

Number 6, January 2011



Fish Tales

The Official Publication of the Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies



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Happy New Year everyone!

As The Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies enters its 59th year of existence, we should all be proud of the new vitalization that has begun in our organization over the last few years. The activity level has risen to a point not seen for a long time and there is no reason to think that it will not continue to increase.

Past president Marvin England was able to encourage communication between FOTAS directors which has led to the rebirth of Fish Tales, the awarding of grants and above all else, the awareness to others that FOTAS is a vibrant entity. Building on Marvin's base, current president Charles Jones intends to see some of the FOTAS programs and activities that have been all but forgotten, reestablished. Keeping with the times, modernization of the FOTAS presence was a necessity. In 2007 Max Smith gave us a huge step forward in constructing a FOTAS website complete with chat, message board and events calendar. Max brought FOTAS from the stone age to the modern era. Over the next couple of years, excitement subsided and the website became dormant. To kick 2011 off on the right foot, current webmaster Evan Bowers and Lee Ann Steeves redesigned the website giving it a modern look. Material is still being added to this project but the website is active once again. I urge all clubs to make use of the calendar feature. This is the most effective (if kept current) method of letting other clubs know what you are up to. This should also eliminate the double booking of events at the same time.

There is the ability for each association within the FOTAS brotherhood to have their own section on the FOTAS forum to conduct or communicate club affairs. If you would like this implemented for your society, contact myself or your club's FOTAS representative. Make use of the website, it is one of the tools the FOTAS provides for you!

The annual FOTAS convention will take place a little later than usual this year. It is slated for November 4th - 6th, 2011 in San Antonio Texas. The final negotiations are being worked out with the hotel but in short order, all information will be available through the FOTAS website <http://fotaswebsite.com/>, Hill Country Cichlid Club website <http://hillcountrycichlidclub.com/>, or the CARES website <http://www.carespreservation.com/>. Make plans to attend this event. It will be one of the largest aquatic events in the country this year.

In the listing of FOTAS member clubs last issue I unintentionally omitted the North American Discus Association. My apologies for this. Please read the feature in this issue on NADA. That's about all to report for now. As always, I welcome any writings for Fish Tales and appreciate all those who contribute.

See you in April!

Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies Directors 2010-2011

President - Charles Jones - marauder_77868@yahoo.com
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Secretary - Kathy England - kengland@pattonroberts.com
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Hill Country Cichlid Club - Diane Tennison - dtet523@sbcglobal.net
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Houston Livebearer Association - Max Smith - guppymax@msn.com
North American Discus Association - John Nicholson - jnicholson@hbssystems.com
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Show Judging Standards - Charles Jones - marauder_77868@yahoo.com

So Do You Know NADA?

- John Nicholson



Contrary to popular belief, we are more than just a catchy name and a pretty face. The official description (Article 1 of the bylaws) states the following description:

We are a collection of discus enthusiasts who are interested in the advancement, improvement and promotion of discus fish.

In other words, we are fish nuts infected with discus fever and trying to become contagious.

While we started having conversations about it prior, the club was officially formed at the ACA 2004. A group numbering 20 decided it was time to have a discus only club. Does that mean we look down on other cichlids? Heck no! In fact I really think everyone involved in the club keeps numerous other types of fish, but our main passion lies in the round, flat fish. In the beginning we tried to provide additional education by having a presence and by providing a discus speaker at the ACA.

In 2008/2009 we decided it was time to stand on our own two feet (or fins if you prefer). The NADA 2010 show was born. Now this may sound simple, but let me tell you, it can be nerve racking. When you decide to have your first national show, you have to ask yourself "What if we have this thing and no one comes?". As an officer/board member, if no one shows up, you still have to pay the bills. If we had failed, it would have killed the NADA. The show turned out to be a huge success and NADA

is really rolling but how did we pull it off?

