The Lateral Line July 1, 2004

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Upcoming Events:

- ACA Annual Convention. July 22-25.
- · August Meeting TBA

Cover Photo:
Altolamprologus
compresseceps
dwarf
by Spencer Jack

BAP Report

June has been another successful month for our Breeder Award Program. Although we only had two species earn points, one of the two was a first time spawn for the club.

With many new people joining the club, it shouldn't be long before we start seeing some new names on our scoreboard. Don't forget, many species are still available for purchase by HCCC members for the unbelievable price of \$5 for a group of six fry.

Dave earned points for a Labidochromis caeruleus spawn and Robert for his Julidochromis dickfeldi spawn.

Lets keep those fish healthy and spawning and don't forget to submit your BAP reports to earn your points.

Current Standings	
Greg	265
Charles	110
Duc	90
Robert	85
Paul	65
Dave	60
Lisa	60
Brian	40
Christina	25

Picture of the Month

This month is the first time that a non-cichlid was featured in our Picture of the Month. This photograph was courtesy of Karli Steeves, an up and coming photographer.

I know what your are thinking, and no, I didn't put the picture upside down nor was the photographer hanging from her feet. This is a normal position for this fish.

From the family Mochokidae and native to Volta River and the Nile River basin, Hemisynodontis membranaceus is a lar-

ger catfish growing to around 14 inches. Instantly recognizable by it's "mustache", the wide maxillary barbells serve to sieve zooplankton which it ingests in an inverted position. Not yet spawned in captivity, Hemisynodontis membranaceus is an interesting addition to most cichlid aquariums.



Photo courtesy of Karli Steeves

A Little Insight on Barombi Mbo, Cameroon

— by Greg Steeves

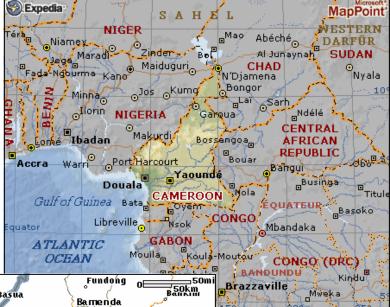
Midway up the African continent's Atlantic coast sits the country of Cameroon. Near the town of Kumba is Lake Barombi Mbo. Barombi Mbo is one of many crater lakes that dot the southern portion of Cameroon. These aptly named crater lakes are basins formed over thousands of years on what were once active volcanoes. Some of the crater lakes sit atop active faults. Over time, pockets of deadly gas form in these craters. Seismic activity releases the toxic vapor through the water and into the air. In 1986, one such toxic burst occurred in another Cameroonian crater lake, Lake Nyos. This event made headlines as mysteriously causing the deaths of 1500 people. Live stock, and native

fauna that were in the path of this killer cloud, also met a dismal fate. The native people in the area surrounding Lake Barombi Mbo are aware of this phenomenon and believe it to be a spirit they have named "Mammy Water". In years past, animal sacrifices were made to soothe Mammy Water. It is to note that the toxic-

Fundong -50mi Abakaliki 50km Onitsha <u>Barnen da</u> lkom iĥiala\ Afikpo Ekok Mamfe Magba Nganbe orlu okigwi Mbouda Ekang Bakebe Owerri Orira Linte Arochukwu Itu Akampka Bangangté Company Mankim Calabar Nkongsamba ngoro Port Harcourt Jkang Bafia Ngila Eket Kumba Bogi Bokito Mbonge Ýabassi Opobo Mbanga _oNgambe Lake Barombi Mbo Doùala Endoula Esse Limbe Yabundē Edea Mbalmayo Obout Lolodorf Menguéme Bipindi ©2004 MapQuest.com, Inc.; ©2004 AND Products B.V

ity of Barombi Mbo waters during these gas leaks must also be detrimental to aquatic life, but over the thousands of years of evolution here, life has not only survived, but thrived and diversified.

The native lake animals of Barombi Mbo are facing threats from a familiar group of menaces. Trees in the area are being harvested for lumber and to make way for agricultural operations. The small tributary that feeds from the lake is dammed up to supply water to nearby communities. Over harvesting the fish with modern netting is probably the main culprit for decreased cichlid populations as of late. All is not bleak though. The native people are developing sustainable harvesting of the fishery, reseeding the area with native foliage, and the protection of the entire lake as a natural reserve is a



step in the right direction to preserving the region.

