



Tank Topics

The Official Publication of
The Greater Akron Aquarium Society



February/March
2008

In this issue:

- *Christmas Party 2007*
- *Lamprologus brevis*
- *Poeciliopsis gracillis*



THE GREATER AKRON AQUARIUM SOCIETY

WHO ARE WE? We are a local group of aquatic enthusiasts. Formed in 1952, the Greater Akron Aquarium Society is a non-profit, non-commercial organization. Our membership ranges from the beginning hobbyist to the advanced aquarist with many years of experience. The goals of our club are to promote the care, study, breeding and exhibition of aquarium related aquatic life and to promote interest in the aquarium hobby.

MEETINGS: Our meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m. at the Mogadore Community/Senior Center, 3857 Mogadore Road, Mogadore, Ohio. It is located East of Route 532 across from McDonald's in the former post office building (see map on inside back cover) Visitors are always welcome, it costs absolutely nothing to attend a meeting and look us over.

MEMBERSHIP: The cost is only \$750 for adults, \$10 for a couple or a family (includes children under 10 years of age) and \$5.00 for a junior membership (10 to 17 years) Membership provides an opportunity to socialize with other that share your interests, a subscription to our bi-monthly magazine, library usage and more.

AGENDA: Our meeting agenda is simple and informal. The meeting will begin at 8:00 p.m. with a short business meeting. Immediately following is the program for the evening which usually lasts about 45 minutes. Our programs consist of a speaker, slide program, movie or perhaps a panel discussion always on a particular subject related to the hobby or various species of fish. Following the program is a short refreshment break. After which the winners of the Bowl Show are announced, the Breeder's Award Program fish are auctioned and tickets are drawn for the equipment and book raffles.

THE BOWL SHOW: Each month members can bring in fish for specific classes to compete for first, second and third place awards. The charge for each entry is only \$.25. Members also compete for annual awards by accumulating wins throughout the year.

BREEDER'S AWARD and HORTICULTURE AWARD PROGRAMS: members can receive recognition for spawning species of fish or propagating aquatic plants. All that is required is to turn in a minimum of six fry from the spawn that are between 30 and 90 days old. Members earn certificates for each species and can work towards plaques in different categories.

LIBRARY: At the library table are a number of books and other publications covering all areas of the aquarium hobby. Members may borrow the books for a month at a time. Also each month several books are raffled off.

EQUIPMENT RAFFLE: The raffle table has such items as tanks, fish food and aquarium accessories that are donated by national manufacturers, area dealers or purchased by the Society. Tickets may be purchased by anyone attending the meeting. Save your losing tickets for the Christmas Party raffle.

ANNUAL SHOW: The Ultra-Aqua show is held the first weekend of August at the Tallmadge community Center. This has become one of the largest all-species tropical fish shows in North America. It is an international gathering of hobbyists to display their fish in class competition, talk fish and to learn about the hobby from each other.

TANK TOPICS: is published on a bi-monthly basis for the members of the Greater Akron Aquarium Society. Articles and comments for this publication are welcome and encouraged. Such articles are to be submitted no later than the board meeting prior to publication. All articles may be reprinted as long as the author(s) and GAAS are given proper credit and two copies of the publication containing the reprint are sent to GAAS. Please send any correspondence regarding this publication to:

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This issue's cover: A male *Glossilepis wanamensis* rainbowfish taken by Wayne Toven.

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President's Message

Bud White



Well folks I hope your holidays were as enjoyable as mine were. A lot of people say they are glad they are over, but I for one would like for them to last a lot longer. I get to spend more time with the family and also with the fish.

When you read this it will be less than 30 days until the Spring auction, and we want you there to help support the club's activities. We always need runners as well as people to help setup. We will be setting up Saturday evening March 1, about 7 PM. So mark your calendar, get some items put together to bring to the auction and help out.