Well first we called in a lot of favors from a lot of friends. We picked some of the best discus speakers on the planet. After that we started having raffles to generate the needed capital to keep the ball rolling. We shopped hotels hard and found a great deal at the Embassy Suites in Irving. We had a lot of individuals and companies donate both time and product to our cause. Lat, but certainly not least, the Texas Cichlid Association very generously allowed us to use all of their equipment. Also, several TCA members showed up to both support the show and to save our rears by pitching in and getting stuff done when it needed doing. We could not have pulled this off without the help of the TCA.

That is in the past, so what does the future hold for NADA? Well, we plan n having a discus show once every other year so look for an announcement about the location of our 2012 show around mid January of 2011. We will also continue with our current program and initiatives. We maintain a website (www.discusnada.org), several of us make ourselves available as speakers to other clubs. We strongly encourage members to infiltrate other clubs. We try to hook other members by selling discus at club meetings an


and auctions. We train new NADA judges at every opportunity.

This should at least give you a feel for what NADA is all about and remember, the next time someone asks you a question, just look them in the eye and say "I know NADA."



John Nicholson speaking at the 2005 HCCC Spring Show in Garden Ridge TX.

FOTAS website <http://www.fotaswebsite.com/>



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FOTAS 2011 CONVENTION

November 4-6, 2011 in San Antonio, Texas

Each year the annual Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies (FOTAS) convention rotates between member clubs. In 2011, the Hill Country Cichlid Club will be hosting the event November 4th - 6th, 2011, in San Antonio TX. Both FOTAS and many of its member clubs are actively involved in species survival and conservation efforts. With this theme in mind, FOTAS CARES promises to be an outstanding experience. An incredible speaker lineup includes Paul V. Loiselle, Kathy England, Ad Konings, Anton Lamboj, Les Kaufman, Charles Jones and Melanie Stiassny. With lectures, displays, vendors, and a large show and auction this will be THE event in 2011. The Babes in the Cichlid Hobby will be in attendance along with many other surprises. Great food, good people and lots of fish, join us for FOTAS CARES 2011.





FOTAS CARES

60TH ANNUAL FEDERATION OF TEXAS AQUARIUM SOCIETIES CONVENTION



San Antonio Texas, November 4th –6th 2011.

A world class speaker lineup including Melanie Stiassny, Charles Jones, Ad Konings, Paul V. Loiselle, Kathy England, Les Kaufman and Anton Lamboj. Fish show, Banquet, Auction, Babes in the Cichlid Hobby and much, much more! Something for every aquarist!

For more information visit
www.hillcountrycichlidclub.com.

The Betta Perspective

- Walden Nida



In this issue I will vary from my usual interview format to showing a farm I visited near Rayong, Thailand. Rayong is an industrial area near Cambodia.

The name of the farm is Modern Betta The farm is run by Yudhana and Ladda Nakpoom. They have two children 10 and 5. Yudhana is the foreman at a steel plant and Ladda is a house wife. Ladda breeds the

fish. The fish are not their main source of income and are more of a hobby that provides some extra money. Neither speak English and use a dictionary to post their fish on Aqua Bid. They raise Half Moon Plakats and Giants. It is difficult to set the color on a giant strain as they must be breed before they are 4 months old and the female gets lazy. You also have to out cross after two generations or the body begins to get short.

lazy. You also have to out cross after two generations or the body begins to get short.

On the previous page is a view of their sign and the gate of their home. The yard is full of plants that produce flowers, Fruit of both. Any plant outside of your fence can be used by passersby. Much of Southeast Asia has a pleasant smell from exotic spices being used in cooking or some plant spreading it's perfume though the air. Though we had a language barrier it was never a problem and I always felt both welcome and comfortable. Of course having Jesda as a guide helped as everyone was comfortable with him.

Cement tanks about a meter in diameter.



A grow out tank for giants. The plant is water banana. It does not grow in the water. Beside the tank are jarred bettas.



