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Fish Tales

The Official Publication of the Federation of Texas
Aquarium Societies



In This Issue:

Coming to the Surface
Making Your Own Fish Food
FOTAS History
Throwing Around the “Q” Word
My First Experiences With *Betta Simplex*
Words About *Enantiopus melanogenys* “Zambian Black Face”

Index

Editorial	2
Coming to the Surface	
Walter Wooton Jr.	3
Making Your Own Fish Food	
Carla Johnson	6
FOTAS History	
Hazel Hall	8
Throwing Around the “Q” Word	
Sheryl Coley	11
My First Experiences With <i>Betta Simplex</i>	
Duc Nguyen	15
Words About <i>Enantiopus melanogenys</i>	
“Zambian Black Face”	
Benjamin L. Smith	18

Cover *Phenacogrammus interruptus*. Photo by Diane Tennison.

Editorial

Like it or not, Texas Summer is just around the corner. For those of us who have been here for a while, we know we have to deal with it (the heat) but that doesn't mean we have to like it. After the scorcher we endured last year, we should be able to keep our fish alive through anything. While most of us had to deal with heat, the England's had to deal with a tornado that twisted through their place. Thankfully no fish were hurt, oh yeah, and they were okay too.

As the Oklahoma Aquarium Association prepares to host the annual FOTAS convention in September, my home club is well underway in the planning process for FOTAS 2011. This will sister as the very first CARES Conservation convention. We have a huge all star lineup in place. More on this is coming issues.

There are two other great events coming up in the next couple months to be aware of. On page 17 you will find the poster for the

big discus show in June. I hope to see everyone there. NADA is the newest FOTAS member too, welcome!

July 31st, Amazonia International, in conjunction with the HCCC, will be hosting an African Exposition (Poster on page 14). Despite my speaking on the bill, it should be a great event! Caroline Estes is hosting a rare fish auction to assist our club with some of the FOTAS convention expenses. There some really great supporters of the aquarium hobby here in Texas, we are truly fortunate.

I want to give a special thank you to some of the people that help me with assembling Fish Tales; Charles Jones (HAS), Kathy England (TCA) and Dr. Keith Arnold (BVAS). Speaking of Dr. Arnold, he treated both HAS and HCCC to wonderful presentations on catfish recently. HAS and the HCCC have been working together on bringing speakers in to present to both clubs. This cuts down greatly on expenses one club incurs while promoting great relations between FOTAS members. July will see Dr. Anton Lamboj visit our clubs and will speak in Austin and Houston.

FOTAS elections traditionally take place at the annual convention and this is coming up quickly. It's time to start thinking about who you would nominate to move this organization forward. It is also very important to make sure your club has an active delegate in place to ensure you are both providing and receiving everything you can have from your membership in the Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies.

There are some worthy projects on the FOTAS table. All that is needed is a few dedicated people to see things through.

That's about all the rambling I have for now. See you in July!

Coming to the Surface

- Walter Wooton Jr.



A beautiful sunfish darting amongst the Cabomba on the Comal River.

We have discussed the formation of Edwards Aquifer and explored its depths now I would like to introduce you to three of the endemic aquatic species that you may actually get to see. Like all of the aquatic species of the aquifer they face challenges that comes with water quality, low rates, development and the introduction of nonnative species.



Fountain Darter (*Etheostoma fonticola*)

Endangered

This is the smallest of the Darters only reaching a Max size of 1.39 inches (3.55 cm) but most only grow to about 1 inch (2.54 cm) and are found at the head waters of both the San Marcos and Comal rivers. These little fish are masters at camouflage with light olive or brown coloring and black spots on their sides they blend in extremely well with the bottom. The male develops a spectacular dorsal fin of red, black and clear when breeding. Breeding is done year



**The fountain darter *Etheostoma fonticola*.
Photos by Anton Lamboj.**

round with 2 peaks in August and late winter. Eggs are laid on vegetation with the eggs developing it 4 to 7 days depending on water temperature. The springs that feed the Comal dried up for 5 months during the droughts in the 1950s wiping out the native stock, but in 1975-76 457 individuals were reintroduced and in 1993 there were an estimated 168,078 there. The Fountain Darter is facing a special challenge of a trematode parasite (*Centrocestus formosanus*) which is a fluke of Asian origin. This is believed to have been introduced by the introduction of the Malaysian Trumpet Snail (*Melanoides tuberculata*) which I can personally attest to the fact they have infested both rivers heavily.



