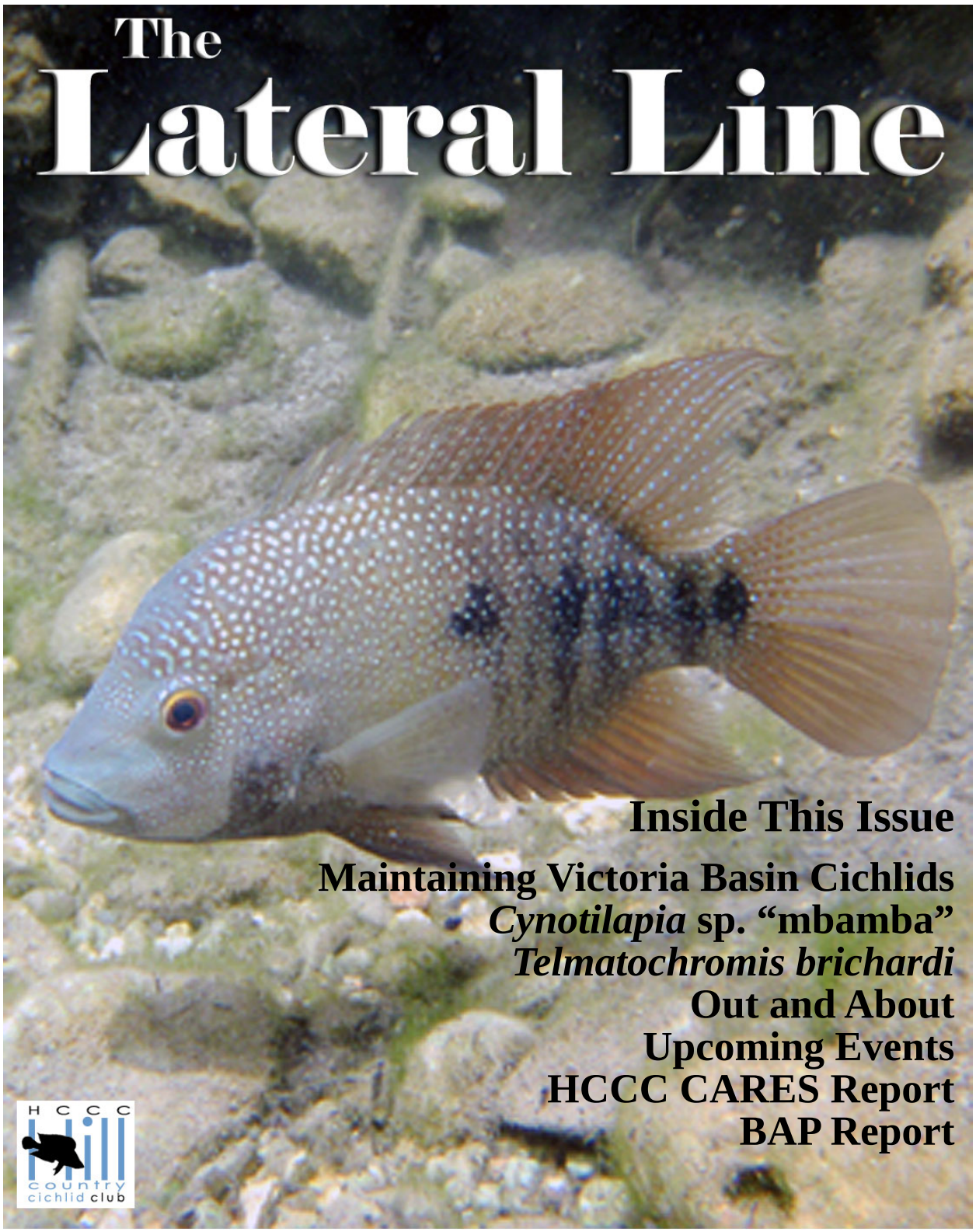
The Lateral Line



Inside This Issue

HCCC Hill country cichlid club

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Cover *Herichthys cyanogattatus* in the Comal River