I want to thank our new board members for joining us. We have Bill and Linda Koleszar doing our refreshments. Bill told me he would fix me up with some Cornish game hens, if I let them do the refreshments. It was a really hard decision, but I said OH YEAH! We also have Paul and Meghan Naxer filling in the historian position. Jeff, the VP, was giving his report at the meeting and was saying we only had the historian position open and Paul raised his hand and said they would do the job.

THANK ALL OF YOU FOR JOINING US!

Also we have a new position being filled by Rom Mullens, it is Webmaster. Ron has been working on the web site and has made quite a few changes, plus updated it. If you have not looked at it lately, you should do so, <http://www.gaas-fish.net/>. Nice job Ron and thanks.

We will have the show classes decided on at this next board meeting and if there is any particular class you would like to sponsor, please let us know. The sooner we get these done the better.

If you missed the January meeting then you missed a very good talk from Christine on how she raises *Synodontis petricola*. She has much success at raising these fish and she spilled her guts and told us all how to do it. She even brought in several age groups to show the rate of growth, even had fry that were a few days old. Then she donated then tank setup and a pair of fish to the BAP auction. Nice job Christine. (Even if you would not let me ask questions!)

See you at the meeting, Bud.



Editor's Message

Dave Williamson

It sure seemed like it was taking for ever to get here, but Winter has really arrived. Now don't get me wrong, we've had a lot worse ones around here as far as snow and bad travel and I'm not complaining about that, but it's been so darn cold lately and I for one am about tired of it! I sometimes wish I was one of those folks who had the bucks to just pick up and go somewhere warm when the weather gets too nasty at home. But until I win the lottery, I guess that isn't too likely!

But anyway since we're all stuck here in the cold, we might just as well make the best of it and have a fish auction! March 2nd will be our Spring Auction (hopefully it will feel like Spring by then). And I hope to see you all there, someone has to buy all that stuff that shows up, it might as well be you! (OK, maybe just some of it, let's not get crazy or anything.) While we're on the subject of auctions, don't forget to check out the "Coming Events" calendar on page 11 of this issue and plan on checking some of them out, you never know what you'll find at an auction.

If you look in the table of contents, you'll notice that it is pretty much dominated by one member's submissions. Do you know why that is? He's the only one that's written anything for Tank Topics lately. Does that give any of you fine folks reading this any ideas? Good, I knew it would. You don't want me to resort to begging again, do you?

One thing I do want to mention before I forget it or run out of room here on my page is to welcome to new board members, Bill & Linda Koleszar, Paul & Meghan Naxer and Ron Mullens. It's always a good thing to get some new blood (and ideas, for that matter). It's been a while since we've had some new active members. That's the important difference; people can *join* an organization or they can *become involved* in an organization. Which do you want to be?

I'll see you at the meeting and the Spring Auction!

Bowl Show & Special Activities



Dan Frase

The year's off to a slow start - just five entries by two members. With all the new faces I saw at the last meeting, I know we can do better than that. Be sure to bring your Suckermouth Catfish, Swordtails and Characins (Tetras & relatives) to the next meeting - it's a great way to get an idea of how your fish would do in a show, and get tips on showing from the judges.

As far as Special Activities go, we have our Spring auction March 2 at the Tallmadge Community Center, and Spring collecting trip coming up. We also have a Spring field trip. We'll be going on a behind-the-scenes trip to Cleveland Zoo's Rainforest March 9th. More information will be in the next mailed flyer and at the auction.

We were also trying to determine what our Fall zoo trip will be - either Toledo Zoo aquarium, the Newport Aquarium (across the river from Cincinnati), or the new aquarium in Atlanta, GA (we can dream, can't we?). Please use the sign-up sheet at the next meeting to let us know if you have a preference. Thanks.

