

Finformation

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INSIDE

Upcoming GPASI Events 2 & 3
Breeding *Ctenopoma acutirostre* 4
Zoogoneticus sp. "tequila" 5
Getting Started with Aquarium Plants..... 6

Next Meeting – June 27
Dave Williamson
on livebearers

CONTACT THE
NEWSLETTER

Please send articles or comments to
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available in full color online at
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NEWSLETTER ART

Platy cover art by Kathy Bintrim.
Original cover drawing will be
auctioned at the next meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

DUES are \$20 a year per family
or street address.
To become a member, write to us or
see Steve Gibbs at the next meeting.
Visit GPASI2002.TRIPOD.COM

General Meetings are held at the
Pittsburgh Civic Garden Center in
Mellon Park at the Corner of
5th and Shady Avenues.
DOORS OPEN AT 7 PM

2003 General Meeting Dates

June 27 • July 25 • Aug 22
Sept 26 • Oct 31 • Nov 21

The Board of Directors meets at 7pm
at Elmer's Aquarium in Monroeville
on the following dates:

July 7 • Aug 4
Sept 8 • Oct 6 • Nov 3

All members and suggestions for
discussion are welcome. Contact a
board member for meeting
confirmation.

Upcoming GPASI Events

Next General Meeting

June 27 Meeting: Dave Williamson will speak on "Livebearers: Wild Types & Domestic." Dave will start by showing us the "big five" livebearers, then some of their rarer variations, and then he'll compare them to their wild relatives. He'll also introduce the other families that don't have any domestic members and touch on the care and health of livebearers.

Dave has been a member of the Greater Akron Aquarium Society since 1981 and has been a member of the American Livebearers Association since 1991. He has bred (so far) 58 species of livebearers and has kept a number of others. He enjoys keeping and breeding almost any kind of fish; his present collection consists mainly of livebearers, killies, African cichlids and barbs. He works at Wet Pets Plus in North Canton, Ohio and also operates an aquarium maintenance business called Amazon Aquarium Maintenance.

Speakers for Coming Months

Watch *Finformation* for more information about these speakers who will be visiting our club: **Dan Woodland** in August on "Fishkeeping: Hobby or Disease?"; **Cheryl Sanders** on goldfish in September.; **Bill Shenefelt** on killies in October.

Auction

Our next big auction will be October 12. More details will be available as we make plans.



photo of Neon Yellow Wag Platy (*Xiphophorus maculatus*) by Dave Williamson

Upcoming Events

GPASI Picnic

The GPASI picnic will be on August 23 from 10 a.m. till dusk at Round Hill Park's Harmony House pavilion (Elizabeth, PA). The picnic offers for food and fun on a working farm. A Yahoo map to the park is posted on our website.

The club will provide soft drinks and cookout. Members should bring their favorite covered dish or dessert. To ensure that we have a good mix of dishes, please tell Jim Davidson what you plan to bring. He'll make sure that a lot of people don't bring the same thing. Call Jim at home between 5 and 10 p.m. or on weekends at (412) 781-3938 to confer on intended dishes or seek suggestions.

Breeders Award Program

The Breeders Award Program (BAP) promotes the keeping and breeding of tropical fish, recognizes and motivates achievement in the hobby, encourages research into the spawning of more difficult species, shares knowledge about breeding techniques, and publishes accounts of spawning techniques. For a description of the classes, awards, and point system, visit the BAP page at gpasi2002.tripod.com. **The latest standings are posted on our website.** Contact BAP Chair Chuck Bialon with questions: bialon@ppg.com.

March BAP Submissions—Congratulations to all the breeders.

Member Name	Genus	Species	Class	Points	Further Information
Gary Balbo	Hemigrammus	caudovittatus	6	15	
	Haplochromis	sp (#44)	7	10	bright tail reds
Eric Bodrock	Colisa	fasciata	2	10	
	Puntius	nigrofasciatus	3	10	
	Rasbora	trilineata	5	15	Scissortail
Marshall Davis	Apistogramma	agassizii	8	10	
Hank Marzina	Betta	coccina	2	20	
	Pseudocrenilabrus	nicholsi	7	10	
	Chlamydogobius	eremius	14	15	desert goby
Don Mikulan	Poecilia	latipinna	1	5	mollies
Linda and Ted Neill	Xiphophorus	helleri	1	5	red swordtails
Walter Roth	Poecilia	latipinna	1	5	mollies
	Neolamprologus	pulcher	7	15	sp (daffodil)
Terrence Trasatti	Pelvicachromis	pulcher	7	10	kribs