San Marcos Gambusia (*Gambusia georgei*). Photo courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

San Marcos Gambusia (*Gambusia georgei*)

Possibly extinct

A live bearer growing between 1 and 1.5 inches (2.4-4.0 cm). It is similar in appearance to the Mosquito fish (*Gambusia affinis*) but with dark edges to the dorsal and caudal fins, a distinct crosshatched side and a yellow median fin. Their preferred habitat is in the shady areas of the shallows along the shoreline out of the main flow where the bottom is muddy and aquatic vegetation is present but not dense. The historic

known range of *G. georgei* has always been limited to a small 0.6 mile (1 KM) section of the river. While never in great abundance the declining numbers prompted attempts to establish other colonies first in Austin, Texas (1979) and Dexter, New Mexico (1980). Both of these colonies were contaminated with crossbreeding with *G. affinis* very quickly and the last known specimen from the wild was collected in 1983.



Texas Wildrice (*Zizania texana*) in the San Marcos River.

Texas Wildrice (*Zizania texana*)

Endangered

This is a beautiful aquatic perennial grass grows in water as shallow as 1 foot (0.3 m) to as deep as 6.5 feet (2.0 m). The stems can reach a length of 12 feet (3.65 m) and the leaves can grow up to 3.75 feet (1.14 m). In the spring and then again in autumn it will send flowering head 1 to 2 feet (0.3 to 0.6 m) above the surface. This plant was abundant in the 1930s that it was considered a pain by local irrigation company due to being difficult to keep out of its irrigation ditches has been reduced to occupying just 1 small stretch of the San Marcos River. In the 1970s there was an attempt to transplant it into Salado Creek and again between 1976 and 1982 attempts were made to use nursery stock in other areas of central Texas, but all failed for various reasons from recreational



**Anton Lamboj, Nick Andreola and the author
exploring the San Marcos River.**

activities to the unique chemistry of the water.

The San Marcos and Comal rivers contain an abundance of plants and animals both aquatic and terrestrial from natives to invasive along their banks and in the water for all of us to enjoy. I invite all of you to visit either or both and see for yourself what a wonderful natural habitat we have right here in our own backyard. Please join us on our "snork trips" it is a cheap, easy and enjoyable experience and also a great way to beat the heat. Three pieces of advice if you do decide to join us.

1: If you never have snorkeled before join us in the Comal first it is a nice easy place to learn.

2: We are a bunch of clowns and cameras are almost always present so smile.

3; It can become addicting.

Hope to see you all in the water real soon!





Making Your Own Fish Food

- Carla Johnson

The old saying goes that you are what you eat, and the same can be said for your fish. They are what they eat, too. Well, actually, they are what we feed them.

When Mike and I started keeping discus, we had never prepared homemade fish food; we really had never even thought about it. However, after several trips to pet stores, and after buying commercial frozen discus food (big bucks!), we thought we needed to ask some questions of fellow fish club member John Nicholson, whom we knew as “the Discus Man”. After considering his suggestions and what we found on the internet, we decided that we could come up with our own version of “Discus Delight”, if a human would call it that. If you have a weak stomach, this may not be for you.

Homemade fish food is a lot like some recipes or, as Mike would call them, “Carla Surprise” recipes. It seems that no two times of making fish food ever turn out the same. Believe me, your fish will let you know how well you did or didn’t do. They will either eat with joy or will refuse to eat even one bite. That is when you realize your success or failure.

It has taken many batches of fish food to come to some type of perfection (ha!). One of our discoveries after the first batch was that it was a very easy matter to slap the final product into ziplock bags, lay them flat in the freezer and wait for them to freeze. It was quite another matter entirely to break the frozen product into pieces in order to

feed your fish. Even a strong man like Mike had a problem with this. So I told Mike, “I have an idea.”

When I have an idea, he is not quite sure what to expect, so he looked quite nervous until I told him my idea. I told him that when I was a kid, my mom had ice trays with tiny holes like the trays frozen commercial fish food comes in, that I called gumdrop trays. We decided it was worth a try to find some to use with our fish food.

I searched local dollar stores (my favorite places!), to no avail. Then, one day during a trip to the local grocery store, I noticed buggies of stuff by the door outside and I just had to stop to see what was in them. Oh my gosh! I could not believe it! You would have thought I had found something SUPER SPECIAL. You have never seen a lady so excited to find ice cube trays, but there they were – just what I had been searching for.

I started counting - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 I quit counting and just bought them all! When I got home I excitedly told Mike about my latest (not eatable) Carla Surprise. He was almost as excited as I was when he saw the ice trays. Our next batch of fish food turned out much better, as we had part of what we needed for it to be successful.

If you have a large food processor and a small food chopper, a very large bowl, a rubber spatula and a “Seal-a-Meal”, you can properly make and store your creation. By

the way, you can go to www.arrow-plastic.com to purchase your Sport Cube Trays. The label says “perfect size for sport bottles and blenders”. They should also add “fish food” to the list.