January Bowl Show:

Goldfish

--No Entries--

Guppies, Males

1st - Jeff Plazak

2nd - Jeff Plazak

1/2 Black AOC

Red

Minnows, Danios and Rasboras

1st - Wayne Toven

2nd - Wayne Toven

3rd - Wayne Toven

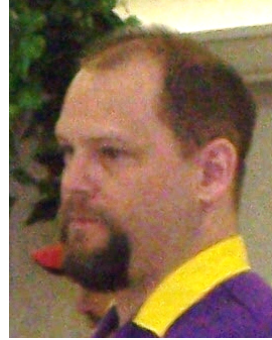
Danio sp. Orange fin

Microrasbora sp.

Danio danghila

Totals for the Year:

<u>Entrant</u>	<u>Total</u>
Wayne Toven	10
Jeff Plazak	8



How the Point System works:

1st - 4 points

2nd - 2 points

3rd - 1 point

1 point per entry, maximum 10 points per class

Remainder of 2008 Bowl Show Schedule

February:

Suckermouth Catfish, Swordtails, Characins

March:

Barbs, Mollies, Corydoras Aspidoras & Brochis

April:

Female Guppies, Platies, Aquatic Invertebrates

May:

Goodeids, Rift Lake Cichlids, Aquatic Plants

June:

Native Fish, Rainbowfish, Male Bettas

July:

Synodontis Catfish, Angelfish & Discus, Killifish

August:

All Other New World Cichlids, Amphibians, Bog Plants

September:

Photography, Gouramis & Anabantoids, Sharks & Loaches

October:

Arts & Crafts, Marine Fish, All Other Old World Cichlids

November:

All Other Livebearers, All Other Egglayers, All Other Catfish

BAP/HAP Report

Wayne Toven



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

So much for the festivities, now down to business. It is Jan 6th and as I look out my window, all the snow is gone and the next couple of days the temperature is supposed to be in the low 50s, I thought it was the middle of winter. This is the second month of the BAP/HAP year, we are of to a snail's pace. Two spawns were turned in at the December meeting, three were turned in this month, that is an increase but not by much. Come on everyone, get those fish busy, it's not like they have much else to do, besides eat and swim, oh yeah reproduce. Set up a pair or group, feed them well, do water changes, remove problem fish, get them spawning, show them how if you have to, visual aids, movies or whatever. There will be auctions starting before you know it, so if you don't have breeders or young adults, I'm sure that some will be available. There is also the incentive program, for every spawn submitted, a coupon for \$1 worth of raffle tickets will be presented, for use in either the book or equipment raffles at the monthly meetings. Then when a member turns in their 10th spawn of the calendar year, a 16 ounce can of brine shrimp eggs will be awarded. At the December meeting the member who turned in the most spawns for the year will be awarded the prestigious title of **Breeder of the Year** and a plaque with which to adorn their walls at home. The HAP program started also in December but I am still waiting for the first item to be submitted. Propagations can be done two ways, vegetative, or sexual, the third method for HAP is flowering of the plant, which needs to be witnessed by a board member. The rules are available to any current member who needs them, through me, and probably by the time you read this they will be available on our club website, for those of you with computers.

December 2007

<u>Species</u>	<u>Common name</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Points</u>
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BAP

Wayne Toven

<i>Lamprologus tetraacanthus</i>		Cichlid s.s.	15
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Bud & Cathy White

<i>Phallichthys amates amates</i>	Merry widow	Livebearer	5
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January 2008

Species	Common name	Class	Points
BAP			
Rich Serva			
<i>Ancistrus teminckii</i>	Bristlenose pleco	Catfish	20
Wayne Toven			
<i>Ilyodon xantusi</i>		Livebearer	10
Bud & Cathy White			
<i>Cryptoheros cutteri</i>	Cutter's cichlid	Cichlid s.s.	5

2008 Spawn & Point Totals	BAP	Points	HAP	Points
Wayne Toven	2	25		
Bud & Cathy White	2	10		
Rich Serva	1	20		

Grand total of participants	BAP	Points	HAP	Points
Rich Serva	176	1255	59	630
Wayne Toven	97	1025	228	23305
Bud & Cathy White	202	1945		

The above totals are from the time the participants started turning in submissions to be considered for the club's Breeder's Award Program & Horticultural Awards Program.