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~ There can be no club without its members. If there is anything that you would like to do for GPASI, just let one of us know. We'd be happy to have you as part of the team. ~

Breeding the Spotted

Finformation June 2003

Climbing Perch: *Ctenopoma acutirostre*

Text and Photo Sallie S. Boggs

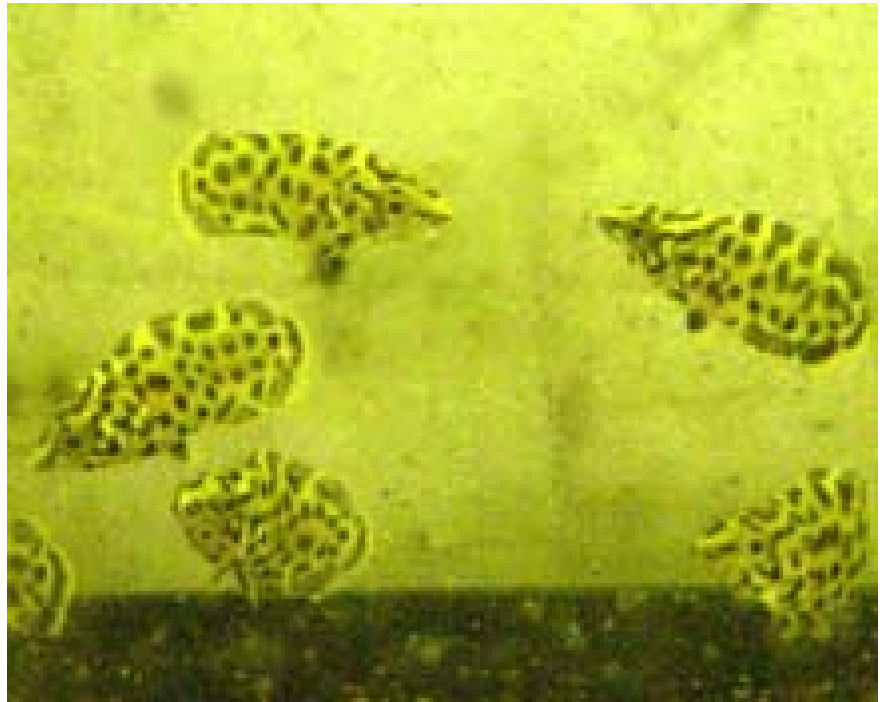
This fish goes by several names including Leopard Ctenopoma, Spotted Ctenopoma, and Bushfish. It was first imported to Europe in 1955.

These relatively large anabantoids come from the Congo, in Africa. Specifically, the fish occur in the Congo river system and in the Stanley pool. They are found in fast flowing rivers as well as in quieter regions and standing water.

My fish were kept in a 125-gallon tank with large clown loaches and large plecostomus. Because of a split in the tank the water level was about half the possible height. They were about 5 years old and the female was larger than the two males. The female was about 6 inches and the males were 4 inches. They are big eaters and will eat anything (fish or shrimp) up to 1 inch long. They were fed flakes, pellets, black worms, earthworms, and culled angelfish. The water was soft (about 120 ppm) and acid (6.0-6.7 pH). Water changes were infrequent. Although they were basically shy and nocturnal, they came out to feed and were not afraid to share a PVC tube with a foot long loach. There is some gravel on the bottom of the tank and some duck weed on the surface of the water. The water is filtered by two large Eheim filters that spray water into the tank from about 1 foot above the surface. The temperature was between 75-80 degrees F (25-29 degrees C).

One day in March the female looked fatter than usual so I put her into a recently cleaned (totally new water) 15-gallon tank with a sponge filter and a floating mop. Two days later, both of the males were moved to the same tank. Sexual dimorphism has been reported to lie in the area of spines on the males gill covers being more developed. In my experience this is not apparent, but instead there is a difference in size and most definitively there is Velcro-like spot at the base of the male's caudal peduncle that is absent in the female.