Editor’s Ramblings

We have had two days in a row where the temperature didn’t hit triple digits here. Yesterday was 99F and today was 98F. I would have never thought I would be thinking of those readings as relief but I am. This was one of the hottest and driest summers on record and I am so honored to be part of it…NOT!!! For those with fishrooms detached from their houses, I hope your critters have faired well. My Victorians have held up great but I’ve had to really step up the water changes. For those with Tanganyikans or other “touchy” species, I hope all is well.

The Texan fish scene is about to hit its busy time. Auctions, FOTAS, TCA and OKAA are both having October shows, and of course, our big Christmas party is all occurring within a short time span. If you are into the social aspect of the hobby, this is a rockin’ time!

Me and the boys (a maritimeism) have been exploring the local waterways with regularity. I can’t emphasize enough, what a wonderful resource we have in our back yard. Come on out and join us for an afternoon snorkel. The underwater scenery has to be seen firsthand to be appreciated.

Our first box exchange went over well. We have upcoming exchanges planned with our friends at the Tampa Bay Aquarium Society and OKAA. I see this as becoming a regular thing. A special thanks to Rare Dave for taking care of all the packing, shipping, organizing, storing, well, for taking care of everything.

In this issue, Nick Andreola gives up a fantastic article on *Cynotilapia* sp. “mabama”. One of the most knowledgeable people I know concerning Lake Victoria cichlids, Kevin Bauman gives us some tips on maintaining cichlids from this region. Benjamin Smith relates his experiences with *Telmatochromis brichardi*. Add to that a CARES and BAP update and we’ve got a great issue together!

See ya next month.

Greg

Maintaining Cichlids from the Victorian Basin

- Kevin Bauman

Heading out on Lake Victoria. Photo by Lawrence Kent near Entebbe Uganda, 2008.

As aquarium hobbyists, we have likely heard some discussion of the endangered status or extinction of many species of cichlids in Lake Victoria. As a mere hobbyist, I can not presume to add to the knowledge base of what has already been published by scientists much more knowledgeable than myself. This article is intended to introduce other aquarium hobbyists to my thoughts and experiences as a Victorian Cichlid enthusiast.

First, a little background on the Lake itself. Lake Victoria is the largest of several lakes in the Victorian basin. Lake Victoria is the source of the Nile River. Several rivers feed into Lake Victoria but only the Nile River flows outward over a waterfall at a hydroelectric generator in Uganda. The Nile River flows Northward from Lake Victoria into Lake Kyoga which is connected to Lake Nawampassa in the rainy season, then west into Lake Albert. Lake Kanyaboli, the Yala Swamp and Lake Nabugabo are smaller bodies of water very close to Lake Victoria. There are other lakes in the Victorian basin such as Lake Kivu, Lake Edward, Lake George and Lake Albert that are north of Lake Tanganyika. These lakes are collectively referred to as the Victorian satellite lakes. We generally refer to cichlids from all these lakes as “Victorians” even though some species such as *Astatotilapia aeneocolor* or *Haplochromis limax* have never lived in Lake Victoria itself.