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Meeting Notice

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Program: Rich Serva - Collecting
wild swordtails in Mexico.

Bowl Show: Suckermouth Catfish,
Swordtails, Characins



Thursday, March 6, 2008

Program: Frank Mueller - Building and
setting up a really large tank in your home.

Bowl Show: Barbs, Mollies,
Corydoras Aspidoras & Brochis



All general meetings begin at 8:00 p.m. at the
Mogadore Community/Senior Center

Coming Events

Feb 2, 2008 – Ohio Cichlid Association - Winter Auction

Strongsville Holiday Inn Rt. 82 (East) at I 71 . Cichlids, scavengers, plants and dry goods Only. \$2.00 sellers fee 70/30 split. 5 bags per species and 60 bag per seller maximum. Registration 10-12 AM, Auction begins at 11. Visit www.ohiocichlid.com. to see the flyer and for a seller's list. Contact Don Danko donfish@ameritech.net, 440-526-0755 or Marc DeWerth madbigfoot@aol.com or Rhonda Sorensen: 216-252-6006, IThinkFast@aol.com for more info.

February 24, 2008 – SCALES - Spring Auction

Perry Grange, Richville Dr. SW, Massillon, Ohio

For more information: Cal (330) 448-0084, John (330) 452-9027 (tbaad@neo.rr.com) or Don (330) 833-7194

March 1, 2008 - Motor City Aquarium Society - Spring auction

www.motorcityaquariumsociety.com

March 2, 2008 – Greater Akron Aquarium Society – Spring Auction

Tallmadge Community Center, 80 Community Rd., Tallmadge, Ohio

For more information: Bud White (330) 848-3856 (bwhite@neo.rr.com), Wayne Toven (330) 296-6322 (wtoven@hotmail.com) or Rich Serva (330) 650-4613 (rjserva@juno.com)

March 8 –Southwestern Michigan Aquarium Society-Spring Auction

Kalamazoo Community College, 6767 West O Ave. Kalamazoo 49009 (rooms 4370-4380). www.swmas.org.

March 8th, 2008 - Columbus Area Fish Enthusiasts First Swap Meet

11-3 at the Hamilton Township Community Building, 6400 Lockbourne Rd, Lockbourne, Ohio 43137, <http://www.columbusfishclub.org/swapmeet.php>

March 16–Youngstown Area Tropical Fish Society -Spring Auction

Lordstown Admin. Bldg 1455 Salt Springs Rd. S.W. Lordstown, OH 44481. Fish Plants, dry goods. Reg. 11 AM, Auction starts at noon. Tom mruaru2@aol.com 330-758-3043 or Mike airbrush6@zoominternet.net 330-716-0889

April 5, 2008 – Great Lakes Cichlid Society - Spring Auction

Masters Church, 771 East 260th Street in Euclid. Registration starts at 9 AM, auction starts at 11. All species, plants and dry goods. Contact Dean at Merspaining@netzero.net, 330-656-0079, Marty at 330-650-0237, Bill at 216-692-9296 or Ron at 440-944-3245. web site: <http://www.greatlakescichlidsociety.net>

Exchange Report

Wayne Toven



If anyone is interested in reading any of the articles that I mention below please let me know at the meeting or by email, I will get a copy of it to you, you never know you might learn something. A lot of the publications I review are reprints of old articles or recently published ones, there are not a lot of new original articles out there. If you spawn some fish write a report on it, it's not that hard, if I can do it so can you. Tell what kind of fish, where they come from, a description, how you set the up for spawning, how you cared for and fed them, how they or you took care of the fry. Our editor is always in need of articles for our club publication. If you need a basic outline to follow on how to write an article, I have a few articles on how to write articles.

One of our members had an article of theirs reprinted in the **Greater Detroit Aquarium Society's**, Tropical Tank Talk: November 2007 issue, *Spawning Corydoras gosseii*, by **Bud & Cathy White**.