Until next time, create your own “Carla Surprise” for your fish – they may just spawn over it!

Carla’s Basic Meateaters Fish Food

All measurements are approximate:

2.5 to 3 pounds of raw, trimmed, deveined ground beef heart
 1.5 pounds raw liver (calf or beef)
 1 pound raw gulf coast shrimp (I take the shells off mine)
 1 pound raw white fish or other raw fish
 2 packages frozen chopped spinach
 1 package frozen green beans
 1 package frozen green peas (I prefer beans due to the shells on the peas)
 3 overripe bananas (for potassium)
 3 large grated carrots
 5 to 6 lightly pureed zucchini
 5 to 6 cloves of peeled, crushed garlic (very important for immunity)
 Flake food - pellets - algae wafers - shrimp pellets (act as a binder)
 1 package bloodworms
 1 package frozen brine shrimp
 15 to 20 vitamins

Combine all in the large food processor and process well. Freeze for a few days in the ice cube trays, then package enough for a one- to two-week supply per Seal-A-Meal package. Enjoy watching your fish eat up!

HINTS: I use Centrum or multipurpose vitamins. I put them in a cup of water to melt the coating, chop them with the small chopper, and throw them into the mixture. Some people use bird vitamins, but I prefer tablets

as they can be crushed to a powder and act as a binder. You could use either or both. We have used oatmeal, but have found that oatmeal clouds the water.

Carla’s Green Surprise by Accident Vegetarian Fish Food

2 pounds raw gulf coast shrimp (no shells)
 English peas
 Green beans
 Zucchini
 Carrots
 Garlic
 Veggie flake (from www.yourfishstuff.com - they sell HBH bulk)
 1 small package floating pellets

Stir all together and process as per the previous recipe.

Enjoy!



Inaugural National Convention
 Irving, TX June 10-13, 2010

Hans (Discus Hans) Koops
 of Stendker Discus USA

Wayne Ng
 Jack Wattley
 John Nicholson

Registration Information:
<http://www.discus2010.com/>

FOTAS HISTORY

By Hazel Hall

*(Reprinted from The Fish Fancier – May/
June 1993)*

*(Edited for spelling, punctuation, and clarity
- CJ)*

The Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies (FOTAS) originated in 1952 with five clubs as charter members, including, once and only, an out of state club: The Oklahoma Aquarium Society. The Houston Aquarium Society is the only original club remaining. Who were the four Texas clubs? We know Houston was one, San Antonio (that would be the long dissolved San Antonio Aquarium Society as Alamo didn't join until 1953) and, we believe, Austin and Dallas.

In the intervening years FOTAS has had as many as twelve clubs and as few as four "member" clubs. At this writing, host clubs for the years 1953 through 1963 are unknown or, perhaps, known but the correct sequence is not known. More research and help is needed on this. One thing is known – not one year was skipped, from 1953 to the present.

The By-Laws were revised several times (1967, 1970, 1973, 1975, and 1981). The original Article No. 2 of the Charter headed "Purpose" was not changed until 1981 and it read: *"The purpose of this federation shall be to further Aquarium Societies, their formation and activities through mutual cooperation maintain an active list of the members of each society and further shall provide for the exchange of publications of the member societies."*

At that time dues were \$10.00 (now \$12.00 ed.) per year per club. One of the revisions made to the Charter was to make it possible

for individuals to join FOTAS, their dues being \$3.00 (now \$6.00 ed.) per year. The "Associate Member" could vote, but each vote would count as one half vote.

Each year brought the question, "What do we get for our \$10.00?" Some clubs obviously weren't satisfied with what they got and weren't inclined to put forth the effort to make it worth \$10.00. There were those who were willing to try. One endeavor was to get the Texas Cichlid made the State Fish. The project was started in 1961 or 1962, ending in 1989 with the State Fish title going to a little known fish native to the Guadalupe River (the Guadalupe Bass).

Almost as popular as "What do we get for our \$10.00?" was the statement, "All FOTAS is, is the convention held once a year."

Trying to answer both question and statement, the Officers and Board Members started adding to the annual business meeting and the banquet. The host club was responsible for the compiling and delivery, to each of the member clubs, copies of the FOTAS membership directory. Small workshops were organized by various club members at first. Later, starting to branch out, speakers who were well versed in the hobby headed the workshops and/or seminars plus the featured speaker were asked to participate. It came to pass that holding a long business meeting interfered with the speakers and workshops so another change was made. The exact date is elusive, but most of the business was attended to at "Quarterly" Board Meetings, leaving convention time free of business except for a short general meeting and election of officers.