While the current situation in Lake Victoria is not the subject of this article, a brief history is necessary to understand the status of the Victorian cichlids in the hobby today. The Nile Perch (*Lates niloticus*) was introduced into Lake Victoria in the late 1950's to create a fishing industry for a population in desperate need of food and employment. This non-indigenous species existed in the lake for many years before its population exploded in the mid 1970's. Victorian cichlids were first exported around 1978. By 1980, this large piscavore had decimated many of the open water species in the lake. A commercial fishing industry was created, population increased around the lake, and many trees were cut down to smoke the harvested fish. The deforestation contributed to agricultural runoff and erosion of silts into the lake. The increasing human population dumped ever more raw sewage into the lake. The added nutrients caused a boom in algae growth and the growth of the water hyacinth. The overpopulation of the water hyacinth on the lake surface blocks the sunlight and reduces the oxygen (eutrophication) in the water by interfering with the water surface to air contact. The once clear water has become murky, making mate recognition more difficult, and it is thought that some hybridization is occurring. In the late 1980's the Lake Victoria Species Survival Program (LV SSP) was formed to preserve a few these cichlids species. There are currently 16 Victorian species being maintained at 20 zoos/aquariums throughout the United States. Since the LVSSP now essentially has multiple generations of tank raised cichlids, the hope of re-introduction into the lake is becoming much less viable. Most of the scientific community does not believe that captive bred cichlids should be reintroduced into Lake Victoria.

Large scale exportation of Victorians has never occurred, and no export occurred from 1998 through 2006. A few species of wild caught Victorian cichlids became available in limited quantities recently. These cichlids lived along the shoreline, either in the rocky zone or in the sandy bottom reed beds, where survival from predation was more likely. As a general rule, many Victorians from the shoreline (referred to as Mbipi) are very similar in temperament and tank maintenance to the Malawi mbuna except that many of them prefer a slightly meatier diet. Many hobbyists feel that all the Victorians are extremely aggressive, but that is simply not true. There is a wide variation in the temperament of the mbipi in Lake Victoria just as there is a great deal of variation in the temperament of the mbuna in Lake Malawi.

Lates niloticus from Lake Victoria. Photo by Lawrence Kent.

So what does all this mean to the average Cichlid enthusiast? Since Lake Victoria is a very young lake, there has not been as long a period of time for the species to diversify. That not only means that it is difficult at times to identify what species we have, but it also

means that these similar looking Victorians are much more likely to hybridize in your aquarium. If you are going to be a responsible breeder of Victorians, then you must be more willing to maintain a limited number of diverse looking Victorian species in any one tank, or better yet, maintain a single species tank. It is common for Victorian keepers to add mbuna to the tank since the diet, water conditions and temperament are all very similar. I myself have never heard of a Victorian cross-breeding with a mbuna, although we all know that anything is possible given the right circumstances. Fortunately, if you know how to maintain an mbuna tank, then you already know how to maintain a tank with mbipi. A sand substrate is preferred with lots of rocks for hiding places. Since many Victorians are insectivores/omnivores there are several species that will do quite well in planted tanks, especially *Vallisneria*. The water temperature should be between 72º F and 78º F with a PH preferably greater than 7.4. A minimum of three females is preferred; however (unlike mbuna) a second male in the tank seems to offer some advantages. A dominant male Victorian is often relentless in his pursuit of a female to breed with. The subdominant male will sometimes act as a target fish to partially divert the attention of the dominant male from the constant pursuit of the females. I've found that most of the Victorians I've kept have a lifespan of around six years.

A very high percentage of Victorians exhibit at least some red coloration. I would imagine that one of the main reasons that people buy Victorians is to "*get the red*" that is lacking in the mbuna. That often does not work out as well as one might hope. With only a few notable exceptions (*Astatotilapia latifasciata* and *Paralabidochromis sauvagei* most of the Victorian females are a rather bland silver/gray or dull yellow/brown. If you ever mix the females of many species, you may never be able to reliably separate them again. If you don't maintain the dull looking females, then there is a good chance you may never see much color in your males. Many times, only the one dominant male in the tank will show good color and the subdominant males will look very similar to the dull colored females. And if your Victorians are housed with another more dominant species, then you might never see the full color potential of any of the Victorians in that tank. If you plan to keep Victorians, then you also need to carefully plan all the tank inhabitants, or you may be disappointed in the results. Your fish may never even remotely appear like the stunning pictures of dominant male Victorians in full breeding dress you find on the Internet.

Paralabidochromis sauvagei. Photo by Kevin Bauman.