Hamilton & District Aquarium Society, Nov 07
Spawning Corydoras, by **Charles Drew**

Southwestern Michigan Aquarium Society, Swam: Nov/Dec 07
Corydoras cervinus - a Not So Popular Corydoras, by **George A. & Vickie L. Coy**
Spawning the Blue Tetra, by **Chase Klinesteker**
Long Finned Plecostomus - Not Bored of Them Yet, by **Vickie L. Coy**
What's in a Name: the Archocentrus Revision, by **Darrell R. Ullisch**

Motor City Aquarium Society, Tropiquarium: Nov 07
The Goo - Obo Gudgeon, by **Gary Leung**

Eastern Iowa Aquarium Association, Fin Flap: Nov 07
Propagating Echinodoras Quadricostatus "tenelus", by **Joy Twentyman-Crock**

Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society Inc., Finformation: Nov 07
Sewellia lineolata the Reticulated Hill Stream Loach, Easy to Spawn Or a Whole Lot of Luck, by **Eric Bodrock**

Pacific Coast Cichlid Association, Cichlidae Communique: Sep/Oct 07
Spawning the Quetzal: Vieja synspilum, by **Daniel Spielman**

Motor City Aquarium Society, Tropiquarium: Oct 07

Discus Discussion Part 2, by **Ron Albers**

Michiana Aquarium Society, Michiana Tropical Times: Sep 07

Pelmatochromis nigrofasciatus, by **John Belke**

Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society Inc. Finformation: Oct 07

Pseudomugil ivanstoiffi, by **Regina Spotti**

Aspidoras dipinnai, by **Eric Bodrock**

Characodon audax the "Black Prince Goodeid", by **Regina Spotti**

Pacific Coast Cichlid Association, Cichlidae Communique: Nov/Dec 07

Building an Aquarium Rack From Channel Strut, by **Kenneth Kellum**

Aquarium Club of Lancaster County, Tank Tales: Nov/Dec 07

Grindal Worms the Final Solution (Maybe), by **Bob Kulesa**

Motor City Aquarium Society, Tropiquarium: Dec 07

Mouth-brooding Bettas, by **Gary Leung**

Eastern Iowa Aquarium Association, Fin Flap: Dec 07

Aulonocara jacobfriebergi "Eureka Red" Albino, by **Dennis & Carol Sindelar**

Propagating Phoenix Moss (Fissidens fontanus), by **Joy Twentyman-Crock**

Propagating Narrow Leaf Java Fern (Microsorium pteropus V. Narrow Leaf),
by **Joy Twentyman-Crock**

Propagating Water Lettuce (Pistia stratiotes), by **Joy Twentyman-Crock**

Water Lettuce Flowering (Pistia stratiotes), by **Joy Twentyman-Crock**

Propagating Cryptocoryne wendtii, by **Joy Twentyman-Crock**

Kitchener Waterloo Aquarium Society: Dec 07

Laetacara dorsigera - the Red Breasted Flag Cichlid, by **Stephen Crawford**

The Green You Don't Want in Your Tank, by **John Skerrett**

Durham Region Aquarium Society, Tank Talk: Dec 07

Eyes on Oddballs - Hoover, Hoover, Hoover!!!, by **Derek P. Tustin**

My Green Wet Thumb - Criminy Crinums, by **Derek P. Tustin**

Aqua Latin 101, by **Derek P. Tustin**

Durham Region Aquarium Society, Tank Talk: Jan 08

Eyes on Oddballs - Freshwater Jellies, by **Derek P. Tustin**

Kitchener Waterloo Aquarium Society, Fins & Tales: Jan 08

My Divided Breeding Tank, **Kent Hunter**

Rockscaping Your Tank, by **Phil Maznyk**

The Cost of Going Green, by **John Skerrett**

My Cyprinid Community, by **Zenin Skomorowski**

Eastern Iowa Aquarium Association, Fin Flap: Jan 08

Copadichromis borleyi, by **Carol Sindelar**

Is Buying Fish In a Shell Like Buying a Pig In a Poke?

