

The Lateral Line

Volume 2, Issue 3

September 2005



Inside This Issue:

BAP Report

HCCC Photo Contest

Species Profiles:

- *Ancistrus temminckii*
- *Tropheops* sp. "red cheek"
- *Labidochromis caeruleus*
- Poor Man's Discus





BAP Report

Traditionally summer is when we in the aquatic hobby slow down our activities. August however has been a terrific month for the BAP program. Our members have been recording spawns of many fantastic species. A lot of these should be available at the upcoming HCCC fall auction.

September 1, 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Photo Contest	3
Ancistrus temminckii	4
Tropheops sp.	5
Lab. caeruleus	7
Poor Man's Discus	9
Writing a BAP Report	12
My First ACA	13

Upcoming Events:

- HCCC Meeting
September 18th
- HCCC Auction October
15th

Cover Photo:

Cyprichromis leptosoma "Kekese"
by Diane Tennison

Nick set the bar with three species. He received points for the beautiful Victorian species *Pundamilia nyererei*, the Python Island variant, and two first in club spawns with *Tropheops* sp. "red cheek" and *Cynotilapia* sp. "mbweca". This elevates Nick to the HCCC Breeder Award. Way to go Nick.

Gene spawned a brood of *Labidochromis caeruleus* in his backyard pond. This was the first pond bred fish recorded in our club. I hope other members take advantage of Gene's expertise in this area and learn how to duplicate his success.



Dave (of RCA fame) scored a first in club spawn with *Astatotilapia nubila*. Charles spawned *Altolamprologus calvus*, the Congo black variant. Great work guys. Lee Ann and I had a spawn of *Astatotilapia* sp. "44" as well.

Jim had a surprise spawn of *Ancistrus temminckii* "albino". This is a class "C" spawn. His article appears in this issue of the Lateral Line and is a great read.

As the atrocious aftermath of hurricane Katrina becomes more evident, The members of the Hill Country Cichlid Club sends out our best wishes and prayers for everyone affected by this horrible storm.

■ Greg Steeves

The current YTD standings can be found on page 11

HCCC Monthly Photo Contest



First Place:

Altolamprologus calvus

By Dave Hansen

Second Place:
Tropheus sp. Red
Nkamba Bay Chilangal
By Jennifer Prince



Third Place:

Cyprichromis leptosoma Kekese

By Diane Tennison

Judging by Pam Chin

Species Profile:**Ancistrus temminckii**

Before I get started I want to point out that most of the information regarding *Ancistrus temminckii* or Albino Bristle-nose is from books or the internet. I was unable to observe any of the spawning due to the fact that the two bristle-noses were put in the tank at about 1 year 9 months old and were still small. They were picked randomly from a group of 24 and were not sexed. I just picked the first two I could catch to help with the algae in the tank. I never thought about them breeding and was unaware that it had occurred until fry were found in the box to my sump pump. That was also due to the keen eye of Jeff Johnson also known as jjoilrig on the HCCC forum.



Photo by Robby Maxwell

The *Ancistrus temminckii* are found in the fast flowing tributaries of the Amazon River in South America. I obtained 24 fish 3/4 inch long, from JJ Tropiquatics (not jjoilrig). Males achieve a size of 6 inches and are yellowish white body that is flat underside with a sucker type mouth. Bristle type tentacles on lower head over nose and mouth make the general characteristics of the bristle-nose. Females

achieve a size of 5 inches and are yellowish white body with flat underside and sucker mouth. Most males have longer tentacles than the females. The bristle-nose is very compatible with the other fish in the tank, but do not play well with other males of the bristle-nose clan.

Also anyone getting information on feeding and caring for bristle-nose will undoubtedly

realize they are herbivorous and love the green stuff. However they are not harmful to plants but eat those undesirable algae. Just make sure that you add sinking algae pellets to supplement their diet because they are highly aggres-

sive algae eaters so they will not starve. I feed the tabs at night after lights out. Information also suggests that you can feed blanched spinach and lettuce also to fulfill feeding requirements. A word of caution, before proceeding with the blanched produce, do further research, so you will not end up with a tank of yucky do (Yucky do is not a technical term

(Continued on page 14)

Species Profile:**Tropheops sp. "red cheek"****Background on T. sp. "red cheek":**

Previously grouped under the genus Pseudotropheus, Tropheops is now considered to be a separate genus by Konings and others. Members of Tropheops can generally be determined based on "the small, ventrally placed mouth with lower jaw shorter than upper, and the steep sloping snout (ethmoverine block)". Tropheops typically feed off the filamentous algae with jerking twists of the body. Some types maintain 'algal gardens'.