Yudhana and Ladda Nakpoom, owners of Modern Betta

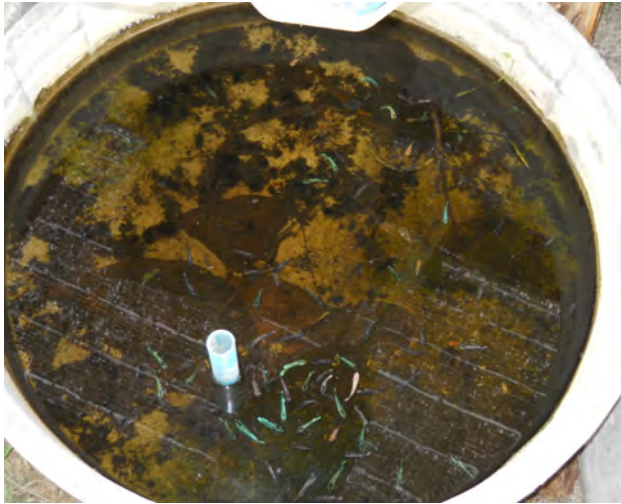


The tanks used to produce daphnia contain aged water and grow out giants.



Waste water containment pond.





In the upper tank you can see a half-moon Plakat spawn. All of the water the bettas are in has Indian Almond leaf tea added to it. Each farm has an area where the tea is brewed.

In the lower tank you see a breeding set up. The cement tank is about 40 inches in diameter and the plastic cylinder is about 10 inches in diameter. The pair are placed in the small cylinder and the female is removed as soon as the spawning is over. The male is left with the fry to protect them from mosquito lava which would eat them.



The female giants are kept in the 2 gallon



plastic containers while the males are raised in the 5 gallon buckets. Yudhana is showing Jesda some of the giants. They must be kept in a screened area to protect them from birds. Egrets are the worst problem bird.





The Styrofoam boxes used for breeding the giants and the plakats. The female is pulled after they spawn and the male is left with the fry.

At this point we had lunch which was a noodle and meat soup with fried bananas for dessert.



Above are fish they have jarred. These are the fish they will show, sell or breed from.

I helped Ladda cut down a banana tree. She then cut each of us a bunch to take home to ripen. A very sweet variety.





Above: A group of women came up selling hand made baskets. Jesda bought the green one to use for carrying fish. We had fresh fruit to eat after that. Ladda served us fresh pine apple and watermelon. The pineapples were the sweetest I had ever eaten. She sent us home with a mango and bananas. They use guava leaves as a spawning aid . They also a good for growing infusoria. The guava leaves keep the daphnia ponds smelling good. They grow catfish in these ponds both to sell and to eat. Guava leaves are used in coffins to keep the body from smelling.

The Nakpoom's are Buddhists. They do not kill their culls. They release them into the surrounding waters.



Lake Victoria and a Little History

- Kory Watkins



A boat floats across calm waters of Lake Victoria. Photo by Lawrence Kent.

Lake Victoria is my favorite of the three main Cichlid lakes in Africa. It is very unique with varied speciation and a history that is unbelievable! I promise that after you read a little about this wonderful basin you will be inspired to get yourself some Lake Victoria cichlid species and join with others who take conservation seriously.

Lake Victoria is very young if you compare it to other large lakes on this planet. Core samples taken from the bottom of the lake

suggest that it is around 13,000 years old. If this is the case then Victorian species have evolved in a very short period of time. If you have ever kept a breeding group of cichlids from this area you would know this. Most are very prolific and adaptable in a wide variety of settings.

Lake Victoria is 26,600 square miles in size, making it, in area, the continent's largest lake, the largest tropical lake in the world, and the second fresh water lake in the world in terms of sur-

lake, the largest tropical lake in the world, and the second fresh water lake in the world in terms of surface area. Being relatively shallow for its size, with a maximum depth of 276 feet and a mean depth of 131 feet, Lake Victoria ranks as the seventh largest freshwater lake by volume, containing 2.2 million acre-feet of water.

Lake Victoria receives most of its water from direct precipitation (rain). The largest stream flowing into this lake is the Kagera River, the mouth of which lies on the lake's western shore. Lake Victoria lies within an elevated plateau in the western part of Africa's Great Rift Valley and is subject to territorial administration by Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

Lake Victoria has a shoreline of 2,138 miles, and has more than 3,000 islands. These include the Ssese Islands in Uganda, a large group of islands in the northwest of the lake that are becoming a popular destination for tourists. Today, Lake Victoria in East Africa is one of the most populous regions in the world. The lake provides food, transport, and electricity to more than 30 million people.