Some of the featured speakers, in no particular order, were: Al Klee, Roserio LaCorte, Andrew Roth, Walter V. Simon, Dr. Gene Lucas, Dr. Carl Hubbs, Helen Simkatus, Dr. Robert Rofen, Braz Walker, Ed Taylor, Dr. Peter Lewis, George Smit, Charlie Grimes, Steve Somermeyer, Dr. Joan Norton, Dr. Robert Goldstein, William Vorderwinkler, Dewey and Dolores Schehr, and many more.

Still working to get FOTAS away from the social image it was decided to start a Fish Judges Registry. Hal Collins spearheaded this venture. Another reason for a "Judges Registry" was to fill a much needed service. It was hard, and getting almost impossible, to obtain services of qualified judges, so why not train the local talent? Show Rules were written, Judges Standards set, and potential judges studied and, when ready, were approved. FOTAS had filled a great need in the state by making available and providing qualified judges from within the state. Most shows in Texas are now FOTAS sanctioned. Along with this is the "Exhibitor of the year" award given to the member who has earned the most points each year.

The booklet, *FOTAS Show and Judging Regulations*, was first approved in 1974, revised in 1979, and again in 1981. Not only does this cover fresh water fish, but also marines as well.

In 1980 the Houston Aquarium Society hosted the convention and it was special in that they honored past members Raymond Head and Ernest May, two men who had faithfully supported their own clubs and FOTAS in any way they could for many years. It was made more special that their widows Jerry Head and Ina May were able to attend and participate.

Also in 1980, the FOTAS Altruism Award was initiated. Members of each club are to

write a letter, to be presented to the Board at the annual meeting, stating who they nominated and why. Each year's winner gets to keep the trophy for a year. Hazel Hall was the first to win. In the following years, not in correct chronological order, Hal Collins, Keith Arnold, Bob Christensen, Lou Harris, Clarence Hall, Silva St. Germain, Ken Ben-night, Ed Makowski, Suzy Fairlie and others, (Dan Martin, Carolyn Estes, Grape and Peggie Winkels-ed.) have been chosen.

FOTAS was incorporated (Non-Profit Corporation Act) in 1981 with Dick Barfield, Vice President, and Barbara Arnold, Secretary, signing. Article No. 2 is now Article No. 4 and states: *The purpose, or purposes, for which the corporation is organized are: To further aquarium societies, their formation and activities, to promote the home aquarium hobby, to educate the keeping, maintaining, breeding, and conservation of all aquatic life, and to do all such things as are necessary and incidental to the attainment of the above stated objectives and purposes.*

Another area in which FOTAS has tried to help member clubs was in the matter of good programs. Each FOTAS member club was urged to make and submit a program which could be used by the other member clubs. By 1976 FOTAS was the proud owner of five such programs. These did help. FOTAS also acquired slide programs, etc., that member clubs can rent for a very reasonable amount and these helped.

On October 1, 1976, the first FOTAS newsletter materialized. *Tail Fin Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 made its appearance. It was designed to be a quarterly publication that would publish both FOTAS news and news from member clubs who would furnish the editor with information to be published. *Tail Fin Review* is still very much alive with Keith Arnold as

its editor.

One FOTAS project still active: the Braz Walker Endowment Fund. In memory of Braz Walker, FOTAS has been instrumental in establishing the Braz Walker Collection of Aquarium Literature in the Special Collections of the Texas A&M University Sterling C. Evans Library as of March 1990.

NOTE: Please bear in mind the above history was written from sketchy references and memory (perhaps sketchy also), so some dates may be inaccurate. Anyone with factual input is invited to come forward. –H.H.

EDITOR'S NOTE (2010): I have tried to leave the original article intact as much as possible. I have edited the article insofar as punctuation and grammatically as necessary for smoother reading. The editor's notes within the article are from the editor in 1993. -CJ

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**Federation of Texas
Aquarium Societies**

**FOTAS ON THE WEB!
WWW.FOTASWEBSITE.COM**

Throwing around the “Q” Word

- Sheryl Coley

Oklahoma Aquarium Club

To quarantine or not to quarantine, that is the question^{1/4}

The quarantine period is really just a part of the acclimation process and is needed to ensure the health and longevity of your fish. Acclimation involves more than merely getting fish used to water conditions: It includes helping animals recover from capture, transport and handling. The process of acclimation is not complete until the animals regain their strength, adapt to captivity, become familiar with new foods and grow accustomed to the aquarist that cares for them. When your new fish must face the stress of entering the display tank and facing his new tank mates, they will be at their peak healthiness which will enable them to finish their acclimation into captivity with the greatest ease. *1. & 2; Effects of capture, transportation and stress on fish.

Although I feel all livestock including salt-water live-rock and invertebrates should be quarantined, I will only discuss the quarantining of fish, both freshwater and saltwater, in this article. The fish we buy, no matter how well handled in the capture process, are stressed. The kindest thing we can do for our new pets who will live from 2 to 20 years is to give them time to acclimate to being in captivity.