Two days after the males were put with the female, thousands of small (<1mm) almost clear eggs were floating at all levels in the water. The actual spawning was not seen, but based on the similar body shape, similar Velcro-like spot at the base of the male's caudal peduncle and similar eggs, I assume the male embraces the



Baby Leopard Ctenopoma

female in the same way as my *Cenopoma kingslei* did. There was no bubble nest and no bubbles at the surface. The temperature was about 76 degrees F. The parents were not eating the eggs, but nevertheless I moved them back to the loach tank. Just for insurance, I moved some of the eggs to a ten-gallon tank. Virtually all the eggs were fertile. After one day the eggs showed dark pigment and after two days they hatched. Even though they hatched, they still floated at all levels of the water with the yolk oriented up and the helpless larva upside down. When the yolk was absorbed enough to allow the fry to swim upright they all hid in or under the mop or the sponge filter. It was truly amazing to see the cloud of tiny black fry swim away when the mop was disturbed.

Because of the small size of the fry, the first food offered was a fine powder that they seemed to ignore. Next rotifers were offered and some of the fry made "capture" motions. The next day a mixture of rotifers and newly hatched brine shrimp were offered and taken. From then on feeding was no problem. The problem was space.

At one month of age the fry had developed a very nice pattern of dark brown spots on a light beige background. They are truly striking. They also developed a voracious appetite. They ate white worms, black worms, and baby angelfish. They even had to learn to eat pellet food. These are beautiful as young fish and not-so-shabby as adults. Attractive in appearance, elegant in their movements and interesting as fry, these fish can be heartily recommended for the right tank. These fish are rarely bred, the first breeding report I know of came from the Basel Zoo, where the fish spawned in a large, well-planted tank. Apparently, despite subsequent successful reports in the US the only details available are that they are free layers, and do not care for the eggs. It is hoped that the current report will rectify that dearth of information. ■

BAP Report

Zoogoneticus sp. "tequila"

Eric Bodrock

Photo courtesy Ivan H. Dibble

I have seen these livebearers offered before in the hobby (usually at a sky-high price!) and had put them in the back of my mind as a fish I'd like to work with some day (my mind has way too many of those type fish in there, too!). I acquired a young adult pair, along with two youngsters, about a year ago. As a couple of months passed, the adult pair put on a little size and the two youngsters both grew out to be females, both sexes just reach two inches in total length when fully grown. They were all housed together in a bare-bottomed, 20-gallon aquarium, which was filtered by a large sponge filter. A handful of marine-type sand was added to help buffer the pH up a bit to 7.6. The outside bottom and back of the aquarium were painted black. A large clump of Java moss took up a good portion of the area inside. The aquarium was also covered well to prevent loss from jumping. Overhead lighting was low, but a bit of sunlight reached the front of the aquarium in the afternoon for a few hours.



The fishes' diet consisted of a large assortment of flakes, frozen bloodworms and live black worms once or twice a day. In addition, I fed them live baby brine shrimp fed once a day. I did fifty percent water changes about every seven to ten days. The temperature was maintained at around 75F and the TDS reading averaged 248.

It took a good while before I ever noticed that any of the females were getting exceptionally full-bellied to the point I was looking for fry to be born anytime soon. Once I did see a heavy female, rather than remove her, I just checked the tank several times a day for fry. I spotted the fry swimming near the surface along the back of the aquarium, against the black background. I'm sure this provided them with excellent camouflage from the adults since the one-centimeter long fry are mostly black and dirty silver in color. This first spawning was of ten live fry (that I found) and several DOA. Spawns since have ranged from three to eight fry and I have noticed that there are often a few fry born dead with each spawning. I would think that the adults are spawning more often than I'm aware, but I have never found a fry that has grown up in the tank with the breeders, which tends to make me believe that they will eat their own young if given the opportunity. When moved to their own aquarium and started off with live baby brine shrimp, microworms and crushed flakes, the fry grow without problems. Sex ratios in the several batches of fry I've grown out seem to be close to even. ■

Getting Started with Planted Aquariums

Substrate Cavan Allen

While not as important to good plant growth as good lighting, nutrient levels in the water, and carbon dioxide, the substrate of a planted aquarium does play an important part in its success.

Gravel that is fine grained and does not have undesirable buffering properties should be the key ingredient for any planted aquarium substrate. Avoid using sand or gravel bordering on pebble size. Neither is suitable, as the former will become compacted and the latter will hold down plenty of rotting food but does not provide a good rooting medium for plants. Sand may be used to top appropriately sized gravel when delicate foreground plants are used, but that's it.