Before the 1950's, Lake Victoria's ecology was outstanding with an incredible array of biodiversity. It was inhabited by over 500 species of fish, 90% of which were cichlids, all but two haplochromine species; plenty of natural action largely untouched with so much diverse life.

Exert from TED case Study 338, Lake Victoria:

Fishing pressure on the lake began to intensify in the early 1900's when the British introduced flax gill nets, which soon replaced the local villagers' papyrus nets and fish traps. With over fishing, catch sizes began to drop; fishermen turned to nets with ever smaller mesh sizes and thus decimated both the breeding adults and young of many native species. By the

1950s the ngege (*Oreochromis esculentus*) was commercially extinct and the labeo (*Labeo victorianus*) was not far behind. To compensate, British officials decided to stock the lake with new fish. The first



The ngege, *Oreochromis esculentus*.

nonnative species of tilapia (Cichlidae), that prospered was the Nile tilapia, *Oreochromis niloticus*, which feeds on the minute forms of plant and animal life called plankton, introduced in the early 1950s. In 1955 the Nile Perch *Lates niloticus* (Centropomidae) was introduced into Lake Kyoga, and when a few years later it was found in Lake Victoria, steps were taken to ensure its establishment there.

Despite such changes, the haplochromines appeared to be thriving in the 1950s. In fact, they appeared so robust that some colonial administrators favored introducing a big predator like the Nile perch to eat what they considered bony little "trash" fish and "convert the haplochromine biomass" into something more able for the restaurant table. Ecologists, fearing the worst for local species, strongly opposed the predator. But in 1954 illicit Nile perch began appearing in commercial catches anyway. Since the dirty deed was done, officials continued to stock the lake with perch in the early 1960s. Speculation is that the perch were first slipped into the lake by colonial sportsmen, just as homesick British anglers put trout into highland streams throughout eastern and south-



Lates niloticus, the infamous Nile Perch. Photo by Lawrence Kent.

commercial catches anyway. Since the dirty deed was done, officials continued to stock the lake with perch in the early 1960s. Speculation is that the perch were first slipped into the lake by colonial sportsmen, just as homesick British anglers put trout into highland streams throughout eastern and southern Africa. Still, for the next decade or so, the alien perch population remained small. A United Nations sponsored survey completed in 1971 found that haplochromines still made up 80 percent of the lake's fish biomass.

Then came what Pereti Basasibwaki, a Fisheries Research Institute biologist, calls the dark period, the years between 1974 and 1979 when Idi Amin cut off access to the lake from Uganda. Until 1978, Nile Perch remained a very small propor-

tion of the commercial catch, less than 5 percent. It wasn't until 1979 that the Kenyan government took over an idle Kisumu facility and work resumed under IC-MFRI's auspices. Pilot surveys suggested the lake's fish biomass was unchanged: it still appeared to consist of 80 percent haplochromines and less than 2 percent Nile perch. But in 1980 an abrupt change showed up in Kenyan waters, and within two years it appeared in Ugandan and Tanzanian waters too. Nile perch suddenly jumped to 80 percent of the biomass, and haplochromines dropped to 1 percent. The ngege, already rare, virtually disappeared. Clearly something had been building during the unmonitored 1970's to cause such a massive explosion of perch. As for the Haplochromines, the leading theory is that they simply provided the predator's fodder. However, when

1970's to cause such a massive explosion of perch. As for the Haplochromines, the leading theory is that they simply provided the predator's fodder. However, when Nile Perch were introduced into Lake Victoria some 30 years ago to improve game fishing, few would even have guessed that it might cause the elimination of whole species and the degradation of the area surrounding the lake. Then in 1978 a very rapid expansion of the proportion accounted for by Nile Perch took place, with the result that by 1990 the commercial catch had a totally different composition, dominated by Nile Perch (almost 60 percent) and Omena (most of the remaining 40 percent). The haplochromines, and the mixture of other fish had virtually vanished from the commercial catch.

