.

As mentioned, the fry will reach a size of about 2 cm or ¾" when they leave the cave. Around one year of age, they will be around 4 cm or 1½". They will grow steadily until they reach 10 cm or 4" at four years of age.

Physical deformities are rare, but increasing in the breeding community at large. I believe that the most likely culprit is inbreeding, so it is essential that there be some exchange of stock amongst various breeders to ensure as diverse a genetic pool as possible.

Conclusion

My initial intention when I started working with *Hypancistrus zebra* was to honour Jim Brown by successfully completing a breeding program that he initiated. While I have succeeded in his honour, I have come to have a personal passion for these fish as well. They are a wonderful fish with gorgeous colouration and interesting group dynamics.

I've bred well over two hundred zebra plecos, my eldest male has fathered at least ten clutches and I have sold a small portion to ensure the genetic diversity of others breeding stock. I'm careful who they go to, and refuse to ship the fish so they must be picked up from me. I've invested a significant amount of money into obtaining and propagating this species, but it is not about a return on investment. It is about their endangered status in the wild and the very real possibility that their native habitat will be destroyed. The fact that they have such small clutches of eggs and the fact that they take so long to mature are obstacles that stand in the way of rapid breeding of the beautiful fish, but now that we have identified them, we can do our part to ensure that they do not become extinct.

I hope you've come to appreciate the zebra pleco even a bit as much as me. If you want to talk about them I encourage you to come talk to me.

Species Profile:

Latin Name: *Hypancistrus zebra*

Common Name(s): Zebra Pleco
L046
L098 (color morph)

Size: 100 mm (4")

Temperature: 28°C – 31°C (82°F – 89°F)

PH: 6.4 – 6.8

Diet: Omnivorous, with a propensity for meat, Bloodworm, brine shrimp, daphnia, rotifers

Distribution: Rio Xingu (a tributary of the Amazon River)

Source:
www.zebrapleco.com



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with Pat and Tom
May, 2011



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

▶ ... in the Potomac Valley Aquarium Society's Newsletter 'Delta Tale' - Spring, 2011

Lots of good reading and photographs! Contact me and I'll fwd. the attachment to you.

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

April, 2011

*The Return to Badis Badis by Charles Drew

*Heterandria Formosa by Jeff Fisher

*The Peaceful Betta, the Betta imbellis by Scott Buckel

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

April, 2011

*Pseudotropheus sp. Black Acei by Peter Melady

*A Method for Handling Excess Numbers of White Worms (Enchytraeus albidus) by Wayne Cole

*Planted Aquariums by Ed Bosker



Most clubs' newsletters are on their web sites. If they are not available to you, let me know and I'll print you a hard copy of the article you want to read.

Pat



JAR SHOW RULES AND REGULATIONS

will be on display at the jar show table at each meeting



BAP ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS presented at the April meeting



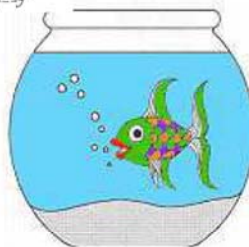
Dave Furness

Pterophyllum scalare – Angel fish.... 10 pts.

Carassius auratus auratus – Goldfish. 15

Congratulations!

Tom Bridges



Give your fish a change of pace...bring them to a jar show and get in line for a trophy!



UPCOMING EVENTS TO OCTOBER 2011



May 20 – 23, 2011, CAOAC annual convention hosted by the Brant Aquarium Society at the Best Western Brant Park Inn, Brantford, ON, Canada
SHOW AND AUCTION

June 26, 2011 CAOAC meetings and President's BBQ:

11:00 a.m. CAOAC Executive meeting in Waterdown, ON

12:00 p.m. CAOAC General meeting in Waterdown, ON

September 18, 2011 CAOAC Meeting

11:00 a.m. CAOAC Executive meeting in Waterdown, ON

12:00 a.m. CAOAC General meeting in Waterdown, ON

September 25, 2011 London Aquaria Society
SHOW & AUCTION

October 2, 2011 Hamilton & District Aquarium Society
SHOW AND AUCTION

October 23, 2011 St. Catharines & Area Aquarium Society
SHOW AND AUCTION

October 30, 2011 Kitchener Waterloo
SHOW AND AUCTION

Member Bio

by Heather Krawchuk

In the past couple of months our membership really started to grow and I am pleased to introduce two new members. Before I do, this is a great time to remind members to tell your friends about the club and to encourage them to come see what we're all about (don't forget your canned goods)!