Substrate additives are just as important as the gravel itself, especially for plants that absorb much of their nutrition from their roots. Soil is sometimes recommended as a sub-gravel layer, especially for lower light tanks, but I don't advise using it. Finding dirt low in organics and free of pollutants can be difficult, as can cleaning up the mess created when a large plant is uprooted.

Laterite is an iron-rich clay often used beneath gravel and is a better option than soil. Besides providing iron, it helps plant roots gather nutrients from the water column. Unfortunately, it still has one of the same main drawbacks as soil in that things can get messy when plants are uprooted.

Seachem's Flourite is a baked clay gravel has the same benefit as laterite but does not contribute to a messy tank. It also has a good grain size and a nice appearance. Plants do quite well growing in it. The only downside is its expense, but I think it is worth it and I like it a lot. If you do decide to use it, *wash it thoroughly before use* to remove the abundant dust.

Although both laterite clays and Flourite are rich in iron, they will likely not provide enough for tanks with strong lighting and plant growth. A liquid iron supplement should then be used.

Plants that are heavy root feeders like sword plants and Cryptocorynes can be fed with macro or micro nutrient balls in addition to water column fertilization. This applies more to tanks where vigorous plant growth can result in shortages of needed elements, but can give a boost in almost any case. Any root fertilization tablets (especially those composed of macro nutrients) should be buried *deep* under the gravel, lest they leak into the water column and cause unanticipated consequences. For my heavy root feeders, I use Jobes Spikes for ferns and palms and Seachem Flourish Tabs for micro nutrients, although the Seachem tabs may not be necessary since I supplement the water column so heavily.

In an aquarium with many plants, it is not necessary to vacuum the gravel deeply. Simply lightly dusting over and between them with the siphon is adequate. ■

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- 6/28-29 Scales show, Canton, Ohio 330-452-9027 – John Baad
7/12-13 Medina show, Wadsworth, Ohio 330-896-3314 – Earl Steffensen
7/24-27 ACA Convention, Cincinnati, Ohio
8/2-3 Akron Show + Auction, Tallmadge, Ohio 330-848-3856 – Bud White
8/16-17 Yatfs Show + Auction 330-824-2653 – Curt Smith
8/23 GPASI Picnic at Roundhill Park 10 a.m. till dusk! Harmony House pavilion
8/29-31 Canadian K.A. Konvention, Ontario, Canada
9/20 Erie Auction, Erie, PA 814-838-6380 – Bob Cashin
9/20 Great Lakes Auction, Euclid, Ohio 330-339-3216 - John
10/05 Medina Auction, Wadsworth, Ohio 330-896-3314 – Earl Steffensen
10/11 Café Auction, Columbus, Ohio 614-846-1038 – Pat Sabourin
10/12 Ashco Auction, Ashtabula, Ohio 440-466-2464 – Bob Swanson
10/12 GPASI AUCTION
10/19 Yatfs Auction 330-824-2653 – Curt Smith
11/02 Akron Auction, Tallmadge, Ohio 330-848-3856 – Bud White
11/22-23 OCA Show, Strongsville, Ohio 440-236-6301 – Marc
Ongoing Reptile Swaps at Palace Inn in Monroeville, PA Herb Ellerbach (412) 361-0835

GPASI Marketplace

Walter Roth has **plastic bags to sell in 100 count packages**. Sizes are 6 x 12", 8 x 15", 10 x 20". Call (724) 449-9651.

Sharon Serbin designs and creates **fish-related art**: stained glass mosaic tables and wall hangings; tile mosaic floors; and hand-painted T-shirts and other clothes items. E-mail sjserbin@pgh.net or page her at (412) 949-3106.

Chuck Bialon has some **fish** to sell: 412-434-2073 or 412-487-2378 w = bialon@ppg.com
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Gambusia krumholzi	\$10 - pair
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Xiphophorus alvarezi-	\$10 - 6 juveniles
Girardinichthys viviparous	\$10 - pair
Xiphophorus mayae (PMH)	\$10 - 6 juveniles

To let other members know about aquarium-related items you'd like to buy, sell, or trade, contact Jean Grace at (412) 441-1106 or jgrace@pitt.edu



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