The basics of a quarantine tank:

1 - 10 to 20 gallon tank, depending on the size of the fish you will be quarantining. All 4 sides should be covered with removable black material. (Cut up trash bags work.) Paint the bottom of the tank black.

2 - Biological and mechanical filtration;

A - A small HOB filter or a sponge filter can be used. I prefer a HOB because of the option to use carbon after any treatments are through.

B - Biological filter media, tiles or a sponge, should be kept in the sump or in the display tank at all times so you have a mature biological media ready for emergencies. Having a fully functional and cycled biological filter is key to a successful quarantine period.

3 - Heater

4 - Thermometer

5 - A lid is needed to help keep tank temperature stable as well as preventing any jumpers from leaving the tank.

6 - A dedicated net and a siphon for water changes (that will not be used in any other aquarium).

The tank should be located in a quiet area of your home. Unless you are dealing with a fish that burrows into gravel, such as wrasses and jawfish, the tank should be bare bottomed. Mated pairs and schooling fish may also need special considerations. **Research the habits of your fish before buying it!** Various sized pieces of PVC pipe or new terra cotta flower pots should be used in the tank to provide the fish a place to hide. Acclimate the fish to its quarantine tank using the lowest room light possible while allowing you to see.

Although not a necessity, an aquarium light will help you to observe the fish. Using a

timer on the light will help your fish adjust to the household routine. Feeding on the same schedule as your display tank will also help the fish to settle better into his new home.

Steps to better acclimation:

1 - Prepare a mature biological filter for the quarantine system when possible.

Benefits: Provides a stable environment without exposure to toxins such as ammonia.

2 - Adjust the pH and temperature in the quarantine tank to match those at the retailer or the shipping water when possible.

Benefits: The fish can be immediately removed from the transport bag and allowed to swim in oxygenated water. This reduces stress and helps fish to remove lactate acid and ammonia from their body. This also allows for slow acclimation to changes in pH and temperature over days rather than minutes or hours.

3 - Consider employing hyposaline conditions.

Benefits: Proactive approach to external parasites, and counteracts osmotic dysfunction due to the stress of transport and handling.

4 - Use dim lighting or red light.

Benefits: Prevents photo shock and has a calming effect on fish.

5 - Avoid the use of nets.

Benefits: Water to water transfer with the use of clear plastic bags or specimen containers prevents stress, gill collapse, lactate acid build-up, and reduces injuries. A small plastic glass can catch the fish from the bag.

6 - Add a polymer such as found in Pro Tech Coat Marine[®] or StressGuard (polyvinylpyrrolidone) to the quarantine

tank. Benefits: Protects wounds and aids in osmoregulation.

7 - Withhold feeding for 24 hours.

Benefits: Metabolic energy is directed toward functions essential to immediate survival such as regaining normal homeostasis.

8 - Slow acclimation to changes in temperature and pH.

Benefits: Less stressful on fish than quicker acclimation and should improve survival.

After acclimation of the fish to the new tank, turn off the room lights and walk away. Although you are dying to see how it is doing, try viewing it from around the corner or across the room. Leave it alone until the next day.

The time a fish should spend in quarantine is determined by its health. If during its stay it shows no signs of disease and is eating well then the quarantine time can be just 4 weeks. *Disease is "any deviation from a normal or healthy condition"* as a definition. *3. The 4 week countdown doesn't start until the fish is healthy and any treatments are over.

The three sets of factors determining the health or well being of any aquatic system are:

1 - Initial state or condition

2 - Suitability of the environment

3 - The presence and degree of infectiousness of disease-causing organisms.

All three are separate and yet interdependent upon each other. In the "real world" of aquarium culture it is ideal to select for and create the best circumstances for each of the three sets of factors. These 3 factors will affect the health of your fish during quaran-

tine.

Keep water quality at the highest standards by removing uneaten food and making small water changes if ammonia, nitrites, or nitrates become too high. Observe your fish for external parasites, odd behavior or breathing, and while eating. A turkey baster is handy for food removal and small water changes. You should have prepared salt water on hand for emergencies.

When it comes to the length of time spent in quarantine or hospital tanks, it should be recognized that treatment is usually only successful at a certain timeframe in the parasite's life cycle. * 4. And since we cannot accurately judge when one portion of the cycle begins and another ceases, it's better to treat for the length of time the entire cycle encompasses. Those cycle times can sometimes be found on various websites by simply putting the name of the disease into your web search engine and reading the applicable articles. Timeframes could be affected by conditions such as temperature and salinity. Yet, a period of at least 30 days, preferably 40 days in most cases, is reasonable.