Lake Barombi Mbo is a small lake only 2.5 kilometers wide, but 110 meters deep. As there is no large current to turn the water, only the top portion (40 meters) contains acceptable oxygen levels to harbor vertebrate life. Still here, a rich mostly endemic group of cichlids (and other fish)

have evolved.

Four endemic genera are found in Barombi Mbo. These Include Konia with two species, Myaka and Pungu with one representive each and Stomatepia with three. All of these fish are in the red list as critically endangered. The cichlids of Lake Barombi Mbo are thought to have originated from a Sarotherodon ancestor. This lineage has evolved over the past 10,000 years.

(Continued on page 4)

The cichlids:

Konia dikume (the local name for this species) is unique species in that when caught it hemorrhages due to high hemoglobin concentrations in its blood. Growing to a length of 12 cm, Konia dikume is a silver colored mouth brooder with faint vertical barring. This invertebrate feeder is one of the rarer cichlids to find of the Barombi Mbo species flock. It is has the deepest range of the endemic cichlids able to enter depths low in oxygen to feed.



Ariel Bornstein www.blackwaterfish.com



Ariel Bornstein www.blackwaterfish.com

Konia eisentrauti is also an invertebrate feeder native to Barombi Mbo. Known as "konye" to the Native people, Konia eisentrauti exhibits a differing adolescent vs. adult coloration and body shape. A broken black line runs from the gill plate to the tail fin splitting the white belly region from the back with black spots on a grey base running under the dorsal. The juvenile form is more elongated than the adult form. When adult, Konia eisentrauti is a mainly silver fish with a solid black bar running mid-body from the gill plate to the caudal area. The adult body thickens and eisentrauti loses it's torpedo shaped profile.

Myaka myaka is the only species from this region that I have personal experience with. Myakamyaka is the native name of this most unusual cichlid and the only fish in the genus. In the wild Myaka myaka is a pelagic planctivore. In captivity, the myaka greedily accepts anything that enters the water surface. Although the Myaka myaka only reaches 8 cm, the fish has a nasty disposition with it's own kind. I have housed my small colony of

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five animals with a variety of Victorian and Tanganyikan cichlids, as well as catfish. Aggression seems to be interspecific. Myaka is somewhat molly shaped with subdominant fish sporting a silver body coloration. Dominant males will turn jet black in the posterior portion of the body and retain the gleaming silver in the head past the gill plates. The

eye socket of Myaka myaka is red orange and really stands out against the body coloration. This fish is, in my opinion, the most attractive of the cichlids of Barombi Mbo. I have had my dominant male stake out breeding territory and shimmer to prospective females in the typical mouthbrooder

manner.

Pungu, like Myaka, is another monotypic genus containing the lone species, mclareni. The unique characteristic of Pungu maclareni is that this cichlid is a sponge eater feeding on an endemic species of sponge (Corvospongilla thysi). The Pungu maclareni is abundant near shore and can reach 10 cm in length. This is another attractive cichlid in that the bright yellow body coloration contrasts nicely with the black blotched thorax and mid body line. Bright blue lips and edge tinge on the fins add the appeal of this mouth brooder.

Sarotherodon caroli grows to 18 cm. One of four Sarotherodon species from Lake Barombi Mbo, caroli exhibits differing feeding habits in its juvenile and adult forms. Young Sarotherodon caroli are carnivorous cichlids while the adult

forms feeds mainly on suspended phytoplankton.

Another of Barombi Mbo's larger cichlids is Sarotherodon linnellii. It too can reach in excess of 18cm. This species is characterized by a disproportionably large head. Males take on a metallic green hue, especially around the region



Pungu mclareni Oliver Lucanus www.belowwater.com

of the head, while females are typically silver with mostly colorless fins. The Native people of the region refer to S. linnellii as

"kippe".

Sarotherodon lohbergeri is a bi-parental mouthbrooder from Lake Barombi Mbo. The base coloration is a grey hue with a black blotched midlateral line

extending the length of the body. A slight yellow blaze runs from the fore(Continued on page 6)



Sarotherodon
Arial Bornstein
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head along the base of the dorsal. The lips and caudal fin are tinged blue. Sarotherodon lohbergeri grows to around 11 cm and feeds mainly on filamentous algae and the minute life forms that inhabit within. This cichlid is known as leka keppe by the native fisherman of Barombi Mbo. Feeding strategy is similar to the mbuna of Lake Malawi and the Tropheus of Tanganyika.

Sarotherodon steinbachi is a light, nearly solid yellow cichlid reaching 11 cm. This schooling fish is a sand sifter, plunging the substrate for organic morsels. Known to the people of the region as "kululu", this is a rather unattractive fish in that it exhibits no bright coloration that make the family cichlidae so popular.

Stomatepia mariae is a substrate spawning egg layer from Barombi Mbo. At 12 cm S. mariae sports a copper flank divided by a solid black horizontal band, and a silver belly. Breeding males exhibit bright yellow fins. S. mariae is a predator on other species.

Stomatepia mongo is another mouth brooding cichlid from Barombi Mbo and recognizable by its long snout. S. mongo, which grows to 10 cm, is a tanned copper color turning bright silver when in breeding coloration. The elongated shape of the Stomatepia mongo

resembles some of the detritus feeders of Lake Malawi. I cannot confirm this feeding strategy as I have also seen this

body profile with piscivores as well. There are also conflicting reports of this cichlid being extinct in the wild however it appears that S. mongo is rare due to



Stomatepia pindu Oliver Lucanus www.belowwater.com

its habit of living in deeper waters and not extinct as some reports have suggested.

Stomatepia pindu is probably the most abundant cichlid from Lake Barombi Mbo we see in the aquarium hobby. Reaching 9 cm, this little mouthbrooder sports a solid jet black coloration when in good condition. Coloration at times range from this beautiful black, to dark purple, to a dull grey hue. Stomatepia pindu is a piscivore. Young S. pindu exhibit a tilapia spot on their dorsal that vanishes upon adulthood.

(Continued on page 7)

Stomatepia mongo
Arial Bornstein
www.blackwaterfish.com



Recently some of these cichlid species have been made available to the hobbyist for the first time. There is much to learn concerning husbandry associated with these animals. Lake Barombi Mbo and many of the crater lakes are small ecosystems especially susceptible to man's interference. It is hoped that by careful analysis and conservation measures, Barombi Mbo and the other crater lakes of Cameroon, can be preserved and the unique ecosystems be held intact for many years to come.

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The Stand: Part II

— by Dave Hansen

This is a continuation of an article I wrote early on a need/desire for more tanks. I went into some detail of a stand I planned on building to achieve this goal. As is typical of my projects, the planning stage and final stage look nothing alike!! If you refer back to the April edition of the newsletter you will see a drawing I made for my stand and the requirements I wanted to meet. The plans looked great on paper, except for one thing. I forgot to incorporate the thickness of the 2X4 and plywood in my design. The 4 1/4" combined thickness of the 2X4 and plywood would affect the design in that it really cut down on the distance between shelves. I needed to be able to maneuver around the tanks for maintenance, catching fish, etc. The stand would have been like 9 feet tall to accomplish this based on my original plans. So what I did was eliminate a

shelf. Obviously I wanted tanks more than anything so I killed the dry good and supply shelf.

So I re-drew my plans and made a trip to Home Depot to pick up the wood. The total came out to \$69.48 for all the wood. Due to all the weight that the stand was going to hold the need for square ends was very important. I didn't feel comfortable trying to achieve this preciseness with a circular saw so I moved the whole project over to my dad's house who has a table saw. I first built all the frames for the shelves and then placed 3/4" plywood for the surface. The only one I didn't attach plywood to was the top shelf. The top was going to use a hinged cover and would work on that later. Once the shelves were built I proceeded to cut the 4 main posts. I attached the shelves to

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the post using regular wood screws for the time being. In the final product I use lag screws because I felt more confident

in the consistent quality of the steel used in them versus regular screws. Here is a picture of the shelves and post joined together.

Once the shelves were attached I started working on the hinged shelf. I built the top so that there are two separate sections that hinge; each section runs half of the distance of the shelf.

The most important part was next. How to finish this stand and have the wife approve enough to actually let me have it in the house. I had bought unfinished paneling to finish the sides and now proceeded to install that.

I next decided to build the flaps that would run the length of the bottom two shelves to cover up the airspace between shelves. They would start at the top of one shelf and run down to cover the top trim of the tanks below on the next shelf. I cut them and installed knobs on them to give it a nice look and also easier to lift the flap. I then sanded the hell out of every surface. Once that was finished I begin staining the wood. This took longer than I thought because the paneling and the plywood sucked up the stain pretty good. After giving the stain a day to dry I shellacked the entire stand. I like the shine and also to help prevent water from ruining the wood. After that I installed the flaps and stood back and was pretty happy with the look.

Turns out that was the easy part. Now I

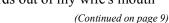
had to get it home. I called up a buddy who had a truck. He came over and we lifted it into the back of his truck. This



beast was not light. The stand looked like it might rub on a few spots on the truck so I grabbed a blanket and placed in some strategic locations. My buddy thought I was trying to protect his truck. I started laughing. This truck has more scratch marks than paint on it. I said,

"Your truck? I am worried about my stand!". We drive about 20 miles to my house and unload and get into my living room. Now I need to move the 55-gallon stand and tank. This is all about 6 pm on a Monday. We get the tank moved, slide the new stand in place and lift the 55 onto the new stand. I am like crap, I can't stop here. By the time I get done draining,

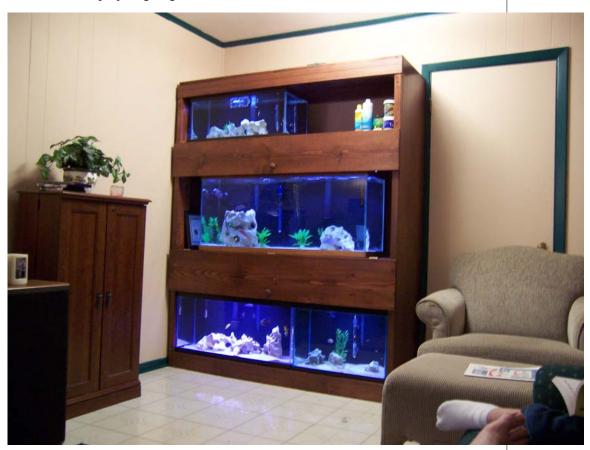
moving, refilling tanks it is about 1 am. The first words out of my wife's mouth





were WOW. That made it all worth the extra effort. We have really enjoyed having all the tanks together and are very happy with the final result. I took a picture the next day. Since I have taken the picture I have a tank running in the top right. Those supplies have been moved. I have another little project going for the

supplies and other stuff we tend to gather as fish keepers. By the time it was all finished my total cost was \$101.35. Now I need to figure out where I will put the next one. I let my wife know I plan on one stand for each lake: Any question feel free to ask.



Tips for Setting Up Your New Aquarium: Part I

— by Bob Nuckols

Originally appeared in FAMA March 2004. Reprinted with permission from author.

The first thing I consider is location. Decide where to put your aquarium by choosing a location that is away from drafty areas and direct sunlight. Both can affect the temperature of the tank and direct sunlight can cause excessive algae growth. Be sure to choose a site that is close enough to be observed from your

favorite chair. If you put it in an obscure corner you will not pay attention to it and the animals will suffer. I have a tank in my dining room that I really need to move. No one stays in that room for any length of time and the fish are kind of ignored, except for feeding time.

A couple of other thoughts on location: be sure to pick a sturdy stand, the correct

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size for your tank and make sure it is level. Failure to do this can cause leakage or breakage. Both bad news! You will find it helpful if you pick a location that is close to an electrical outlet. If it also happens to be close to a water source and a drain, all the better.

Next, you will want to clean the aquarium. To clean the aquarium just wipe it inside and out with a clean wet towel. I use old baby diapers. Never use soap to clean your aquarium. Any remaining soap residue will kill your fish. And be careful carrying a wet tank. Glass is slippery when wet.

The third tip is filtration. The basic filter systems are undergravel filters and power filters. Most new tank set-ups come with one type or the other. Other types of filtration out there are corner filters, canister filters, fluidized bed filters and wet/dry filters. No matter which kind of filter you choose, it takes on av-



erage six to eight weeks to grow the bacteria to process the fish waste; or with a new product on the market, add live bacteria, wait overnight and add your fish. Be sure to follow the directions!

The undergravel filter is the workhorse of aquarium filters for the last thirty years. They are easy to set up and fairly easy to maintain. Undergravel filters are biological filters. They work by circulat-

ing water through the gravel taking oxygen-laden water from the water surface to the bacteria growing in the gravel. These bacteria process the fish waste as fast as the fish produce it. Unfortunately, this circulation also traps waste in the gravel as well, making it difficult to remove from the gravel. Regular use of a siphon-type cleaner will help keep the filter unclogged and working properly. Undergravel filters can be run using either an air pump or a powerhead (which is just a small water pump) to move the water through it.

Outside power filters are probably the next popular filtration systems available today. Outside power filters used to provide mechanical and chemical filtration only. In the "old days" they were used in conjunction with undergravel filters to provide all three types of filtration - biological, mechanical, and chemical. Now, the better filters have a place to grow bacteria. Some have sponges, ceramic or plastic pieces or a spinning wheel as a place for the bacteria to grow. Like the undergravel filter, the bacteria grow to process the fish waste as fast as the fish can produce it. Outside power filters also trap dirt mechanically and use carbon to chemically purify the water, which undergravel filters cannot do.

Another type of filter is the corner filter. These filters have been around since the fifties. This type of filter uses floss and carbon as a filter media. This filter is primarily a mechanical and chemical filter. The floss grows bacteria on it as well as acting as the mechanical filter. Unfortunately, when the floss clogs and needs to be replaced, the bacteria get thrown out as well. One way to get around that is to use sponges, ceramic or

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plastic pieces in the filter for the bacteria to grow on. Corner filters are generally included in the economy type tank setups. I use them for quarantine tanks or for breeding fish. I load them with gravel from an active undergravel filter bed so I have the bacteria instantly started.

Canister filters are sealed containers that have filter media to act as mechanical, chemical, and biological filtration. These are similar to an outside power filter but don't hang off the side of your tank.

Many people prefer that. However, the location under the tank and the sealed lid make this filter more difficult to maintain than the outside power filter.

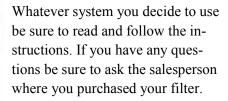
Fluidized beds are solely biological filters. They use a small pump to run water through a

pipe filled with sand. The sand grows the bacteria on it. These filters can process a lot of waste in a small amount of space, and they are clog proof. The bacteria, once established, are able to respond to additional loads quickly, making them useful for those who have variable loads like retail outlets or wholesalers. These filters are difficult to operate and are prone to spew sand into your tank. They also have virtually no current out of them at all, making additional air pumps, powerheads or power filters necessary to ensure adequate water movement.

Wet/dry filters are probably the most complex looking filters on the market but are really quite simple. Water is taken out of the tank and run through some biological filter media. In addition, a sponge in the sump acts as a mechanical filter and a bag of carbon can be included to be a chemical filter.

Because the biological media is suspended in air, the bacteria have an abundance of oxygen and can grow in terrific numbers while in a small space. That makes these filters very efficient. Their under the tank location keeps the clutter to a minimum. I prefer this type of filter because you are able to add protein skimmers

and other additions easily.



You will need to have gravel in the

bottom of your tank. Gravel is nec-

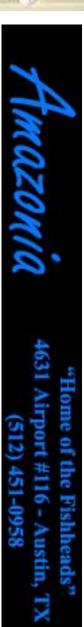
essary to anchor live or artificial plants and is available in a myriad of sizes and colors. It takes about one and a half pounds of gravel per gallon to have a depth of about two inches. Most gravel will need to be rinsed before use, as it has fine particles and dust in it. The easiest way to rinse the gravel is to put about five pounds of gravel in a five-gallon bucket and rinse in a sink or bathtub. Stir the gravel and empty the water as you go until the water runs clear. Once clear, empty out the remaining water and carefully dump the gravel into the aquarium. Rinse the rest of the gravel this way until

Continued next issue:

you are finished.

Decorations, conditioning, temperature, lighting, the nitrogen cycle and more.





Species Profile: Astatotilapia latifasciata

— by Robert De Leon

The Lake Victoria region cichlids have always been a source of stress to me. On one hand, the region produces some of the most beautiful cichlids. On the other,

many are extremely aggressive, improperly identified, easily hybridize and are generally hard to find. Nonetheless, their colors and appearance always draw me to them. Over the years I have kept various species with mixed results, but one species that I will always have warm memories of is Astatotilapia latifasciata (aka zebra obliquidens).

Originally from Lake Kyona, A. latifasciata evolved in a swampy area of the lake that is rapidly dis-

appearing. Its plight is similar to many other species from the region whose habitats are being destroyed.

I was attracted to the wonderful coloration of this species. The bright red and yellow blotches in contrast with the vertical barring on the males are not only usual, but very attractive. Females have the barring

but lack the red and yellow color. When I first saw a picture of this fish, I knew it would make a great addition to my tank.

I obtained three juveniles and hoped for the best. As they matured, it became evident that luck was on my side. The male and two females were housed in a 75 gallon tank with other Victorians and Malawi mbunas. I fed them a combination of spirulina based flake, pellets and frozen food. They accepted everything greedily. They got along well with other



fish, rarely a target and never aggressive toward other species. Although the male occasionally chased his females, the aggressive was never excessive and the females never appeared stressed. This species is definitely not as aggressive as

(Continued on page 13)

other Victorians.

I was shocked one morning when I found the 1.5" female holding. She looked so small and I was sure she wouldn't hold her eggs the first time around. To my surprise, she not only help the eggs, but she had a large 20 fry clutch. The female and the fry were kept alone in a 10 gallon tank. After releasing the fry, I soon learned that A. latifasciata females are great mothers. Every night the mother would take her fry back into her mouth. In the morning, she would release them again so they could feed. I let her stay with the fry for about a week before returning her to the main tank. I've since read that the females will guard their fry for months.

The fry grew quickly and that was good because it became apparent that these fish are very prolific. From what I've heard, they have a short reproductive window and they sure make the best of it. Between the two females, I had new fry about every 3 weeks. I couldn't give them away fast enough. Everyone I knew got some of their offspring.

A. latifasciata is a great starting species for anyone thinking of trying out Victorian cichlids. They mix well with Malawi cichlids, both haps and mbunas.



Hatching Baby Brine Shrimp

— by Lee Ann Steeves

There is no argument that newly-hatched baby brine shrimp (Artemia) is one of the best things you can feed African cichlid fry, as well as adults in many species, such as shell-dwellers. Of course the lazy man's alternatives to live baby brine shrimp include the more expensive frozen, flake and freeze-dried... but let's say you're both lazy and thrifty, but want your fish to have the best...

There are about as many different methods for hatching and feeding baby brine as there are aquarists, and they range from what I'm going to suggest, to the most technically advanced methods that yield the highest hatching rates (such as that which can be found here: http://www.argent-labs.com/artemia.htm).

Those that fall somewhere in between include those cute little hatchery kits you can buy at the pet store... IMO, too complicated, and you've defeated your purpose by spending so much on it.

First, you need an area that's out of sight. I've NEVER seen an attractive brine shrimp hatchery set up. I don't recommend setting it up in the living room and then waiting to see if your spouse comes unglued. Find a warm place with an electrical outlet that isn't frequently visited by people that will be annoyed by a light being on. Also needed: empty 3 liter pop bottle, air pump, tubing, clothes pin and an incandescent desk lamp (or reflector,

(Continued on page 14)

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or any incandescent light source that can safely be placed very close to the bottle)... you'll also need artemia cysts (brine shrimp eggs) and uniodized salt (pickling salt is fine, so is aquarium salt).

Fill the bottle about 2/3 full with warm dechlorinated water. Add about 3 tablespoons of the salt and set up the air pump/air line. Poke the end of the airline tubing into the bottle so that it is nearly on the bottom. Use the clothespin to secure the tubing to the top of the bottle. Don't worry about how fast the water is circulating... what is important is that it DOES circulate. Turn it on, make sure all is going well, then add about a teaspoon of eggs. Swirl the water around to get any that have stuck to the side, and put the light on it, very close to the bottle. This will warm the water so that the shrimp hatch. In 24 hours the water will look pink, indicating that they have hatched.

The hatch will be good for a couple of days... to harvest, I like to simply pour

some water off into a container (like a plastic bowl) and let it settle, shining a light on the bottom. The empty cysts will go to the top, and the hatchlings will migrate to the light... when you see a pink cluster, use a turkey baster to siphon them up.

What you do next depends on what you're feeding. If you're feeding something that doesn't tolerate salt, you'll need to rinse the BBS in a brine shrimp net or coffee filter. If you're feeding African cichlids, you can probably just put the shrimp directly into the tank without any trouble at all... that's what I do:)

I don't worry about water temperature. If there's a light on it, it's warm enough (as long as it's not in a very cold room). If you're not getting a good hatch, you might monkey with the settings a bit... more or less salt, more wattage on the light, or more lights... if it's still not working, your eggs are probably old. I've never had it not work though... GOOD LUCK!

Available BAP Fish

The following species are currently available. Remember, you must be a member of the HCCC to purchase these fry (\$5 for 5-6 fry):

- —Haplochromis sp. Flameback
- —Paralabidochromis sp. "rock krib"
- —Neolamprologus olivaceous
- -Neolamprologus falcicula
- —Lepidiolamprologus hecqui
- —Neolamprologus multifasciatus
- —Haplochromis sp. "44"
- —Pelvichromis pulcher

This list changes frequently as new BAP

fry are donated and as batches are taken by other members. Don't miss out,



check the discussion board under the Member Fish Exchange regularly.