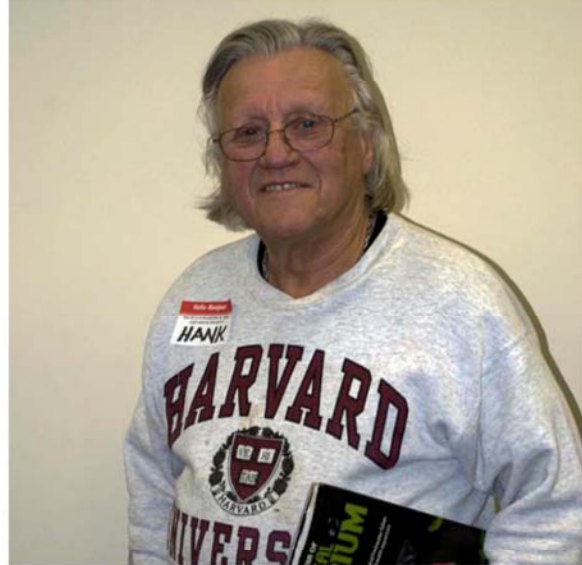
Our first new member is the quiet, yet very friendly, Adrienne. You can catch her crocheting beautiful squares before most meetings; make sure to say hello and ask her how the betta-breeding is going! She grew up in Thornhill and first developed her interest in keeping fish when she was about eight years old with fancy guppies.



At the moment she has three, ten gallon tanks and five, five gallon tanks containing yellow and cherry shrimp, gold killies, neons, juli corys and rock shrimp. She also has ten female and eight male bettas. Like most of us, Adrienne has plans to add even more tanks to her collection, possibly for rainbows or poison arrow frogs, or anything else that catches her eye.

Next we have Hank Makkreel who is originally from the Netherlands and who also took an interest in fish at a young age. At the moment, Hank only has one, one hundred and twenty-five gallon tank containing barbs and cichlids. While

he asserts that he has no future plans to add more tanks, I think we'll have to check back in with him in a few months and see if that has changed! Hank has been enjoying our meetings, but has noted that all of the aquatics in our auctions would only serve as dinner for his fish. He is very interested in meeting and talking to members who keep larger fish, such as cichlids.



Before presentations or during the break would be a great time to introduce yourselves to our two new members and possibly to help Hank out if you have larger fish. Welcome to the club Adrienne and Hank!

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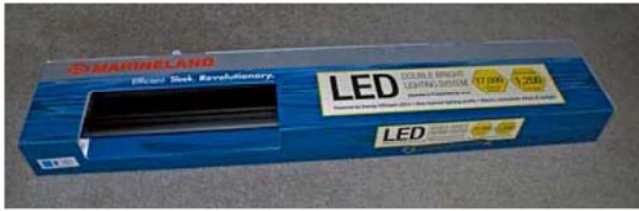
Marineland Double Bright LED

Lighting System

by *Dave Unruh*

Product review update: Six Months later

Refer back to the original article published in the October 2010 issue of The Scat.



After using the light for six months I have only a few observations to make.

The light has continued to give good color rendition – the only way to know for sure if the light color has shifted would be to measure with a color temperature meter (which I do not possess). The light output appears to be the same as it was 6 months ago, as measured with the same light meter I used before.

Plants continue to grow well, the Vallisneria spiralis continue to grow & reproduce at about the same rate, perhaps even faster than with the fluorescent lighting previously used. The Anubias barteri & nana are growing at about the same rate as with the fluorescent tubes. There were a few Cryptocorene nurii & they have hardly grown at all.

The algae problem has gotten worse – whether this is a result of the LED light, or just because the algae already was present & had a foothold before I changed to the LED fixture. I plan to take steps to try and eradicate the algae using SeaChem's Organic Carbon Source.

In closing I think the LED lights are having an overall positive effect on this planted aquarium. I will do another review after another 6 months.

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LIST OF SPEAKERS

**AT THE 2011 CAOAC CONVENTION
HOSTED BY THE BRANT AQUARIUM
SOCIETY**

**May20 – 23 at the Best Western Brant Park
Inn, Brantford**

Erik Bodrok
Breeding Oddballs
Cory Breeding Made Easy

Myron Roth
Myths About Aquarium Fish Health
Bacterial Disease in Aquarium Fish

Chuck Davis
Gizmos, Gadgets and Good Ideas
Collecting in South Florida

Laif DeMason
African Cichlid Farming in Florida

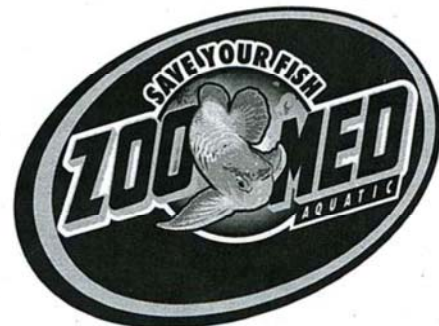
Eco Reefer
Coral Fragmentation Seminar

Anne-Marie Towell
IBC Management of Wild Bettas

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Sunday from 9:00 to 4:00.**

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schedule

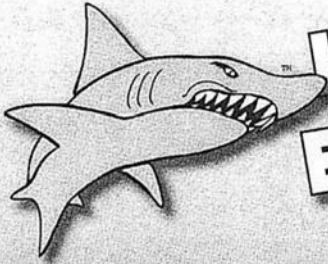




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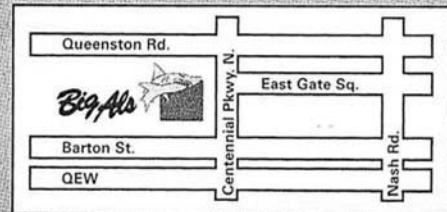
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