Use of a quarantine period is not really an option for the serious hobbyist who cares about the lives of the creatures we bring into our homes. Not only is it smart, it is humane.

*References and Additional Reading

<http://www.advancedaquarist.com/2006/1/aafeature2/view>

<http://www.advancedaquarist.com/2006/3/aafeature1>

<http://www.wetwebmedia.com/mardisease.htm>

http://www.wetwebmedia.com/ca/volume_3/cav3i4/quarantine/Quarantine.htm

<http://www.advancedaquarist.com/issues/dec2003/mini2.htm>

Sheryl Coley is a 30 year freshwater and 20 year marine aquarium enthusiast and was instrumental in forming the first Marine based aquarium club in Oklahoma in 1992. Sheryl is currently a member of the Oklahoma Aquarium Club (www.oklahomaaquariumclub.org) and former Public Relations Officer of the Central Oklahoma Marine Aquarium Society (www.comas.org). Sheryl currently keeps a 75 and a 57-gallon reef setup and two planted freshwater displays. Her favorite saying is: "I've never met a fish I didn't like."

2009 FOTAS Member Clubs

Brazos Valley Aquarium Society

Hill Country Cichlid Club

Houston Aquarium Society

Houston Livebearer Association

North American Discus Association

Oklahoma Aquarium Association

Texas Cichlid Association



**Federation of Texas
Aquarium Societies**



Amazonia's African Exposition July 31st, 2010

Begins at noon
Free
Admission

AMAZONIA INTERNATIONAL
4701 N I 35
AUSTIN, TX 78722



Speakers:

Dr. Anton Lamboj

Dave Hansen

Greg Steeves

Rare Fish Auction!

Free Refreshments!

My First Experiences with *Betta simplex*

-Duc Nguyen



Betta simplex originate from the Krabi Province which is in southern Thailand. They are considered to be in the smaller sized Bettas; their maximum length rarely exceeds 5 cm. Sexual dimorphism is somewhat easy to distinguish. Males have larger heads than females, and are more colorful than their female counterparts. In addition, males have a dark and more pronounced horizontal stripe in their anal fin. A good number of Betta species are bubble-nest builders. That is, the male will build a bubble-nest in preparation of spawning. This is where the eggs are kept and protected by the male until they hatch. The remaining species are paternal mouthbrooders. To add more complexity, some species exhibit both bubble-nest and mouthbrooding behavior! In the Betta genus, only the male exhibit brood care; the females have no involvement. *B. simplex* is an example of a paternal

mouthbrooder.

My first group of *B. simplex* consisted of two adult males and two adult females. I housed them in a 20 long with sandy substrate. It was decorated with a few cave structures as well as a number of *Anubias barteri*. I have read on several websites that these fish can be pretty finicky with water parameters; however, my water was pretty hard (pH = 7.8) and they were perfectly fine. I did add some almond leaves to help with stabilizing the pH as well as easing stress on the fish. I did not use a heater in the tank (the water temperature was consistently around 72 F). Also, I used a sponge filter since these fish do like some water movement. They are not finicky eaters at all. I fed them a combination of live baby brine shrimp and Hikari Micro Pellets. They ate the pellets pretty voraciously as well as the

lets. They ate the pellets pretty voraciously as well as the shrimp. After about three months into me having these fish, I had noticed that one of my females was getting visibly gravid so I wanted to be sure to keep an eye on them daily to see if anything would come of it. Already in a few days, I checked and I witnessed the spawning. It was very exciting! I wanted to try to capture it on my cam but they took an extremely long

time to finish the actual spawning! The female would lay several eggs after the male would fertilize these eggs and would catch them in her mouth. Then, she would spit individual eggs at the male; sometimes he will catch them and if not, she will pick them up and start over again. This process continues until she is completed. Since this lasted over several days, I have no idea how many eggs were laid, but it was very visually evident by the bucal cavity of the male! After the spawning was complete, the two have no further interaction. The male went into hiding. He can't eat during this time. After about five days, I moved the male into his own tank so he can release the fry in peace. When doing this, it's important to take water from his original tank to reduce stress on him when he is in

his new home. Based on some online sources, *B. simplex* hold for 10-12 days. In my experience, mine held for 15 days. I only counted ten fry in this particular clutch. An-



A mouthbrooding *Betta simplex*.

other observation was that he released a few every day. As soon as I noticed the male had released all the fry, I put him back in the community tank. I am hoping I can get larger spawns in subsequent spawning. The fry were very small. I fed

them with baby brine shrimp. I will try using the micro pellets with them also to see if they will accept it. As of writing this article, I still have the fry in their grow out tank and they are still doing well. These fish are listed on the IUCN list as vulnerable so I am hoping that I can get an established colony of them going for those Bettaphiles in the hobby.