Most experienced hobbyists want to have a definite identification of the species in their tanks, and they also want to know that the species they maintain are "pure". Unfortunately, there are no

such guarantees possible with most of the Victorians available today. The vast majority of Victorians have not been scientifically classified and likely never will be, since wild stock from the lake is far from abundant. Again, since the lake is not that old, the differences between many similar species are very subtle. It is virtually impossible to tell the difference between many females and it is also nearly impossible to identify many of the males unless they are in full breeding dress. Unless you are lucky enough to buy some of the few wild exports, the only reliable source for "pure" Victorians is from stock released from one of the LVSSP institutions or from one of the extremely rare hobbyists who has maintained a colony for many, many years. This lack of certainty is often frustrating to both those new to the world of Victorians as well as experienced hobbyists.

Victorian cichlids are some of the most prolific cichlids you could possibly maintain. I've had both *Haplochromis* sp. "finebar scrapper" and *Astatotilapia aeneocolor* breed at less than 1" long and less than six months old. The brood size is often less than a dozen, but they breed easily and often. I've noticed that many of my Victorians breed until they reach the age of around three years old. After that age breeding is either non-existent or sporadic. Being a breeder of Victorian cichlids is easy, but finding another responsible hobbyist interested in maintaining and distributing an endangered species, can often be challenging. Not every hobbyist wants to dedicate an aquarium to a single species for a long period of time especially if that species is not one of the more colorful ones. The demand for most Victorians is very low, because the average hobbyist may never have heard of the species you have available. Information is sparse, so even with proper research; you may never know what species you have in your tank. Among the reasonably small community of avid Victorian breeders, it is common to give them away to a good home rather than sell them to some one you don't know. (With the exception of a few of the more popular and extremely colorful species like *Pundamilia nyererei*) If the goal is to preserve the species, then finding your brood a good home with another breeder is far more important than maximizing your income.

I've told many people that to maintain Victorians one needs to have a little different attitude. At least half of all the Victorians I've purchased at any club auction or even from reliable breeders has been incorrectly identified by the breeder and more than a handful have been obvious hybrids. Unfortunately, that's life as a vic-lover. You just have to shrug your shoulders and move on. If you keep one of the less popular Victorian species, you may never know if it is indeed a pure specimen and chances are pretty good that someone will tell you that you have a hybrid. Most of us like to research as much as we can about our aquarium residents, and the lack of adequate information about Victorians can be frustrating. But seeing the unusually long extended fins of a bright red male enticing his female is an incredible sight. And preserving a fish so close to possible extinction in the wild has its rewards as well.

Cynotilapia sp. "mbamba"

- Nick Andreola

If you try an internet search for information on this undescribed species of Cynotilapia, you won't find much material available. On our forum some time ago, we had a discussion as to what differentiates sp. *mbamba* from the better known species *afra*. The only answer I could give was to fall back on, "I know one when I see one." I'm hoping to learn and share a better answer through researching and writing this article.

Since *C. afra* had been clarified by Regan in 1922, there must have been enough of a distinction between the two

types for later researchers to have come up with a new separate species name over fifty years later. "….(Ribbink *et al*. 1983). They initiated a nomenclature system, intended as temporary, of providing taxa with mixed Latin/English names, such as *Pseudotropheus* 'zebra gold', *Cynotilapia* 'mbamba', or *Pseudotropheus* 'tiny'. However, their system has proved remarkably stable. For example all three of the preceding names were still in use 18 years after the Ribbink group's paper (e.g. Konings 2001)."[1] Konings continues in the 2007, 4th edition, as we continue now, over a quarter century later, to maintain this uniqueness from *afras* or other Cyno-types.

I'll list the few tidbits of information available and discuss them later.