Today people like Greg Steeves, Nick Andreola, Troy Veltrop, many other hobbyists and I are pushing to keep these rare species going. Lake Victoria today is a muddy, murky, polluted lake and it is also overstocked with predator fish that kill anything in sight.

After reading this I would hope that you have learned a little history about the lake and are interested in keeping a Victorian species of some sort. We need hobbyist to step up and offer a spot for a few of these species in their homes. Breed them and spread the love! Conservation is the key to their prolonged existence. So again please open up a tank for these little critters you won't regret it!

References:

Steeves, Greg. Lake Victoria: A Brief History. "<http://hillcountrycichlidclub.com/articles/Lake%20Victoria%20History.pdf>"

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Victoria

Large Lakes Observatory, University of

Minnesota: <http://www.d.umn.edu/llo/>

TED Case Studies: Lake Victoria: <http://www1.american.edu/TED/victoria.HTM>



Ugandan children with a basket full of haplochromines. Photo by Lawrence Kent.



TENTATIVE TCA CALENDAR FOR 2011

Date	Meeting/Event Information
January 15	Regular monthly meeting to be held at 7:00 at Spring Creek Barbeque, 1509 Airport Freeway, in Bedford (site of Christmas Party). Phone number (817) 545-0184. Time for officer elections. Guest speaker Bill Court from Penn Plax will be introducing us to new products.
February 19	Regular monthly meeting to be held at 7:00 at the home of Mike and Diane Stewart, 2319 Collin Dr, Grand Prairie, TX 75052. Home phone (817) 652-1143. Diane's cell (817) 253-0537; Mike's cell (214) 793-3210. Larry Lampert will be speaking on maintaining cichlids in a planted aquarium.
March 6	First Ever TCA Swap Meet. Bring your new and used (in good working condition) fishkeeping equipment, rent a table for only \$30 and sell, sell, sell! Each seller keeps all sale proceeds. No admission fee. Fish and plants being sold must be bagged appropriately in order to prevent water spillage. No tanks will be set up. For more information, please contact Marvin England at (903) 244-3993 or marvinengland@hotmail.com.
April 29-May 1	TCA Spring Show, Workshop and Auction at the Hilton Garden Inn in Irving. Speakers have not been set at this time. If there is someone you would like to hear, contact John Hansen at (501) 627-4354. For more information on showing your fish, and to reserve show tanks, contact either Page Ullman at (817) 905-8184 or Marvin England at (903) 244-3993. To reserve holding tanks for auction fish, contact Alan Young at (817) 683-7659.
May 21	Road Trip! To the home of John Nicholson, C.R. 2613, outside Caddo Mills, to tour his new fish house. John will also be updating everyone on happenings with the North American Discus Association. Special starting time for the meeting is 6:00.
June 18	Monthly meeting/cookout at 7:00 at the home of Alan Young, 1201 Brookvalley in Arlington. Kathy England will give a quick presentation on some of the pond and bog plants she maintains.
July 21-24	American Cichlid Association convention in Maryland/Washington, DC.
August 20	Regular monthly meeting at 7:00. Location and program yet to be determined.
September 18	Fall Auction at Hilton Garden Inn, Irving.
October 15	Monthly meeting at 7:00 at the home of Ernie McAnally in Southlake. Tentative program is viewing of a collecting video.
November 4-6	Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies annual convention hosted by Hill Country Cichlid Club, highlighting the C.A.R.E.S. program sponsored by the American Cichlid Association
December 3	Annual Christmas Party and Crazy Santa gift exchange

**TEXAS CICHLID ASSOCIATION
SPRING 2011 SHOW, WORKSHOP & AUCTION**

April 29-May 1, 2011

Hilton Garden Inn DFW South
2001 Valley View Lane, Irving, Texas 75061
(972) 313-2800

*Confirmed speakers at this time include Steve Lundblad
and Don Conkel, with more being contacted.*

Admission to the workshop and auction is \$5 per person per day, or \$10 for the entire weekend. Everyone is welcome - you do not have to be a TCA member to attend.

