



## GPASI CARES Program

The Greater Pittsburgh Aquarium Society has been participating in the international CARES program (Conservation, Awareness, Recognition and Responsibility, Encouragement and Education, and Support and Sharing) since May of 2017. The CARES program spans more than two-dozen clubs and organizations with a goal of promoting the captive breeding and maintenance of vulnerable species. The CARES organization collects data from hobbyists that maintain species designated as priorities (you can view this list at <http://caresforfish.org>) and curates a database. The end goal is that the database can be used to estimate the population size for captive individuals and provide a way for breeders to find other individuals working with the same species for trades.

### Why You Should Participate

The aquarium hobby has a complicated relationship with conservation efforts. While over-collection has certainly been detrimental for many ornamental species, captive breeding efforts by hobbyists have also been instrumental in preserving species that have gone extinct in the wild. You really can be an important part of conservation efforts of the fish species you love to work with!

To recognize the contributions of our members to CARES, we will also be implementing an award program. Love certificates and stickers? Still have room in the file cabinet you store your AHAP and BAP certificates in? Great, you can get more! Each species registered will earn you a handsome CARES certificate along with a gold seal. You can earn additional seals by sharing fry and your knowledge of CARES species with other members. You can also earn an additional longevity seal for each year you maintain your colony. In addition, one GPASI member will be awarded a plaque for outstanding contributions to the CARES program each year. The recipient will be chosen by the CARES coordinator (who is ineligible for the award) in consultation with the Board of Directors.

### How to Participate as a Member of GPASI

Participation is easy! If you maintain a colony of a priority species (GPASI defines a colony as a group of at least one male and one female or at least four individuals if sex cannot be determined easily), then you will first need to register it on the CARES website ([http://caresforfish.org/?page\\_id=879](http://caresforfish.org/?page_id=879)).

The proper identification of species is critical to CARES as a viable program for both the hobbyist and conservation priority fishes. With your help and the combined knowledge and expertise of the CARES Team we will ensure that your fish are registered with the correct species identification.

As part of the registration process, you will need to submit a photo of your fish for species verification. Photos are not expected to be of high quality, but **MUST** be of the fish that you are registering. Photos taken in the past or from the Internet do not identify the fish you are keeping and cannot be accepted for registration. If you would prefer to send a video, I have been told that you can send a message to Claudia Dickinson through Facebook (sorry Claudia!). Please be aware that the file name for the photo must be formatted in a specific way.

File name format: species name\_your name\_CARES club\_submission date. For instance:  
Etroplus canarensis\_James Fish\_GPASI\_1-26-17.jpg

In the message box please include:

- a) your name.
- b) your email address.
- c) your postal address (optional).
- d) your telephone number (optional).
- e) species name.
- f) where or from whom obtained.
- g) collection location, if available.
- h) when obtained (approximate date is fine).
- i) whether or not the colony has produced fry.
- j) your CARES affiliate organization.

Once your registration has been processed, CARES will notify our club's CARES Coordinator (Luis Bonachea) to let them know. From this point on, keep and breed your fish!

## Awards of Recognition

As added incentive, participating members are recognized for their efforts in the CARES program with a certificate for each registered colony. A variety of colored seals can be added to each certificate in recognition of specific achievements:

- Gold - This seal is automatically awarded for registering the colony.
- Green - This seal is awarded for sharing your experiences and knowledge in working with the species with others in the aquarium community. For example, you may present a brief talk at a GPASI meeting or publish an article in our newsletter.
- Blue - This seal is awarded for sharing at least 6 fry of your registered CARES species with a GPASI member. The seal is awarded when the recipient registers the new colony or emails your club coordinator (Luis Bonachea) to confirm they were added to an

existing colony. Note that in order to register the colony, the fry will need to be old enough to be readily identified by CARES personnel.

- Red seal - This seal is awarded for sharing at least 6 fry of your registered CARES species with a member of another participating club. The seal is awarded when the recipient registers the new colony or emails your club coordinator (Luis Bonachea) to confirm they were added to an existing colony. A list of member clubs is available at [http://caresforfish.org/?page\\_id=96](http://caresforfish.org/?page_id=96).
- Longevity seals - For each succeeding year that you continue to maintain a species enrolled in CARES, a red longevity seal can be added to your CARES Certificate of Recognition. The certificate itself has space for 12 of these seals, so be ready to enjoy your fish for years to come!

## Member of the Year Award

Each year, GPASI will recognize one member that has made significant contributions to the club's efforts in the CARES program. Three members will be nominated by the coordinator (who is not eligible) who will then bring those nominations to the board for a vote.

If you have any questions about the program, please contact the GPASI CARES Coordinator:

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