#1 "*Cynotilapia* sp. "mbamba", which is found sympatrically {the occurrence of organisms in overlapping geographical areas, but without interbreeding} with *Cynotilapia afra* along it's distribution, differs from the latter by the colored patch on the head and nape. This colored area is sometimes extended into the dorsal fin. Females of *Cynotilapia* sp. "mbamba" have a light, silvery body (often with a yellow dorsal); those of *Cynotilapia afra* are bluish-brown or light-blue but not silver."[2]

#2 "*Cynotilapia* sp. "mbamba" – like many other zooplanktivores, males have a bright 'blaze' on the dorsal fin and upper surface of the head, probably to attract females down from the water column."[3]

#3 "…a very dark *Cynotilapia* shares the habitat with *C. afra* but has a characteristic lacking in all *C.* sp "mbamba" populations, i.e. two black bars on the forehead. For the time being I will refer to this population as *C.* sp. "black eastern"."[4]

#4 "The populations in the southeastern part of the lake previously referred to C. sp. 'black eastern' are here regarded as belonging to *C.* sp. 'mbamba'."[5]

#5 "Two species of *Cynotilapia*, *C. afra* and *C.* sp. 'mbamba', are often found sympatrically, but because of the enormous geographical variability of both species
it is sometimes difficult to identify them with confidence. Although these species
have different habitat preferences-*C.* sp. 'mbamba' occurs in more sediment-rich biotopes-they are often found side by side…." [5]

Other than notation on the discontinuity of their distribution, a general listing of some locations they're found and

[1] Genner M.J., Turner G.F. (2005) The mbuna cichlids of Lake Malawi: a model for rapid speciation and adaptive radiation. FISH and FISHERIES **6**, 1-34 [page 5]

[2] Konings A., as curator of the *Cynotilapia afra* profile on cichlidae.com

[3] Genner M.J., Turner G.F., ibid, [page 3]

[4] Konings A., (2001) Malawi Cichlids in their Natural Habitat, 3rd edn. Cichlid Press [page 111]

[5] Konings A., (2007) Malawi Cichlids in their Natural Habitat, 4th edn. Cichlid Press [page 69]

generic size/disposition information, that's it. The sum total of all the data I was able to gather.

#1 lets us know that we should be looking for a blaze to distinguish the mbambas from the *afras*. However, many *afras* have blazes as well; the variants from Lumbila and Nkhata Bay for example, and several of the mbamba photos in the 4th edition; see pg 71/photos 5 & 6, show males with no more blaze than a typical *afra*. As #2 points out, the blaze is not an uncommon feature. The well known C. *afra* Cobwe male shows more of a blaze than any mbamba type I've seen (more than any other *afra* type as well). My conclusion on the blaze issue is this: Significant portions of the mbamba group have a very distinct blaze, while some *afras* also display this pattern. While the blaze may be an initial indicator, there is too much overlap for it to be used as a specific identifier.

Much is made of #3, however, #4 seems to address what many in the hobby have experienced themselves; that the double forehead bars (or lack of) is not an absolute designator. The C. *afra* Nkhata Bay has many individuals which have only the interorbital bar between the snout and the dorsal while individuals from several location variants of the mbamba group can show that bar as well as the more *afra* like bar extending from the cheek across the opercular spot and over the forehead. As far as the first torso bar, which begins immediately behind the pectoral fins and extends up to the beginning of the dorsal fin, we can say that on most sp. mbamba types/individuals this bar is broken by the blaze while being continuous on most *afras*. We cannot, however, assign this as a completely positive indication. The same can be said about the extensions of the rest of the torso bars into the dorsal fin. The conclusion on these facets being the same as that above: too much overlapping.

As a short aside; C. *afra* Cobwe is the only variant of either type that I have ever personally seen (live or in photos) that either completely lacks or shows just vestigial traces of the interorbital bar as a standard part of their full breeding dress. There is a photo by Ad Konings in Schraml's Aqualog book on mbuna (plt. A27931-4 / pg. 38) of an *afra* specimen from Nkhungu Reef which shows just a spotty trace of this bar. Another of Ad's photos of this same variant (#15 / pg. 70 / 4th edition) shows a specimen with a more complete bar, so I cannot assume that this lack is the 'norm' for this variant.