Male Tropheops

T. sp. "red cheek"

has been collected often from the waved-washed rocky shores of Likoma and Chizumulu Island. It is usually found in the upper 3 to 5 meters of this generally clean but turbulent zone. It is sometimes seen in the hobby as "Macrophthalmus Red Cheek" or "Big Eye". In the local language this Mbuna is called 'M'kokafodya' which means 'glowing fire' or 'live coal'. In the wild, the males stake out a territory over a large rock (1-2 meter) and guard it "with great zeal". Red Cheeks are not known to maintain algal gardens in their territories.

Personal experiences with Red Cheeks:

I first received a group from fellow HCCC member Shannon (Fishgirl500) last Fall. After a series of population adjustments, I ended up with 1 dominant male and 2 females. The male is approx. 4-1/2", the females are 4". The

group is housed in a 40BR with 1m/3f groups of Pundamilia neyererei "Python Island" and Mbipia lutea and 2 BN's. The male Red Cheek is the dominant fish in this tank. He is a relatively benevolent dictator. Both males

of the other 2 species are fully colored up and well tolerated. He pretty well just ignores the females of these other groups. The same cannot be said for his own harem, how-

River City Aquatics

a proud supporter of the HCCC

Member discounts:

25% off livestock

15% off dry goods / 10% off aquariums

12108 Roxie Dr., Suite D

Austin, TX (512)219-7200

ever. He likes black leather, whips and chains and is a very aggressive 'spawner'. I usually remove the holding female to an isolation tank for the duration of her term so she can have a break from his attentions and mend torn fins.

The females are quite robust and heal quickly. They usually spawn again within 3 weeks of their return to the tank. They are very good mothers and will protect their fry for an unusually long period after the fry's initial release.

One mother was still taking the fry in every night for 10 days. Typical batch size is around 20. The fry are a little larger than most Mbuna fry and are all minnow-silvery at first. Size variations and coloring can begin to be seen in as little as 3 weeks. They grow quickly on a diet of daphnia and crushed flake and are aggressive feeders. They quickly recognize me holding a flake can and rise to the surface expectantly. The adults have fared well on a mixed diet of flake, pellets and fresh foods. Because of their tank mates, I have used foods more geared towards omnivores which they have eagerly accepted and have experienced no ill effects.

Conclusions:

Red Cheeks are a very rewarding species



Female Tropheus

to keep. Much like a *Ps. salousi*, the blue males (with the yellow 'cheeks') and the orange-yellow females allow for a nice mix of color within the species group. They are an undemanding and attractive species that can

be mixed with any Mbuna and with many Victorians, as I have done. I feel that having the Red Cheek male as the dominant fish has blocked either of the Victorian species males from becoming hyper-dominant and destructive. I highly recommend this

species, and other *Tropheus* species, to all cichlid enthusiasts.

All quotes from Ad Konings, Malawi Cichlids (3rd edition.)

■ *Nick Andreola*

Amazonia International

a proud supporter of the HCCC

Member discounts:

20% off Fish & Live Plants

10% off Tanks, Stands, Eheim's & Eclipses

25% off Filters & Powerheads

4631 Airport #116 Austin, TX

(512) 451-0958

Species Profile:**Labidochromis caeruleus**

I think a fish spawn is almost as exciting as actual child-birth, at least amongst the fish hobbyists... My first real attempt at breeding my fish was a success on several levels. I have a beautiful male Yellow Lab (whom my niece has nicknamed "Pepe LePew") that is a deep yellow with dark black fins and a smudge on his upper lip which looks like a small mustache.

I got him from Polly's Pet Shop when he was about 1.5". I bought a pair at the time. I thought I had a male/female combination - turns out I have 2 males. Pepe LePew is the dominate male. I got 2 full grown females from Dave Hansen and my breeding project began in earnest. The male spawned with one female within the first two weeks of them being introduced to the tank. Unfortunately, there was a lot of activity going on and she either spit or swallowed the eggs.