Wayne Toven



I get a lot of my fish at club auctions, usually as a bag of six fry or juveniles, buying fish in a six pack you normally wind up with at least a pair or trio for spawning purposes. When fish reach sexual maturity and form a pair sometimes they just stake out a territory in one area of their tank, like a cave, a flowerpot, or just a cluster of rocks. Then they just chase the other fish from that area, but not always, sometimes they hunt down and kill off the others till they are the only ones left. A lot of cichlids work this way, if you see that the other fish are being chased and beaten, fins tattered, tails chewed off, remove the pair or all of the others. Then if everything goes as planned they spawn, sometimes the fry can be left with the adults, sometimes it is best to siphon the fry out before they are eaten. I recently had a problem with six young *Lamprologus leleupi* I got at an auction, when they grew to 2 1/2 to almost 3 inches they quickly killed off four and I had a pair left. They proceeded to spawn soon after, they didn't seem to bother the fry but showed no care for them either. About a week after the fry were free swimming there was still no aggression shown by the parents. Then one day I only saw a few fry hiding around the rocks and caves, a few days later the female was lying on the bottom beaten and dead. I have three surviving juveniles just over 2

inches long now.

Occasionally at an auction I will buy a young pair that somebody else has spawned, and like me needed to move them on to make room for something new. At a fall auction last year, 2006, there was a bag with a really pretty shell in it, about 3 1/2 inches long and 2 1/2 inches in diameter, the label on the bag said it was a spawning pair of *Neolamprologus brevis* Mototo zebra, all that could be seen was the shell. The name of the seller was on the bag, and since I knew him, I knew it would be a quality pair of fish. That is why it is important when selling fish at an auction to put your name and phone number on the label, besides what species, quantity, and sex if known. In case the prospective buyer wants to know anything about the fish, like their temperament, water conditions, how big they will get, how you got them to spawn, or any other pertinent information, you can be contacted. When the bag came up for bid, of course the only thing to be seen was a single pretty shell, since no one had seen the fish the bid did not go very high, so I got them at a very reasonable price. I brought the shell home and housed it in a 5 1/2 gallon tank, with the opening up so the fish could get out if they were really in there. A sponge filter, a some pieces of tufa rock, and some dolomite for the substrate, were the tank decorations. Since the supposed "fish in the shell" were from Lake Tanganyika, they like hard alkaline water, the tufa rock and dolomite would help buffer the water more to their liking. Shortly after the jostling from the bagging, the auction, traveling home, and set up stopped, one fish appeared out of the shell, a little while later, I guess after the all clear was given, another smaller fish also came out of hiding. Of course when I approached to see them they both darted back into the shell, long distance observation seems to be needed.

Lamprologus brevis is a dwarf cichlid that lives in waters from 20 to 180 feet deep in Lake Tanganyika, so hard alkaline water is preferred, with a Ph of 8 to 8.5. They inhabit muddy, and sandy areas where there are large numbers of snails. They make use of the empty snail shells as hiding and spawning caves, sometimes they move the sand from around the shells so they sink in, then nudge them around, push the sand back in, till they like the way they are situated. Sometimes the opening of the shell is the only thing to be seen, the rest of the shell is buried in the sand. Territories are small with a diameter of about 8 inches around the shell. Most of the time in the wild the shell is just big enough for the female to get into, as she is the smaller of the pair. In captivity they pick a shell out of whatever is offered, my pair picked a shell that was big enough for both of them to fit into easily. It was a pretty shell so the female probably had the final say as to which one was going to be home.