The description of female coloration in #1 might have been a substantial point of separation if it matched my experiences with these fish in captivity. I'm not sure how depth of water or other factors when viewing these fish in the lake alters perceptions of coloration versus that of a brightly lit aquarium. In the latter, females cannot be called silver. {I've seen Mullet's pictures and I know what silver is ☺}Varying food sources in captivity can and will play some factor in coloration, however, my observations include groups of wild caught adult females. I have a relatively high reliability factor on the provenance of two of the WC groups and note that their coloration in an aquarium would better be described as a light brown. It's a silvery-brown or a grayish-brown, but brown none the less. The females of the F1 group of sp. mbamba Mphanga

Rocks are very similar in coloration to the WC females of my *afra* Jalo Reef group. In short, my experience with these two species can be summed up like this: sp. mbamba females range from silvery-brown through brown while *afra* females range from brown through blue. Again, the overlap is significant.

#5 seems to address the general overall theme that I've encountered. While the habitat preference may help narrow down possibilities for those lucky enough to be viewing these fish in the lake, it is of little value to the hobbyist and the final portion of that quote seems to underscore the overlap issues.

While a lot of attention is paid to the forehead blaze I'd like to add some personal observations on typical sp mbamba male coloration. First, the color of the last 20% or so of the torso to the caudle peduncle is almost always very dark. On many males, this entire section will appear solid black. Conversely, on every *afra* I've ever seen, this area is white to blue. The remaining torso coloration may also contain some clues. Many sp. mbamba specimens lose the blue/black pattern to varying degrees up to presenting completely black. I don't have any measurements to validate this, but my overwhelming impression on those that do not go completely black is that the black bars are wider than the blue thus giving the appearance of blue bars on a black body. With *afra*, I generally see black bars on a blue body.

So, if you're not sure if you have an *afra* or a sp. mbamba, go through this checklist:

A- Does the male have a white/blue/yellow blaze?
B- Is the blaze uninterrupted from interorbital bar to dorsal?
C- Are the females silvery-brown through brown?
D- Do the torso bars seem blue on black (or solid black) vs. black on blue?

If the answer to all of these questions is Yes, send me a picture of the fish and I'll help you identify it because, I'll know one when I see one!

Synodontis lucipinnis and *Neolamprologus multifasciatus*.

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F.O.T.A.S. 2009

Presented by

F.O.T.A.S. LVIII
September 11th-13th
The Omni Hotel

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Houston, Texas 77079
281-558-8338

All Species Show, Awards Banquet, Giant all-day fish auction.

Speaker Lineup
Spencer Jack-Charles Hawks-Greg Steeves-Dave Hansen

For more information visit http://www.houstonaquariumsociety.org/

Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies

Out and About

FOTAS LVIII is right around the corner! The Houston Aquarium Society always does a wonderful job of hosting this annual convention. The Dave and Greg show will be there. Greg will be presenting a new talk on furu compatibility while Dave will be the banquet speaker with a photography presentation. Spencer Jack will also be on the bill. Make your plans for September 11th – 13th. http://www.houstonaquariumsociety.org/FOTAS2009/E/index.html

For you ACA members, rumor has it that there is heavy HCCC representation in the upcoming issue of the Buntbarsche Bulletin.

OKAA member Dean Hougen will be speaking at the Midwest Cichlid Association Expo in Kansas City September 18th – 20th. Dean is a wonderful lecturer so if you happen to be up that way, make sure you check this event out.
http://www.kcfishclub.org/top-mca-expo.html

Evan Bowers received rave reviews for his presentation at the ACA a few weeks ago. Great job Evan!