I began watching for the tell-tale signs of an impending spawn. The female will get a "round" look to her middle section and an ovipositor will descend. Once that happens - I know that a spawn is eminent. I have not been fortunate enough to see the actual spawn yet -

but on Thanksgiving Day, the other female was holding a mouth full of eggs. Labidochromis caeruleus are maternal mouth-brooders. The female lays eggs and the male will either fertilize on the substrate or she will immediately pick up the eggs and he will fertilize them in her mouth. She holds the eggs

in her mouth until they hatch and then continues to brood in this fashion until she feels safe to release the free swimming fry. Labidochromis caeruleus are one of the longer brooding Mbuna and can hold for up to a month.



Photo by Diane Tennison

The Yellow Labs are housed in my 55 gallon Mbuna setup. Their tankmates include: Pseudotropheus acei, Labidochromis Red Top Hongi, Melanochromis joanjohnsonae, a Common Pleco and a Raphael Catfish. The Ps. acei were making the tank atmosphere a bit rowdy. The holding female began to get in the way of all of the constant activity. She did her best to hide in the Texas Holey Rock, behind some big plants or tucked up under the filter over-flow. But it wasn't working. She was getting chased quite a bit. As with most mouth-brooders, when the female began to

hold - she stopped eating. This was causing a problem because, by week two, she was quite thin. I quickly decided that if I was going to save the female and the brood - I needed a nursery setup. So, I marched off to the pet store and purchased a 10 gallon setup. I used some water conditioner to speed up the tank cycle and within a few days it was ready. By then, the poor holding female was quite weak and it didn't take much of an effort to net her out of the main tank. In she went to the nursery tank and the wait began...

By the end of week three - the fry were so big that she was having trouble keeping them in her mouth. They wanted out! I decided

that it was time to take them from her or I was afraid that she wasn't going to make it. I purchased an acrylic breeder tank that floats in the top of the nursery tank. I have never stripped a fish before - so I was quite nervous. I netted the female and grasped her carefully through the net. I gently lifted her out of the water until she began to gasp. Then I took a paper clip and gently inserted the end in her mouth and pried it open. Dunking her, head first, into the breeder tank - the fry began to spill out! What an amazing moment! A few of them were a little more difficult - coming out tail first. But in the end, I had 8 perfectly formed fry. I knew that she was still holding



Photo by Diane Tennison

on to a few more - but I had taken too long with this process and was afraid that I was stressing her too much. I released her back into the nursery tank and sat down to enjoy my new "children". She released the remaining fry within a few days and I have seen them peeking out from the piece of Holey Rock in the tank.

I am feeding the fry powdered Cyclopeeze in the acrylic breeder and the female is still in the nursery tank. She is fattening up nicely, and should return to the main community within a few days. The fry have doubled in size and are a nice yellow color. They are starting to get a bit of black on their fins.

When the female goes back to the main tank, I will remove the acrylic breeder and put the fry in the 10gal nursery to grow. What an amazing experience this has been... Who's next??

■ Diane Tennison

African Cichlid Central

a proud supporter of the HCCC

Member discounts:

20% off livestock

\$59 flat shipping —No minimum orders

www.africancichlidcentral.com

Species Profile:**The Poor Man's Discus**

This is a term I once read describing the beautiful and graceful Gold Severum, a.k.a. Heros Serevus, some argue or claim it is a morph of the Heros appendiculatus or Turquoise Severum. This article is not intended to get into scientific details of the Gold Severum nor provide an in-depth discuss on its origins or native waters. They are common in the hobby and can be readily found at your LFS or CFS. They are a South American Cichlid and therefore a full size adult has the potential to reach at least 12", though 8" is the norm many have stated for captivity. I will leave the scientific jargon and claims for your online or library research. This is a discussion on my personal experience.



Male Severum

Photo by Orlando DeLeon

I have kept this often times peaceful and graceful giant for approximately five years. I say often, as they can become quite temperamental and territorial at times, especially when spawning. My oldest Gold Severum, "Sun Shine" is five years old and currently a little over seven inches. She was the first addition to our first 55 gallon tank. She was

purchased for about \$5 at a size of a quarter. She was almost white and no indication of her true beauty, also I had no idea if I was purchasing a female or a male as they are virtually impossible to sex as juveniles. I simply

picked her out because she was the perkier in the tank. I did not add my first male to the tank until she was almost 4".