Anyway, back to the fish, their bodies are laterally compressed, males being the larger grow to a length of 2 1/2 inches, while the females only to about 1 1/2 inches. As with other cichlids the dorsal, and anal fins are

a little longer on the males, the trailing edges of the dorsal and anal fins are pointed on both sexes, the pelvic fins on the male is the most noticeable difference, they are obviously longer. The basic body color is tan, with lighter vertical stripes on the sides, the first couple stripes after the gill plate have a light bluish iridescence, the rest of the stripes have a yellow iridescence, the stripes continue out into the fins and tail, but without the iridescence. The pectoral fins on both sexes are a clear pale yellow, the dorsal, pelvic, and anal fins of both sexes are basically the same color as the body. The dorsal fins of the male and the female have a light horizontal stripe near the edge, with an almost orange edging, the anal fins on both have a pale blue horizontal stripe near the edge, with dark edging. The lobe shaped tail fins on both have a wide light colored band near the edge, with dark edging that only goes half way up around the edge of the tail. The males head around the eyes and above the mouth is a golden yellow, while the female has a patch of golden yellow on her side behind the gill plate. Both sexes have an arched stripe of medium blue iridescence under the eye, it's hard to say which one of these fish is the most colorful.

I do my water changes in a cycle around the fish room, I do a rack every few days, that way by the time I get all the way around the room it is time to start over, so the cycle just keeps going. Smaller more frequent water changes are better for Tanganyikans because the water parameters, PH and hardness will not change too much, I did approximately 10-15 % a week. I feed most everything the same foods, which can vary in size according to the size of the fish, flake, small floating pellet, and live foods were used on the *L. brevis* one or two times a day. I always put a couple of red rams horn snails in the tank to clean up the uneaten food, this doesn't always work with adults as for some cichlids snails are some of their main food items in the wild. Most of the time the male sort of just hovered over the mouth of the shell, while the female spent most of her time in the shell. She would come out to eat but if I got too close, especially with my camera, she would dive into the shell, sometimes if I really spooked them the male would too. When the male was over the



shell and if I could peek in all I could see was the tip of the females head and an eye, just enough so she could see out. *L. brevis* are harem spawners, so a sex ratio of one male to three females is good if possible, I only had the pair. After spawning the male guards the territory around the shell, the female will stay in the shell with the brood of up to 30 eggs, development takes about 24 hrs, and fry will be free swimming in about 6 days. The female will tend the fry for about 2 weeks, they will be almost 1/4 of an inch long, then they are on their own, make sure there plenty of hiding places or remove the fry, as they might become a meal for the adults. There might also be a problem if all the fry are removed, the adults might look at each other as the killer of the fry and possibly kill one or the other, so always leave a few fry if possible. I left the fry with the parents, I fed finely crushed flake food 3 to 4 times a day, this is where the snails come in handy, as small fry have very small stomachs. It is also good idea to do small more frequent water changes on the tank, 10-15 % every 3 or 4 days, larger water changes are not good for Tanganyikan fry, they are too delicate for mass water quality fluctuations. Small tank's water conditions can change very quickly with multiple feedings every day. I removed the fry to be turned in for our club's Breeder's Award Program, our requirement is a minimum of 6 fry between 30 to 90 days old, there were only seven that grew old enough, they were almost 1/2 inch long by then, it was a small spawn, I only ever saw 10 fry. I kind of suspect that maybe my water conditions were not quite right for a good sized spawn, not quite high enough PH, mine is only 7.4, and not hard enough water. Shortly after I removed the fry, it happened, the male killed the female or she just died, I don't know for sure which, I tend to think he did it, she was kind of tattered. Oh well live and learn, I'll know better next time.

References:

Baensch Aquarium
Atlas #2
by Hans A.
Baensch & Dr.
Rudiger Riehl



Peeking Through the Porthole With *Poeciliopsis gracilis* - the Porthole Livebearer

Wayne Toven

This has nothing to do with ships or anything else that has portholes, but a small livebearer. *Poeciliopsis gracilis* has from 4 - 11 eye size dark spots in a row along it's lateral line, thus the common name of porthole livebearer or porthole top minnow. They are a peaceful schooling fish that should be kept in groups of at least six or more. Suitable for a community aquarium, provided there are no larger aggressive fish that might consider them lunch.