B. simplex is a very attractive fish and I would recommend them to anyone who would like a good beginner and hardy Betta that happens to be a mouthbrooder as well. I am impressed at how many eggs the male can incubate at one time. These fish are not that common in the hobby so if you have an opportunity to get some, please give them a try.





GENERAL INFORMATION:

When: The Show will be held June.10-13, 2010

Where: Embassy Suites DFW Airport South, 4650 West Airport Freeway, Irving TX 75062, (972) 313-8028

Cost: Registration is \$45 - includes a 1 year membership to NADA or 1 year renewal for current members.

NADA has secured a special room rate for this Show.
Visit <http://www.discus2010.com> for more information.

SCHEDULED EVENTS:

Speakers - The current scheduled speakers and topics are:

John Nicholson	"Discus 101"
Tony Silva	TBA
Discus Hans	"Discus Hans USA"
Jack Wattley	TBA
Dick Au	TBA
Al Sabetta	"Disease and Sickness"
Phil Edwards	"Plants and Discus"
<i>Scheduled Speakers subject to change and substitutions without notice</i>	

Discus Show - The following classes are available for showing fish: Solid, Fine Line Striated, Thick Line Striated, Spotted, Wild, Open plus Best In Show and Peoples Choice Award.

NADA Awards Banquet - Saturday evening, 7pm. Tickets are \$40 and can be purchased below. The banquet will be buffet style Texas BBQ and is emceed by Special Host *Ron Jackson*.

Show Auction - Sunday, June 13th, starting at 10am until all items are sold.

<http://www.discus2010.com>

Words About *Enantiopus melanogenys* “Zambian Black Face”

- Benjamin L. Smith



A male *Enantiopus melanogenys* “Zambian Black Face” in the author’s aquarium.

This is a fish that comes from Lake Tanganyika and is a part of the group of fish known as “sand sifters.” They will take food that is plainly in sight but otherwise forage by taking mouthfuls of substrate and sifting it through their gills to glean whatever morsels may be available therein. In the wild the males of this species dig large shallow pits, or nests. They are often more than a foot in diameter and many males may inhabit an area and build nests adjacent to one another. The adults can be quite colorful and they enhance the iridescence in their bodies by dancing about their nests turned slightly on their sides to reflect the sun’s rays as females pass by in schools. With luck, a female will leave the school, choose a male

and spawn only to leave for the protection of the school and brood a mouthful of eggs until time for release away from the school again.

Aggression in the wild is limited to the male’s own large nest. In the aquarium a large floor space of sand is required to house multiple males. I had a group of two males, two females and two juveniles housed in a 55 gallon tank. It is my opinion that this tank was too small as the non-dominant male was always in a corner cowering with no color even though there was space for two nests. I had just started to have spawns at about 15 months of age for the adults when I had a heater that decided to stay on

and cooked the two females who had just spawned. I noticed in time to save the other fish, but this has been quite a setback for me with this fish. Their previous spawn went to waste as the female spit in the sand during a water change and the others gobbled up the eggs.



The male *Enantiopus melanogenys* displaying in his bower.

While these fish are not exactly mean in the aquarium, they do require some of the treatments of the more aggressive *lamprologines*. While they don't tear each other up (a torn fin is rare) a chased male will jump and so a closed top is a must. I would also recommend a good amount of rockwork to serve two purposes if you chose a smaller tank such as a 55 gallon or even 75 gallon. A stack dividing what would be only two nests in a four foot tank would diffuse some aggression as well as provide a place for the females to hide since there would be no school of females and juveniles to leave the area with. I have read that in a larger tank, the males will build their nests right up against each other and dance right along the edge of their nests to outdo their competition. In those larger tanks, a group of females could also swim from end to end and, in a sense, mimic natural behavior.

From what I've read also, fry could be left in the tank as with *Cyprichromis* species and as



The female *Enantiopus melanogenys*.

such, Cyps make good tankmates. I would recommend a *Cyprichromis* species over *Paracyprichromis* species as they seem to tolerate the higher energy that these *Enantiopus* males exhibit. To do this fish absolute justice, I'd love to get my hands on an eight foot tank that is at least 3 feet wide! Oh well.



**FOTAS ON THE WEB!
WWW.FOTASWEBSITE.COM**

Your Chance to Own a Piece of Aquatic History!

Dr. Keith Arnold is parting with some historical and valuable aquarium literature. Ideally, he would like to keep these collections within the FOTAS membership. A chance like this does not happen often. 30% of the proceeds will go to the FOTAS service award named in his honor.

For Sale

Aquarium Digest International: Issues 1 - 53 [all published], including 5 "official" binders: minimum acceptable bid \$175.