Though many state that the Gold Severum is very picky about their mates, I have had minimal difficulty in having her pair up with a male gold severum (she has had four boyfriends, all having spawned with her). They will go through a courtship if you may as they establish dominance in the

tank, but as one provides plenty of room and does not allow for direct line of sight in a

Lisa's Lair Bookstore
Online Books
Various Discounts for
HCCC Members
www.lisaslairbookstore.com

tank, the damage to one another is minimal and eventually work it out. However, I have found some males are just rougher during mating than others, and thus my need to move him out for a new "man." When they reach about 3" it becomes a little easier to sex, I have had 100% luck with sexing the Gold Severum by the looking at their heads.

Males will tend to have more red lines in the face as seen in the head shot of current male versus Sun Shine.

The fins of the males are also much more pointed than the female, but I have found this to be trickier to discern than the facial markings. Again, this is impossible to note in a gold severum until they are about 3"...so many will recommend to purchase 5 or 6 and allow

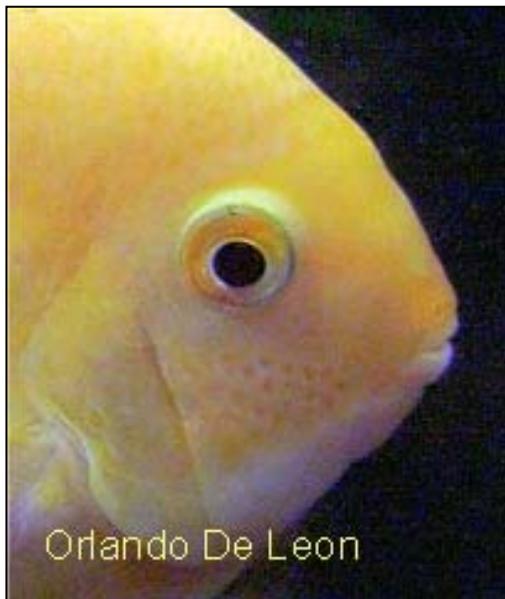
them to mature and allow them to pick their mate. However, the male and/or female can both grow to mature and beautiful show quality cichlids in my experience if you choose to have start or remain with one.

Tank size is minimum 55 gallon, however, with tanks with a good footprint like a 40 gallon breeder or 40 gallon cube will accommodate a single severum nicely. I will hold strong to the recommendation of a minimum of 75 gallons for a pair. The severum is a shy cichlid and

dithers are a must. I have had success with large tetras, tiger barbs and Red-Tailed Hemiodus, obvious reasons for large dithers (yum yum). I found the tiger barbs to be a great choice, as they are tough little buggers themselves and handle the occasional or constant (*when severums are breeding) chasing

and defending territory moods of the severum. Severums are mid-to-low water swimmers by nature and to encourage upper tank swimming I have used driftwood to stimulate a more natural bottom of the river feel for the severum and encourage upper water swimming. Plants you ask? Will depend on your beauty, mine have tolerated anubis, large veil and plastic plants, however, be ready to see a re-decorated tank to the liking of your cichlid at

any given day. Some will not only dig up your live plants, but enjoy a nice expensive snack bar. Plastic plants will be tolerated or simply shredded. A nice selection of driftwood and some well place river stone and some hiding places for your severum and you will have a very happy cichlid(s) on your hands. My severums have tolerated bottom dwelling fish such as, cories and botias/ loaches nicely. Severums do have large eyes from their days from the Amazon, so modest



Female Severum

Photo by Orlando DeLeon

to low light encourages wonderful swimming behaviors and mood for your beauty or beauties.

A note on water parameters: The Gold Severum is a South American cichlid as noted and many argue for neutral and soft water parameters. I have been raising my Gold's on Austin tap and so pH and hardness (within reason) are not a factor in raising a healthy Gold Severum in my opinion. They have been pond bred for many generations are having probably forgotten where they even came from...hehe - healthy biological balance is the simple key: cycled tank, good filtration, regular water maintenance (I do 50% twice week) and good gravel vacuum every other week and you are on your way to big beautiful giant. Gold's are omnivorous and I have been feeding them a high quality cichlid pellet as staple supple-

mented with blanched romaine, green leaf and zucchini vegetables and the occasional blood worms, earth worms or even cheaper, generic boiled salad shrimp from your local grocery store as a meat protein. A final a note on temperaments, it will be luck of the draw on whether you get a mostly peaceful giant or a tank hoard. This makes finding your wet pet a great challenge and joy! I highly recommend this great fish to anyone looking for a wet pet and not a true tank buster.

*Current project with my Gold Severums is allowing them to raise their fry. I have read they are great parents. My breeding pair was moved from 120G to a 75G and doing well. Future article to come on this experience, I hope!

■ *Orlando DeLeon*

Current Standings	
Name	YTD
Greg	430
Charles	330
David D.	240
Jeff C.	140
Robert	135
Nick	135
Dave H.	75
Jim	75

Current Standings	
Name	YTD
Nathan	75
Diane	65
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

Member article:**Writing a BAP Report**

I have always been a bit intimidated at the thought of writing a BAP report. Part of our BAP (Breeder Award Program) involves earning points for the fish we spawn through the donation of fry. An equally important part is writing a BAP report. When I had my first successful spawn last year, I lept headlong into writing my first report. I even included pictures of my actual fish. But before I submitted it - I made the mistake of looking at some reports (or species profile articles) on other websites. What I have seen on other websites was amazing. All of a sudden, my attempt seemed inadequate. I think that is why I have never submitted the report that I first wrote. I felt that I didn't have enough technical, scientific knowledge to make my report what it should be. The thought of researching the origin of my species, the natural lake conditions, etc seemed to make the task of a BAP report even

more daunting. However, at a recent meeting - we were discussing the need for articles in our great publication, The Lateral Line. The more the guys talked about how they wanted to see articles about individual spawning experiences, the more I thought that maybe I DID have something to offer. So I am sending over my written BAP report on my first "official" spawn. It's a bit late (heck, I don't even have the fish anymore), but I hope that what I have done will be an inspiration to the rest of the club. Write a humble account of your spawning experiences. Attach some photos of your actual fish. Share with the rest of us the excitement that you experienced when you contributed, through your husbandry efforts, to the reproduction of these beautiful creatures.

■ Diane Tennison

BAP Fish

Members of the Hill Country Cichlid Club are entitled to purchase Breeder Award Program fish at a great price.

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 jacobfreibergi 6 fry \$5.00

Neolamprologus gracillis 6 fry \$5.00
 Labrochromis ishmaeli 6 fry \$5.00
 Melanochromis joanjohnsonae 6 fry \$5.00
 Cynotilapia sp. "mbweca" 6 fry 5.00
 Pund. nyererei "Python Island" 6 fry 5.00
 Labidochromis caeruleus 6 fry 5.00
 Astatotilapia sp. "44" breeding pair 5.00

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

Member article:**My First ACA**

What do you get when you cram a hotel full of fellow fish geeks for several days? You get to look at and talk about fish and aquarium equipment to your heart's content! Novices and pros from all over the country (and some like our friends, the Torres, from other countries) swapping fish tales and fish. What could possibly be more fun? Hangin' with the HCCC while at the ACA, that's what. I enjoyed meeting all the new folks who share this obsession but I really had the most fun with the 'wild bunch'.



Photo by John Yull

The Babes In The Cichlid

Hobby (a.k.a. BITCHES) auction was an absolute blast. The fun that night was topped-off with Dave's "experience" at the end of the auction. Ha! Dave promised to give us free fish from RCA to not get into the spicy details about his little group grope. All I can say is that all THREE WOMEN walked away with satisfied smiles!

The auctions (and there were many) ended up being seller's markets for the most part, so, I didn't make any fish or equipment purchases at them. (I guess I'm spoiled!) I did snag several T-shirts to support the BITCHES and their efforts towards the Loiselle Conservation Fund. I got some vintage shirts with great cichlid pictures on them--mostly Mbuna, of course! My favorite one is a BITCHES shirt that was

printed with a typo on it. Where it should read "Excellence through Experience" it says "Excellence through Experiments" instead. The latter fits my fish keeping style so much better!