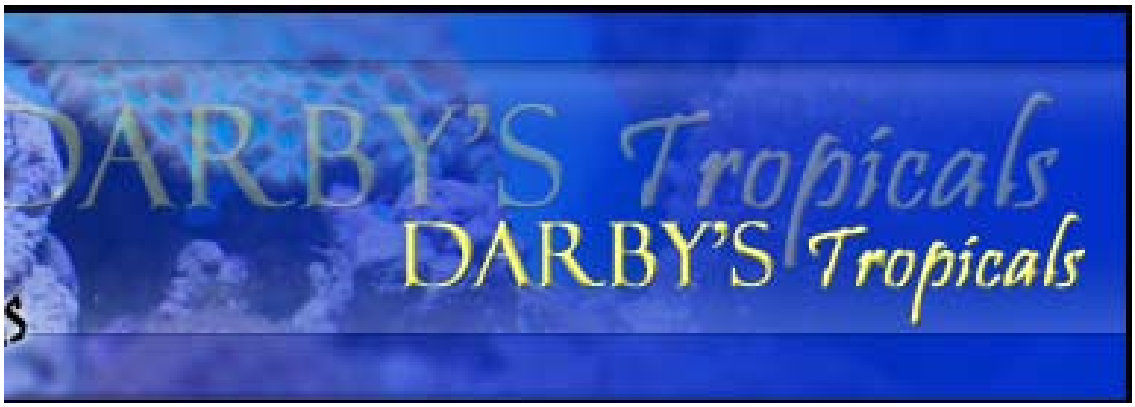
Barbara Wooton was honored as the CARES member of the year! Congratulations Barbara, this award could not go to a more deserving individual.

Two FOTAS members will be running for the ACA Board of Trustees. Dean Hougen (OKAA) and Dave Hansen (HCCC) will be on the ACA ticket. Make sure if you are an ACA member, to cast your vote.

On a more scientific realm, HCCC'er Anton Lamboj recently described a new fish. *Enigmatochromis lucanusi* is a new genus and new species. Maybe we can find out more about this when he comes in for a visit on September 19th. Also, Anton and the snork club gang will be exploring a small section of the San Marcos River on September 18th. If you are interested in going, check the "Snork Club" section of the HCCC forum.

Rob Teague will be hosting a tour of his fishroom Friday September 11th for those of you attending FOTAS. Rob's house is nearby and his fish collection is legendary. This is one tour you do not want to miss.

Greg Steeves was honored with ACA Spawn of the Year for his work with *Astatotilapia desfontainii*. This is a back to back for the HCCC as last year the title was awarded to Dave Hansen.



Upcoming Events

F.O.T.A.S 2009 September 11th-13th
The Federation of Texas Aquarium Society's annual show will be hosted by The Houston Aquarium Society.
The Omni Hotel
13210 Katy Freeway
Houston, Texas 77079
281-558-8338

Hill Country Cichlid Club Quarterly Meeting Sept 19, 2009.
Ryan's Steakhouse New Braunfels TX.
6:00pm
Special guest speaker, HCCC member Anton Lamboj

OKAA Fall Classic Oct 10th-11th.
Hilton Garden Inn, S. Meridian, Oklahoma City, OK
Speakers Juan Miguel Artigas Azas, Mike Wickham, David Stewart, Gerald Griffin.
Banquet and Auction.

Texas Cichlid Association Fall Workshop, Show and Auction. October 23rd – 25th.
Speakers John Hansen, Mike Wise, Don Conkel.
Show and Auction

HCCC Christmas Party December 5th, 2009.
Springhill Suites
3636 Northwest Loop 410
San Antonio, TX 78201
Special guest Ted Judy

BAP Report

Dan Schacht

June must have been a bad month for spawning as only one person has submitted an entry so far. Only one member has submitted any entries for the month of August. Benjamin Smith's first entries into the BAP field came just the day before this summary was due. Thanks Ben for giving me something to write about! Striving to be a little different, Ben started out of the gate with five BAP entries. This earned him not only the Spawning Award, but also the Breeder Award! Congrats to Ben and his June spawning fish!