P. gracilis is originally from Central America: southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras in tributaries on both the Atlantic and Pacific slopes. Natural habitats vary from shallow clear rivers, turbid ponds, to slow and fast moving creeks. They are rather undemanding as to water conditions, slightly acid to slightly alkaline is acceptable, although no salt should be added to the water. A temperature range of 72 - 82 degrees F will suffice, but for breeding purposes the temperature should be nearer the high end.

Aquarium setup should be well planted, with mid water to surface floating plants, as they often hang out in groups near the surface under plant leaves. Lighting seems to be up for debate, two books say subdued light another one says bright light. I kept mine in a ten gallon tank with a sponge filter, some rocks, and mid water floating plants, under indirect room light. They seemed quite at home often swimming around out in the open, rarely if ever hiding.

I captured my group of six young 3/4 inch juveniles indirectly from Eric Bodrock at a Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society Inc. auction a year and a half ago. That is not quite full grown, females can reach a whopping 2 1/4 inches, while the males only grow to 1 1/4 inches. I figured that the ten gallon aquarium would be adequate for the six, if the group is larger, a bigger tank should be used. The males are not only smaller but have a slimmer body, and most noticeably a gonopodium. Coloration is much the same for both sexes, the top half of the body sort of a bronze color, the belly area is a silvery white, and of course the row of dark spots along the lateral line, and the fins are clear. The body of the male has a blue iridescence on it if the light hits it right, like during judging at a fish show, where my male took first place in his class at last years YATFS show.

Feeding is no problem at all, they are omnivorous. That means they eat just about anything they are offered, within reason, no steak and garlic mashed potatoes, hmmm, that does sound good though, but not for the fish. I fed them a variety of foods: flake, frozen blood worms and brine shrimp, freeze dried daphnia and blood worms, and floating micro pellets.

Sexual maturity for the young is at 3 months of age, and breeding can begin a month later, a few fry are produced everyday over a 7 - 10 day period, at 4 week intervals. If the adults are well fed and there is plenty of cover available for hiding the fry are not at risk and can be left with the adults. Apparently my group either was not fed well enough or just never had that many fry. I had two females and three males grow up from the original gang of six. The last of that group, a female died early this year, but I still have some young from her. I have recently come into possession of two more species of *Poeciliopsis*: *turneri* and *scarllei*, I hope to have success with raising and breeding them as well.

Sources:

Baensch Aquarium Atlas #2 and #4
by Hans A. Baensch & Dr. Rudiger Riehl

Livebearing fishes by John Dawes

Aqualog of All Livebearers & Half-beaks by Michael Kempkes & Dipl. Biol. Frank Schafer



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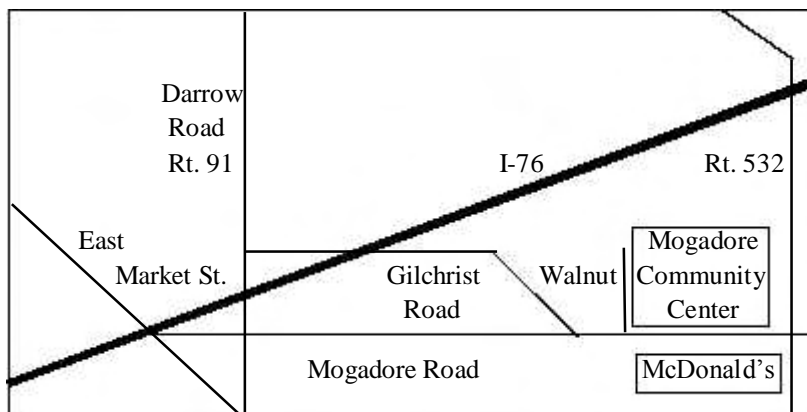
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