To all of you sitting on the fence about ACA '06-Go!!! -- You won't regret it. To be relaxed in a hotel, hitting the breakfast buffet with all your buds, seeing Rinaldo drink some alcohol free orange juice, sharing stories over some JW Red with Geno, laughing your @\$ off with Terry and

Diane, watching the 'whipper-snappers' ride the bull, and in general just enjoying the company of all you favorite fish geeks in such an absolutely wonderful environment makes attending ACA '06 a must for all of us!

■ *Nick Andreola*

Armke's Rare Aquarium Fish

a proud supporter of the HCCC

Member discounts:

20% off livestock

www.ohiexchange.com/armke/

1058 N. Business 35

New Braunfels, TX (830)629-1191

Ancistrus temminckii (cont.)

but you get the picture).

My bristle-nose bred in a 150 gallon tank which contained medium gravel and no live plants. The tank did contain artificial plants and holey rock and was a community tank to 8 adult fish and 4 Synodontis catfish. The water was filtered through a sump pump with a large amount of bio filter. Also I added floss filter to the drip plate that is over the bio balls and floss to the tower intake tube in the box on the back of the tank. I added the floss for two reasons: 1) is I over feed and 2) too lazy to get down and turn off pump during feeding. This floss helped save 5 of the fry and at this point unknown if any more fry have survived. I did not do a pH test on the tank but I do perform weekly water changes equal to 20% - 30% of the tank volume religiously. I used fluorescent lighting for duration of 14 - 15 hours each day. I fed the bushy-nose algae tabs and flake food that made it to the bottom and not consumed by the others. I only feed once a day, normally around 10 pm and then turn off the lights around 11 pm.



Photo by Robert Starks

The info I have found indicates that they require a hardness of 2-20° dGH and a pH of 5.8 to 7.5 with water temperature ranging between 23-27° C (73 - 80 F). I keep my water at 80 degrees F. One of the articles on the web recommends the condition of the water for

breeding to be 5-10° dGH and 6.5-7.0 pH.

The pair may have laid any where from 50 - 75 eggs, according to the book South American Catfishes by David Sands. The male guarded the eggs and also fanned them to circulate the water around them. Later when fry were free swimming he attached them to his nose bristles. He accomplished this by secreting a mucus substance on his nose and the fry stuck themselves there (authority: JJ). No special care on my part was given. Approximately 5 eggs representing 5 of the total hatch were viable

and hatched after 20 days. The fry were a light yellow color. Unknown what size when free swimming, but when found they had grown to 1/2 inch.

As I have said before, the fry didn't require any special care on my part. Spawning was not even known about until fry were caught in overflow box for sump pump. For filtration the tank used wet and dry sump pump. Not being able to witness any of the spawning nor the male caring for the fry, I missed out this time, but hopefully prepared for the next encounter.

I have waited for three days before I fed fry in the overflow box, small particles of algae tabs. They were also receiving flake that was not consumed in the tank. I am not going to feed on a regular basis because of the food they are already getting off the floss.

Although I was unable to observe any interesting habits in this spawning, it was very exciting seeing fry in a tank where you would not expect to see new fish. Its one thing to be watching spawning tanks, waiting to catch the action, but not to even be aware of it and then find the fry, very exciting. I did not know the small parents were mature enough to reproduce. I am hoping to observe the next spawning.

I do have an adult male and female that I attempted to breed in a 20 gallon long. The proc-

ess lasted about 9 months with no results. I used drift wood and fed them the foods recommended, but only a stinky tank resulted. Inexperience on my part was the culprit.

I want to thank "Lady Luck" for not only giving me some fry but also a mated pair. Now the hard parts begin. I must wait till the fry are

large enough to move and get them out of that box, whew, going to be touchy. And I must also remove the pair to another tank. I will attempt to trap them at night in a tube using algae tabs as bait. The last resort is moving the rocks and catching them. I will have to do more research to find out when they will be ready to

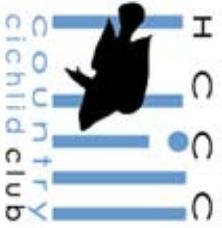


Photo by Joe Candelaria

spawn again.

I wish to thank Jeff Johnson again for his advice and information. To him it was just common knowledge but to me it was very helpful.

■ *Jim Beck*



The Lateral Line

Official Publication of the
Hill Country Cichlid Club