Freshwater and Marine Aquarium January: 1979 through February 1995 [204 consecutive issues] - includes 13 "official" binders - minimal acceptable bid \$575.

Tropical Fish Hobbyist: January 1986 through October 2002 [202 consecutive issues] - minimum acceptable bid \$525.

Aquarium Fish International: February 1993 through June 2010 [209 consecutive issues] - minimum acceptable bid \$550: winning bidder will receive all 2010 issues.

Dr. Arnold will deliver these journals either to the FOTAS convention in September or to a monthly club meeting of H.A.S., H.C.C.C. or T.C.A. He also has many issues of the "small" sized TFH [prior to January 1986]; e-mail at kbarnold2@verizon.net for a list of these issues. Bids on these runs may be sent to the same e-mail address. Bidding will close 31 July 2010.

Brazos Walker Special Collection of Aquarium Literature Additions

Donated by Gwen and Steve Butler of Bryan, Texas [former members of BVAS]

- Axelrod, H. R. 1971. *Breeding Aquarium Fishes*. Book
- 2. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, N.J. H-941.
- _____ 1980. *Tropical Fish*. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, N.J. KW-020.
- _____ & W. Burgess. 1980. *Tropical fish in Your Home*, Revised edition. Sterling Publishing, New York.
- _____ & _____. 1988. *African Cichlids of Lakes Malawi and Tanganyika*. 12th edition. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, N.J. PS-703.
- _____ & L. P. Schultz. 1983. *Handbook of Tropical Aquarium Fishes*, Revised edition. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, N.J. PS-663.
- _____ & _____. 1990. *Handbook of Tropical Aquarium Fishes*, Revised edition. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, N.J. PS-663.
- _____ & M. E. Sweeney. 1992. *The Fascination of Breeding Aquarium Fish*. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, N.J. TS-185.
- Burgess, W. E. 1989. *An Atlas of Freshwater and Marine Catfishes*. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, N.J. H-1097.
- Pronek, N. 1982. *Oscars*. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, N.J. PS-687.
- Terceira, A. C. 1974. *Killifish, Their Care and Breeding*. Pices Publishing Corp., Norwalk, CT.
- Wischnath, L. 1993. *Atlas of Livebearers of the World*. T.F.H. Publishing, Neptune, N.J.

The special collections are now in the Cushing Memorial Library at Texas A&M University, adjacent to the Sterling A. Evans Library. Eventually they will be formally moved into the Braz Walker collection. (3-4 weeks from June 25th).

Upcoming Events

To have your club's event published in **Fish Tales**, submit to editor at gsteeves@gvtc.com as far in advance as possible.

MAY

15- TCA Meeting with Dr. Earl Chilton with Texas Parks and Wildlife speaking on introduced "exotics"

22-USAFishBox Meeting Euless TX. Kory Watkins speaking on Hybrids and why we have to keep species pure.

22-23 OKAA Spring Fling Show, Symposium and Auction..

28-HCCC Outing Aquarena Springs San Marcos. 2:00pm. Glass bottom boat \$8.00 for adults and \$6.00 for children.

JUNE

10-13-NADA Annual Convention Irving TX
<http://www.discusnada.org/show/>

19 TCA Meeting at Rift 2 Reef Aquatics. Hagen rep will be speaking.

26-(Tent.) HCCC Meeting with Dr. Michael Kidd speaking on his research with Xenotilapia and other Lake Tanganyikan sand sifters. Location TBA.

JULY

11-HAS Auction, Houston TX.

22-25 ACA Annual Convention Milwaukee WI

31-HCCC/Amazonia's African Adventure. Amazonia International, Austin, TX. Begins at noon with speakers Dave Hansen,

Anton Lamboj and Greg Steeves. Rare Fish Auction. Admission free for all.

AUGUST

14-USAFishBox Auction Mansfield TX.

21 (tent) HCCC Collecting trip.

21 TCA Meeting at The Fish Gallery in Dallas. Jaxine Finnel with United Pet Group-speaking on new products

SEPTEMBER

3-5 FOTAS annual Convention Oklahoma City OK hosted by **OKAA**.

18 TCA Meeting Larry Lampert speaking on the Planted cichlid aquarium.

OCTOBER

HCCC Quarterly Meeting Ryan's Steakhouse, New Braunfels TX.

TCA Fall Workshop and Auction.

21-24 All Aquarium Catfish Convention Bethesda Maryland.



The first recipient of the Dr. Keith Arnold Award is its namesake. Pictured is Charles Jones (HAS) presenting the award to Dr. Keith Arnold (BVAS) at the FOTAS 2009 awards banquet in Houston Texas.



Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies

Fish Tales is the official publication of the
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