Show tanks will be set up Friday afternoon. Everyone is encouraged to assist with this undertaking. Show entries are \$3.00 each and **must be pre-registered by April 27, 2011**. Contact Show Chairmen Marvin England or Page Ullman with your show entries.

No rental tanks will be available. However, holding tanks will be available for individuals bringing fish in on Friday or Saturday to be sold in the auction. Out-of-town members will be given priority on these holding tanks. Call Alan Young **on or before April 27th** to determine holding tank availability.

Speakers will make their presentations on Saturday and show winners will be announced Saturday evening after the last speaker presentation is completed. If you are interested in going out to dinner with a group after the awards presentations, please sign the list at the registration table no later than noon on Saturday so a timely reservation can be made.

A "live" auction and a silent auction will be held on Sunday. Items being sold in the live auction include cichlids, livebearers, catfish and plecos, plus honeycomb rock, filters and fish food. Seller split is 75% to Seller for items selling for less than \$30 and 80% for items selling for over \$30. All plants will be sold in the silent auction. **Please bag and mark your plants for the silent auction as you would bag and mark your fish for the live auction.** Items received as club donations will also be sold in the silent auction. All donations are welcome!! Products from several vendors, including fish food, tanks, pumps and filters, will be raffled and sold to attendees. TCA appreciates the folks who support us and we want to introduce our members to their top-quality fishkeeping products.

For further information visit the TCA website (www.texascichlid.org) or contact:

Ernie McAnally (817) 329-2090

Alan Young (817) 683-7659 or alanyoungdrfish@hotmail.com

Page Ullman (817) 831-7876

Marvin England (903) 244-3993 or marvinengland@hotmail.com

HILL COUNTRY CICHLID CLUB SPRING AUCTION

for freshwater fish, plants, and more!

Sunday March 13, 2011

Now at the Schertz Community Ctr.

1400 Schertz Parkway, Schertz, TX



Doors Open at 10am, bidding begins at noon. This event is open and FREE to the PUBLIC and there are no bidder fees! Bidders and Sellers are welcome.

For more information, visit the forum at www.hillcountrycichlidclub.com



Upcoming Events

Visit the FOTAS Calendar for a posting of up to date info on the hosting of events by member organizations. <http://www.fotaswebsite.com/>

Feb 7 BVAS Monthly Meeting. Greg Steeves speaking Lake Victoria, Past Present and Future.

Feb 12 OKAA Monthly Meeting

Feb 19 HCCC Monthly Meeting at Dave's Rare Aquarium Fish in San Antonio TX. Greg Steeves giving a presentation on Snorkeling the Comal River.

Feb 19 TCA Monthly Meeting Grand Prairie TX. Larry Lampert Speaking on cichlids in the planted tank.

March 6 TCA Swap Meet Contact Marvin England for more info. (903) 244-3993 or marvinengland@hotmail.com

March 12 OKAA Monthly Meeting

March 13 HCCC Auction Schertz TX (Flyer page 18)

April 9 HCCC/Amazonia 2nd annual Cichlid Symposium. Amazonia International Austin TX

April 9 OKAA Monthly Meeting

April 29 - May 1 TCA Spring Show and Workshop, Irving TX. (Flyer page 17)

May 14 OKAA Monthly Meeting

May 21 TCA Road Trip to John Nicholson's new fish house Caddo Mills TX.

May 21 OKAA Auction Tulsa OK

June 18 TCA Monthly Meeting Arlington TX. Kathy England speaking on pond plants.

Aug 20 TCA Monthly Meeting, Time and place TBD

Sept 18 TCA Fall Auction Irving TX

October 15 TCA Meeting Southlake TX

Nov 4-6 FOTAS CARES, 59th Annual FOTAS Convention. San Antonio TX (Flyer Page 6)

Dec 3 TCA Crazy Santa Christmas Party



**Federation of Texas
Aquarium Societies**

Fish Tales is the official publication of the
Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies.