

The Lateral Line

Volume 2, Issue 4

October 2005



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October 1, 2005

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Upcoming Events:

- HCCC Auction October 15th
- HCCC Christmas party December 3rd

Cover Photo:
Pseudotropheus
demasoni
by Dave Hansen

BAP Report

The BAP program was rocking this month just in time for our fall auction. Lisa kicked things off with a late entry last month that only got tallied this month. She spawned *Mbipia lutea* and can hopefully get the species established in Ontario as the HCCC has done here. Diane earned her HCCC Breeder Award with a *Copadichromis azureus* spawn and then followed it up with *Cyprichromis leptosoma* and *Protomelas taeniolatus* spawns. Jeff C. went on a rampage with three first in club spawns. These included *Aulonocara kandeensis*, *Aul gertrudae* and *Copad. virginalis*. He was also awarded points for *Aul stuartgranti* "Lumbaulo", *Julidochromis transcriptus* "gombi", *Labidochromis caeruleus* and *Copad. trewavase* "Magunga". Jeff earned his HCCC Advanced Breeder Award. Jim earned his HCCC Breeder Award with a first in club spawn of *Protomelas spilonotus*. Lee Ann and I scored with a first in club spawn of *Astatotilapia burtoni*. Nick also got a first in club spawn of *Labidochromis* sp. "red top Kimpuma". It was a very active month!

In order to have the awards readied in time for the Christmas party, the BAP Year ends Oct. 31st. I would like to thank Jim for assisting with the BAP program has brought much needed organization to this committee. I would ask that all participating members review their points to ensure they are accurate. Our fall auction is Oct. 15th and many of the fish propagated throughout the year will be available there.

Jim and I will be at the auction with a list of who is supposed to bring what fish. Please ensure that your BAP fish are marked "BAP" and the species on the bag. Present the fish to Jim so he can check your fish off his list, and tag them for the proper table.

*****IMPORTANT***** All outstanding BAP fish are due at the auction. If you are not attending and have fish that are to be donated to the program, try to have them brought on your behalf. As a last resort contact Jim or I. Points, even though awarded, will be adjusted for BAP no shows.

■ *Greg Steeves*

(Continued on page 8)

HCCC Monthly Photo Contest



First Place:

Pseudotropheus demasoni

By Dave Hansen



Second Place:

Male *Tropheus* Red Cheek

By Nick Andreola



Third Place:

Maylandia Zebra "Gold Kawanga"

By Diane Tennison

Judging by Spencer Jack

Species Profile:**Mbipia lutea**

Synonyms: Haplochromis sp. "carp", Haplochromis porthole, Haplochromis sp. "porthole", Haplochromis sp. "spotbar", Haplochromis sp. "crossbar"

Common Names: Spotbar, Porthole, Crossbar

Family: Cichlidae

Original description: Seehausen, Ole & E.

Lippitsch, N. Bouton and H. Zwenne; 1998; "Mbipi, the rock-dwelling cichlids of Lake Victoria: description of three new genera and fifteen new species"; Ichthyological Explorations of Freshwaters; pp. 129-228.

Habitat: Lake

Victoria (Yala Swamp) - Makobe Island, Mponze Point, Ndura Point, Bwiru Island, Chamagati Island and Mafwinki. They are found among the rocks and in shallow water in fairly steep slopes on the edges of the lake (the riparian area) at depths of about 6 feet. They are not found in the surf zone.

Size: 4"

Sexing: Males tend to get larger and have

eggspots. They will also have a red caudal. Females tend to have yellow tails and anal fins. They can be sometimes confused with Haplochromis sp. "Thick Skin". Mbipia lutea has a more rounded head with a blue-gray color on the top part of the body and head, while H.sp. "Thick Skin" has a blue head with a bright yellow color and red fins.

Food: In the wild, they tend to eat green and

bluish green thread algae and insect larvae. They scrape these off the rocks. In the aquarium these fish should be fed a vegetable based diet.

Breeding: These fish are typical mouthbrooders.

Care in aquarium:

Temperature of 75-82°F (24-28°C). A

pH of 7.5-8.5 is recommended. This species can be highly aggressive so a large tank is suggested.

I received these fish as small fry from a friend in Texas (Greg Steeves). He'd sent them to me with a friend of his who was driving up our way. He sent us several species of Victorians at the time, as well as a few Neolamprologus multifasciatus. The fish all survived the trip



Photo by Nick Andreola

except for a few of the multies as they were pretty small when they came. These fish were started off in a small 10 gallon tank as that was the only space I had available for them when they arrived. The tank was a bare bottom tank filtered with a sponge filter. They got weekly water changes and were fed an assortment of flake and pellet food. After they started getting some size, and after our local club had an auction where I got rid of some fish to make some room, they were given a 50 gallon tub to live in. This tub is filtered by an Aquaclear 300 and a sponge filter. They were also given a few *Labidochromis caeruleus* to live with as I needed to grow both of these species and was running out of room for fry. The temperature in the tub is kept on the low end of their needs. I keep the tub running at about 74-75°F. I've never actually kept these guys in an aquarium where I could see them from the side after they started getting their colour, so it's actually very hard for me to describe them.

Once they reached about 3" TL for the females and larger for the males, I was looking in the tub one day and thought I'd noticed a fish with a larger mouth than the others. I wasn't entirely sure, but I did go get my net and

catch the fish out. It turned out to be a female holding fry. I got about 15 fry from her. Before I placed her back in the tub, I looked to see if there were any more 'big mouthed' females. There was! So, I promptly caught that



Photo by Dave Hansen

female as well, and stripped a bunch of eggs from her. They were tumbled until they were freeswimming. I did not lose any of the fry or the eggs from either female. Those fry are in a tank together and being fed tetrabits, assorted flakes and other pellets.

These fish are very colourful. You can tell even from looking at them from above only. I can only imagine what they'd look like side-on. Hopefully, I'll be able to

find a spot for them that will allow me to do that.

■ *Lisa Boorman*

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Interview with Pam Chin

A special thanks to Pam Chin for taking the time to judge our photo contest and answer some questions. Pam Chin is the editor of Cichlidae Communique and is well known for her "Ask Pam" column. She is also the founding member of "Babes In The Cichlid Hobby".

Interview with Pam Chin

By Merlin Sanitz

Merlin: I'm relatively new to the Cichlid hobby and for many who are just beginning there are many questions that steer towards where to start. What were some of the qualities that you looked for in selecting your fish? For example was it based on a specific region or just an interest in a specific species?

Pam: I pick cichlids the same way today as I did when I began keeping cichlid, and the main requirement for me is that I have to like it. There has to be something about the fish that draws me to it. Whether it is the finnage of *Aulonocara jacobfreibergi*, the parental care of *Julidochromis transcriptus*, or the personality of my pet *Parachromis dovii*, Juan Miguel. If you pick cichlids you like then the research is fun, remember this is a hobby!! It is easy to learn the latin name of a cichlid you like, and as your favorite list expands so does your latin and pretty soon it all falls into place. Once I narrow it down to a species, then I try to find the nicest stock I can. I like to see the parents if possible, this is going to let you

know what your fish are going to look like when they grow up.

Merlin: What were some hard learned lessons you faced while growing in this hobby?

Pam: I learn something new everyday in this hobby!! And just when you think you have it all figured out these darn cichlids will trick you. It doesn't matter how long you have been keeping fish, you can still kill off a tank in a moments notice, or put the wrong cichlids together. I don't think there is an enough room for all the stupid mistakes I have made. I asked Gary if he had any specific hard learned lessons and he reminded me of the time we went to one of our first ACA conventions, we had ordered a bunch of fish from other hobbyists. We got a little excited and wound up when we arrived and started to party a little early, these types of things happen at an ACA convention, the excitement of seeing big names in the hobby, friends you haven't seen in a year and new fish. Gary took the new

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acquisitions up to our room, I kept partying!! He put the fish in styro's filled with water and aged sponge filters, treated for chlorine and preceeded to pass out. A few hours later when I made it back to the room all the fish were dead, because we didn't know there were Chloramines in the water. In fact I don't think we knew what chloramines were.

I think the worst mistake we make with our fish is overfeeding, some how these darn cichlids guilt you into feeding them more. It takes a lot of control to control yourself, but your cichlids do much better on less food. Once or twice a day, no more then they can eat in a few minutes, and if any food gets to the bottom of the tank, you have fed too much.

Merlin: Is there a specific tank setup or species that you have enjoyed keeping the most or learned the most from?

Pam: No, I don't think I can say that there is one species who has taught me more. Here is my cichlid breeder mentality.... There are two ways cichlids spawn; substrate spawners and mouthbrooders. Once you can successfully spawn either, you just gain more knowledge, and it is this learning that will help you spawn your next cichlid. Lake Malawi is the gateway cichlid for people who are interested in mouthbrooders. Once you have successfully worked with a few Malawi cichlids, learned how to strip females, tumble eggs, and hatch baby brine shrimp, you can move on to Lake Tanganyika mouthbrooders which are more difficult and be successful. Same goes with substrate spawners, once you understand the

concept, realize the importance of pair bonding, or lack of bonding, you just adjust your strategy. In reality cichlids are not difficult to spawn, what is difficult is raising viable fry.

Merlin: What would you consider the most advanced species to keep; I guess what would you consider to be the "Expert Level" species in our hobby?

Pam: Although people try to classify cichlids and their level of difficulty I don't really know if that is fair or not. I have been keeping cichlids a long time, but I know some young hobbyists who are successful breeding cichlids that I have killed a couple of times, so does that make them an expert? I have a couple of cichlid species that probably no one else in the country is working with, does that make me an expert?? Or am I just the only fool working with that little brown cichlid! I think if you do your research, and provide the right conditions you can be successful with just about any cichlid. Especially today, where there are so many books, and the internet. Its not hard to find someone who has worked with a certain species at one time or another. Combine that with the foods that are available, the additives to make your water perfect, and pictures from the wild showing the habitat, how can you go wrong? There have been species of cichlids that have taken me forever before I was successful, *Neolamprologus leleupi* is a good example. I probably kept this fish for 10 years before I had a successful spawn with viable fry. What I find interesting is that a lot of spawning fish is luck, and some of it is skill. Some people find certain species

easy to work with, while other find them more difficult. You may spawn a fish with ease, while I'll pull my hair out and vice versa. But that is what makes fishkeeping so much fun!!

Merlin: Your going to love this question I'm sure, If you could start all over and do it again is there anything you would have done differently.

Pam: You know not really, I think that keeping fish is a work in progress, similar to your fish room/house. Sometimes it is trial and error, and you don't know until you try, because if there is one thing that I have learned, it is that there is more than one way to be successful keeping fish. Do your research, ask questions,

and then sort it down to what applies to your situation. I love hearing how other people are keeping and spawning cichlids, I pick up tips all the time, some work, some don't. But if you want to spawn cichlids and raise up the fry, and its not happening, what do you have to lose to try something different. However, the one thing that I did do, that I have never regretted is joining a fish club, and I truly believe that the organized hobby is the single biggest influence that I have had. It has led me to cichlid experts, cichlid breeders, cichlid friendships, and of course more cichlids! And isn't that what it is all about??

BAP Report (cont.)

Thanks to all who make this program such a success for our club. See you at the auction.

Current Standings	
Name	YTD
Greg	455
Charles	330
Jeff C.	245
David D.	240
Nick	155
Robert	135
Diane	110
Jim	95

Current Standings	
Name	YTD
Nathan	75
Dave H.	75
Duc	50
Lisa	50
Ryan	45
Terry	45
Robby	45
Dave S.	40

Current Standings	
Name	YTD
Gene	35
Kris	25
Jeff J.	25
Paul	25
Kevin	20
James	20
Dani	15
Mike	15

Species Profile:**Cynotilapia sp. "Mbweca"****Background on C. sp. "mbweca":**

Also known as C. sp. "thomasi", afra mbweca, and green afra. I honestly don't understand the 'green' business; their predominant colors are yellow and black! Originally collected from Mbweca, Mara Point and Cobwe, this species is still somewhat rare in home aquariums.

Adult size is about 3-1/2" for males and about 3" for females.

While not a true monomorphic species, the females are not the drab brown or pale blue of many *Cynotilapia* species. They vary with mood from almost solid black to a pale yellow with vivid black bars. It also appears that the so-

cial position within the group is displayed by this coloration: The alpha female being the lightest. The males are easy to identify as their lower faces are completely black and their torso coloration is a deep rich yellow with hints of blue around the edges of individual scales. Of note to *Cynotilapia* fans; unlike other types whose male's black bars continue up through the dorsal fin, the mbweca male's do not. Their dorsal is primarily yellow with just a hint of black bar continuation. The black barring on

the females does continue into the dorsal creating a appealing yellow and black stripe pattern. Typical Mbuna aquascaping, water parameters and diet apply.

Personal experiences with C. mbweca:

I purchased a small group from the HCCC spring auction. Unfortunately, it turned out to

be a reverse trio.

A quick trip to Armke's before the Young King's exit yielded three more females.

(Dave was kind enough to vent them for me)

The group is housed in a 45BR with a small group of *Pundamilia nyere-*



Photo by Nick Andreola

rei "Ruti Island" and a group of *Tropheops tropheops*. The alpha male mbweca is the dominant fish in this tank but seems to tolerate the males of the other species well. However, within a few weeks it became obvious that he would not tolerate any rivals for his harem's attention and began to harass the subdom male relentlessly. Once the subdom male was removed, breeding behaviors began in earnest. The young females 'hold' well and deliver spawns of about 20 fry typically. The

fry are quite cute little black and white stripers that emerge ready to eat just about anything offered. They grow quickly and several (which I assume are males) have surpassed the size of a batch of T. red cheek fry born 3 weeks before them. The 1M/4F group seem to have established their 'rankings' and there doesn't appear to be any signs of psycho aggression or hyper-territoriality. This tank has a small UGJ system and the group likes to face into the current and swim in place. The interesting thing is that they form up in a pattern every time: alpha male up front with the females in descending order be-



Photo by Nick Andreola

hind him.

Conclusions:

Add these to your short-list for (a) smaller, (b) not too aggressive (c) easy maintenance Mbuna species with attractive males and females. If you're trying to come up with something that not everybody has, like the ubiquitous Yellow Lab, this species is worth the effort to hunt down and purchase.

■ *Nick Andreola*

Species Profile:

Cyprichromis leptosoma

Cyprichromis leptosoma is found only along the eastern shoreline of Lake Tanganyika, between Kigoma in Tanzania and Mpulungu in Zambia, a distance of over 300 miles. In the wild, *Cyprichromis* (or Cyps for short)

occur all over the distribution area wherever there is a rocky shore with deep and clean water. Five geographical variants of *leptosoma* are recognized currently and each occurs in both blue and yellow-tailed morphs. In the wild, Cyps live in schools that number in the

thousands.

I saw photos of these beautiful sardine-like fish and decided that I needed a colony. The Cyps can be found in "regular" and "super-size". The Jumbo variants require a fairly large surface area to best accommodate their schooling behavior. The Jumbo variants can reach sizes up to 6" so a 6ft tank is recommended. Well... as I currently do not have a 6ft tank in my home - I decided to begin my search for the "regular" size. I purchased a

37gallon, high tank with the sole purpose of beginning a small Tanganyikan Community setup. My tank setup was pretty simple: sand bottom with a tall piece of Texas Holey Rock on one side of the tank, a small open area in the middle (which I filled with shells) and then a small pile of round river rock on the other side of the tank. I stocked a shell-dwelling species (Alto Comp Sumbu Dwarf) and a rock/shell dwelling species (Telmatochromis Vittatus). Fortunately for me, our 2nd Club auction was right around the corner! Lady Luck was in my

corner that day and I picked up a trio of *Cyprichromis Leptosoma* "Kekese". I was in business!! I very quickly realized that I had a reverse trio (2m/1f) and this was not an optimal combination. Fortunately, the store who put the trio in the auction had some more left. I soon went by and picked up 3 more females.

Cyp behavior is pretty different from the Malawi cichlids I was used to. The females schooled together and allowed the sub-dominant male (which happens to be a blue-tail morph) to school with them. Interestingly, the sub-dominant male maintains full color when schooling with the females. It is

not uncommon for Malawi cichlid males to "hide" in with the females - but they usually "drab down" to blend in. Not with Mr. Cyp! There he is, in all of his lonely glory, swimming with the girls. The dominant male (which happens to be a yellow-tail morph)



Photo by Diane Tennison

stays in an area on the "front" side of the Holey Rock and doesn't really associate with the others. The "girls" pretty much hang out on the "back" side of the Holey Rock. I don't see a lot of open water schooling, probably because my tank isn't long enough. However, I will be

shortly moving the group to a 55gal and they should be much more at home. Even though I don't currently have optimal conditions - apparently they feel comfortable enough to spawn!

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Cyprichromis spawning is a unique endeavor. They literal spawn in the open water. The dominant male's territory is actually a three-dimensional water column. When the female was receptive, she simply swam into his "turf". He immediately began to display. Cyp display is also unique. With all fins extended, the male positioned his body in a vertical (mouth to the surface) display and began to vibrate his entire body. The other thing I noticed was that the tips of his Pelvic fins turned white (similar to what you will see on the Featherfin species). The white tipped pelvic fins seemed to attract the female as she moved in and began to make a "sucking" motion with her mouth. The male then spun around and she adopted this vertical, vibrating position. They switched places several times and then the female did an open water head-stand. At that moment, she dropped an egg! I was amazed to see that the Cyp eggs were much larger than the Malawi eggs I was used to seeing. As a matter of fact, they were probably twice the size of the eggs laid by the much larger Red Empress. Once the egg was released, the female quickly backed up and sucked the egg right into her mouth. She dropped 3 more eggs in quick succession. Once she had the eggs in her mouth, the male began to shimmy again and released milt to fertilize the eggs. I was really surprised to see this process take quite a long time. The entire spawn probably took almost 30 minutes! The pair would display a bit and then separate. Then display, spawn and then separate. This was repeated numerous times.

This group has spawned twice previously. The

first spawn resulted in, what I assume, was a batch of dead fry. I think the female held onto them for too long and they starved. I attempted to catch the holding female for almost a week, with no success. Cyps are very delicate fish and stress very easily. I finally put some floating plants in the top of the tank, hoping for fry hiding areas if she chose to release. Within 24 hours of putting the plants in, there were fry in the plants - but I was too late! I wonder if putting the plants in a week earlier would have saved the fry... The second spawn was unknown to me. I think the female had been holding for several weeks before it became obvious that she had a mouthful. She was one of the larger females and they have quite a large buccal cavity. I let her stay for a week longer than when I noticed she was holding. I was actually able to catch this one! I purchased a breeder net and attached it to the top of the tank. I moved her into the breeder and gently grabbed her. Picking her up out of the water until she began to gasp a bit, I dunked her under the water and 6 little fry swam out. I immediately released her back into the tank and stared in awe at my beautiful little Cyp babies. They were perfectly formed and larger than most Malawi fry I am used to. I placed a small floating plant in the top of the breeder net for cover. I began feeding them freeze-dried Cyclopeeze. It has been a week since those fry were released and tonight was when I actually got to witness the spawning behavior as the cycle started once again. I guess it's time to get a move on and get that 55gal set up so these guys have a bigger home to move to!

■ *Diane Tennison*

Member article:**F.O.T.A.S. 2005**

September 9th to 11th 2005 was the Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies annual show and convention. This years festivities were hosted by the Brazos Valley Aquarium Society and held in College Station. This was my third FOTAS convention and as the Brazos Valley Aquarium Society is small in membership but large in tradition, I was unsure quite what to expect. Due to a scheduling conflict, I left Canyon Lake Friday afternoon without my other half. Lee



Ann was able to join me Saturday evening just in time for the banquet. I arrived at the Clarion Hotel (site of the convention), checked in, and then went to get my show fish in their tanks. Upon walking into the showroom I was greeted by fellow HCCC'er Dave Rinaldo and Dr. Keith Arnold. They were preparing the showroom so I helped out where I could. Rinaldo was harassing a gentleman I hadn't met. He suddenly ceased the put-downs when he found out that this guy was judging the show! Leave it to Dave. Other friends wandered in including Marvin and Kathy England and John Nicholson. As Dave took further sips on his "mystery cup" the one-liners flew more freely

and increasing laughter accentuated the atmosphere. As the show fish were getting acclimated we all had a chance to view each other's entrants. There were some truly stunning fish there including Rinaldo's yellow and black catfish and the most beautiful pair of swordtails I had ever seen. After going out for a bite to eat we sat around telling lies the rest of the evening.

Saturday morning was the FOTAS board of directors meeting. I attended on behalf of the HCCC. It was a short meeting that mainly consisted on voting in the amendments we had made to the FOTAS charter earlier in the year. After

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the meeting it was time to hear some of the speakers that were lined up. Gene and Jennifer arrived in time to catch a couple talks. First up was Dr. Del Gatlin who spoke on fish nutrition. This was surprisingly interesting and well worth the listen. The next speaker was Dr. Adam Jones who spoke on seahorse reproduction. I don't think there is anyone that doesn't have an affinity for these little creatures and Dr. Jones was most entertaining. Jennifer and I had lunch with Dr. Arnold and the FOTAS speakers at a seafood restaurant.



I ate so much that I seriously considered going back to my room and taking a power snooze through the next speaker. The topic of the next speaker was Geophagine cichlids and really the only topic I was remotely interested in. Dr. Hernon Lopez-Fernandez stole the entire show! This gentleman is a wonderfully entertaining speaker whose knowledge is unparalleled in his field. If you missed him at the ACA in Ft. Worth earlier this year, and FOTAS later, don't despair. There is a possibility that Dr. Lopez-Fernandez will speak at an upcoming HCCC function! He put on one of the best presentations I have ever attended. That evening was the banquet. After the Braz Walker auction (to which our most excellent member Carlos Cardenas donated a

complete eclipse system on the HCCC's behalf) Dr. Lopez-Fernandez gave a slide show on a recent expedition collecting in Brazil and Venezuela. This was full of "oohs" and "ahhs" at some of the fish he discovered and lots of great laughs as well. Dave and I both made

out well at the show (someone had mentioned that it might have been the first time that another club out scored the TCA) and the evening was capped off with lots of fish discussions in the hospitality room and Travis giving us all foot-

ball score updates.

Sunday was Auction Day. Lee Ann and I woke early to start bagging fish as well as assisting with the tear down of the show tanks. It seems that I had brought more fish than I had thought so there was quite a bit of

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bagging to do. Mullet and Robert arrived for the auction as well as RCA Dave (after getting his bearings straight). The auction was on the small side but very entertaining. Rob Teague entered a "bag of fun" (30 frontosa) in the auction and all Lee Ann's bidding had me holding my chest fearing that the big one was coming! Of course her bidding was not her own doing, two certain HCCC members, who shall remain nameless, were coaxing her on. All I could think about was "where am I ever going to find room for all those fish". Kathy England and Charles Jones shared auctioneering duties while the rest of the HCCC crowd handled being runners and bag-



ging the goods.

I really enjoyed myself at this years FOTAS convention and would like to thank the Brazos

Valley Aquarium Society for putting on a great show. It was not as large as some of the other events we've attended but the quaintness was refreshingly pleasant. We as a club could learn a lot from this show, especially that a large crowd

means nothing compared to a friendly bunch of folks getting together for some fun.

■ Greg Steeves

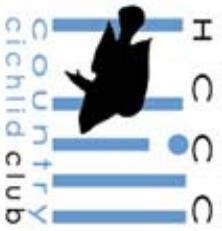
BAP Fish

The following fish, if not purchased by an HCCC member, will be sold at our auction.

Sciaenochromis fryeri 6 fry \$5.00
 Pseudotropheus flavus 6 fry \$5.00
 Pseudotropheus flavus Adult pair \$5.00
 Pseudotropheus elongatus 6 fry \$5.00
 Aulonocara baenschi 6 fry \$5.00
 Metriclima estherae 6 fry \$5.00
 Lamprologus sp. "kinganga" 6 fry \$5.00
 Aulonocara jacobfreibergeri 6 fry \$5.00
 Neolamprologus gracillis 6 fry \$5.00

Labrochromis ishmaeli 6 fry \$5.00
 Melanochromis joanjohnsonae 6 fry \$5.00
 Aulonocara stuartgranti Marleri Is 6 fry \$5.00
 Cynotilapia sp. "mbweca" 6 fry 5.00
 P. nyererei "Python Island" 6 fry 5.00
 Labidochromis caeruleus 6 fry 5.00
 many more available, check the list on the discussion board.

If you are interested in these fish, contact Jim (Bristlenose) via the discussion board.



The Lateral Line

Official Publication of the
Hill Country Cichlid Club