Our leader board remains almost unchanged. Nick added a few points this month by submitting his article on Cynotilapia sp "mbamba". Nick maintains the lead for the BAP year which ends on October 31st, but by no means is he safe in that number one position.

Let's keep the fish coming as the BAP year end nears!

Cyprichromis leptesoma

CARES Report

Troy Veltrop

This report consists of those people who have registered their CARES fish in the HCCC Cares program. If you are a participant, please ensure Troy is updated on any changes to your colony and if you are not registered, contact him with your species.

HCCC CARES Membership Roster

Nick Andreola (nick a)
Roberto De Leon (Ripple)
Brenda Figah (Bre)
Takeru Garcia (Tak)
Charles Jones (marauder_77868)
Mike Kaaki (Mike)
Terry Maxwell (tmax57)
Steve Murdock (Dorie Rath)
Kyle Osterholt (snakeskinner)
Dan Schacht (Dan)
Greg Steeves (GAS)
Troy Veltrop (Troy Veltrop)
Barbara Wooton (LadyBarbar001)

There are still a lot of members who haven't registered. What are you waiting for?

Telmatochromis brichardi

Benjamin L. Smith

Telmatochromis brichardi are a cave spawning fish from Lake Tanganyika. The water in their area of the lake is alkaline with a pH of 8.6 and is considered "hard," having a high content of dissolved minerals. The temperature is in the upper 70s Fahrenheit. The fish tend for form pair bonds and are aggressive once paired off. They will spawn in both caves and shells. For their food, *Telmatochromis* are known to be egg stealers of other fish as a large source of their diet in the wild.

I purchased a trio of adult fish, one male and two females, from Dave's Rare Aquarium Fish. The fish are somewhat cigar-shaped, beige in color with a dark horizontal band down the side with some cross hashing to it. There is also a stripe at the base of the dorsal fin. The fish also have a crescent of blue green around the eye that flashes in the light every so often. The male fish are larger than females and reach a length of about 5 cm.

They were housed in a ten gallon aquarium with a hang-on-back filter and a sand substrate with a couple of pieces of holey rock, three large narrow shells and a plasticine clay cave. The water in my house is hard with a high pH (my pH strip stops at 8.2). A heater was used in the tank to keep the temperature near to 78 F. They were fed flake food and water changes (50%) were made every 2-3 weeks.

The fish settled in quickly and initially, one female was bullied about a bit while the male courted the other female. The female took up residence in the clay cave which I had initially made for my *Altolamprologus calvus*. It is wide and flat with about a 0.75 cm x 3cm opening at the mouth of the cave. She stayed in the shell for one week while peaking her nose out, she did not come out of the shell while I was watching, though, the other female would always hide as well. The male tended to stay in the open more regularly. After about two weeks, there were numerous fry swimming about.

The fry are a blast to watch because they mimic their parent's movements so well. They are mottled and appear almost checker-boarded. I fed Hikari First Bites initially, then Cylopeeze, and finally crushed flake. They are slow to grow and numerous generations can be tolerated in the same tank. I had spawned this fish in the past with a

different, younger group, and that young group picked off the older fry once the 3rd generation came along. However with this older group, 4 generations were together with no problem. Their first spawn was small, about nine fish, and subsequent spawns were larger in the mid 20s. The male also began spawning with the second female as well.

Spawning this fish was not difficult. I chose it primarily because it would spawn in a small tank. As for tank mates in a larger community aquarium, I would recommend something fairly stout. I did keep them with *Paracyprichromis nigripinnis* and *Cardiopharynx schoutedeni* for a short while and had to separate them since the *Paracyprichromis* and *Cardiopharynx* were always huddled in a corner opposite my *T. brichardi* though not showing any signs of abuse. I think some sort of mouth brooder would be a prudent choice for a tankmate given their egg eating nature. Overall, this is a fun fish and I particularly enjoyed watching the fry grow up and would recommend it readily to the novice aquarist.