

The Lateral Line

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Upcoming Events:

- October Meeting on the 15th in New Braunfels
- Christmas Party Dec. 16th

Cover Photo:
*Triglachromis
otostigma*
by Dave Hansen

BAP Report

The month of August was another hot month for the BAP. The month consists of numerous entries but one that was outstanding was the entry of *Neolamprologus multifasciatus* submitted by Lisa (Lisachromis). The reason it is outstanding is that the entry placed Lisa in the level of Advanced Breeder with 200 points. What makes this an accomplishment even more outstanding is that Lisa only receives points by the submission of articles. Being a member from Canada limits her to the writing of articles which you have seen in the Lateral Line. Congratulations Lisa for the spawning of the *multifasciatus* and reaching the Advanced Breeder Level. Thanks for the support of the club with the work that you put into your articles.

One of this month's first entries was made by Robert (Ripple) with a class "C" spawning of *Ancistrus* sp. "Albino Bristlenose". Congratulations Robert. Another congrats goes to David (Dockusan) with the spawning a 1st of species entry of *Aulonocara* sp. "Deep". Congratulations David. Another 1st of species entry was made by Greg (GAS) with a "C" class *Orthochromis stormsi*. Also two more entries consisting of *Protomelas steveni* Taiwan Reef and the *Aulonocara stuartgranti* Ngara Flametail were submitted by Greg for a total of three this month, congratulations to you Greg. The Ngara Flametail spawning was a 2nd generation which earns Robert (Ripple) 5 extra points. Congrats Robert and keep sharing those fish.

Nick (Nick A) also had three entries this month with the *Cynotilapia* sp. "Lion Cove", *Tropheops* sp. "Red Fin" and *Tropheops* sp. "Lilac". Congratulations to you Nick. Diane (Gryhouse) receives congratulation on her spawning of *Pseudotropheus acei* "Ngara". Congratulations goes out to David (Dockusan) got into the August BAP with an entry of *Altolamprologus compressiceps* "Red Lufubu". Greg (Mokkers) receives congratulation on a "C" class spawning *Platytaeniodus* sp. "Red Tail Sheller".

Current BAP standings on page 10.

■ Jim Beck

HCCC Monthly Photo Contest



First Place
Gerard Delaney
Sciaenochromis fryeri



Second Place
Gerard Delaney
Otopharynx tetraspilus



Third Place
Greg Ward
Tramitichromis intermedius

Judging by Dr. Mike Helford

Species Profile:***Neolamprologus multifasciatus***

Etymology: *Neolamprologus* comes from the following Greek words: neos = new & lampros = light (or bright) & logos which refers to the white of the eye. *Multifasciatus* comes from the Latin word multi which means many and fascia which means banded or striped. This refers to the stripes on the body.

Common Names: Multies, Multi.

Described: Boulenger 1906



Photo by Greg Steeves

Synonyms: *Lamprologus multifasciatus*

Family: Cichlidae

Subfamily: Pseudocrenilabrinae

Max Size: 4 cm (1.5") for males and 3 cm (1.2") for females. This is one of the smallest cichlids in the world.

Distribution: Africa: Endemic to Lake Tanganyika. (Mbita Island NW Point Mpulungu, Niamkolo, Kapembwa, Ndole Bay, Musende Bay, Mbita Island - Zambia) (Luvu, Lumbu Bay, Ubwari, MYUNGA - Congo Democratic Republic) Tanzania, Burundi.

Habitat: They are found in rock crevices and shell beds in the lake. They utilize the empty Neothauma shells for protection and breeding. They will congregate in large groups in the wild but tend to stay in pairs. They will also be harem spawners if the opportunity arises.

Natural Diet: *N. multifasciatus* feeds upon zooplankton that drift by their colonies.

Aquarium Diet: Will accept most foods, even flake. Frozen and live food are preferred such as baby brine shrimp.

Aquarium Care: 24-27°C (75-81°F), Hard and alkaline: pH 7.8-9.0

Description: Light beige to brown fish (I suspect the slight color difference has to do with the different locales) with many thin stripes running vertically down the body. These bands also appear on the unpaired fins. A fine yellow stripe can be on the end of the caudal and anal fin.

Tank setup: A small tank (10g) can do for a few of these fish. A sand substrate with appropriately sized shells should also be included in the tank. I would recommend that you have

more shells than actual adult fish in your colony. You can use empty Mystery snail shells. Multies will dig their shells down to the glass but do not tend to bury their shells like a lot of other shelldwellers. Generally, a species setup is preferred. However, you can add them to a tank with other fish as long as the other fish cannot eat the multies.



Photo by Lisa Boorman

Breeding: More females than males are preferred. As these cichlids are shelldwellers, they lay their eggs inside their shells. Several batches of fry can peacefully co-exist in the tank. Brood size is generally small (approx 5-15, with 15 being a very high number). Fry hatch in about 6-10 days.

I received the first of these fish who sent them up to me from Texas in early 2005. He had sent me a 'goody box' of fish and these were sent along to fill up the box. They were extremely small yet. He sent me 5 but the stress of the trip had wiped out all but 2. I placed them into a 10 gallon tank by themselves and hoped for the

best. I fed these little guys on flake food and live baby brine shrimp. The tank has a sponge filter but no heater as the tank stays around 72-74 depending on what time of year it is. The tank is at the top level of one of my tank stands. The duo survived and thrived but neither of them appeared any different in size to the other. After many months I figured I ended up with 2 females.

This led to a trip to Wet Thumb in early 2006. I bought another 2 fish to add to my little colony of *Neolamprologus multifasciatus*. They tried to sex them for me. I supposedly bought 1 male and 1 female. They were promptly added in with my other multies. Again, several months go by and no one fish was larger than any others and no sign of any fry at all. I was getting a little discouraged by this.

This, in turn, led to an offer from a friend. He needed to move out some fish from his tanks. Some of these were multies. He gave me what he was sure was his breeding pair and the shell they had claimed as theirs. I added these to my colony.

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I found it interesting to note that for each of these multies I had, that I could pick out which 2 multies came together by their color. It was only a matter of 'shading' but I could pick them out.

The last pair I added did not stay together it appeared. I hoped that the male would go back to his female or at least pair with another one in the tank. Within a couple weeks of adding the last pair to the tank, I noticed a couple of fry scooting around a shell at the back of the tank. I was excited! Finally!! After all this time, it was finally a breeding colony of multies. The next week I looked and realized after adding in some live baby brine that I had several batches of fry in with their parents. Soon, all 5 females had babies around their shells. I do not know how many fry I have right now, except that it's a lot.

One interesting thing happened with one female. She seems to be the lowest fish in ranking in the tank among the adults. This female had a single shell slightly away from everyone else in the tank. Her shell was somewhat near the tank wall. Instead of laying her eggs in the shell like all the other females, she laid hers on the tank wall! I got to watch the development of the eggs. At one point after hatching she moved them close to the shell. This was before they were free swimming. It took 9 days from when I first saw them as wrigglers until I saw the fry actually free swimming.

I absolutely adore the attitude of these tiny fish. They seem to think that they're big fish. They try to show you that. However, if you show them that you're not intimidated (by not moving a siphon, etc.), they hide in their shells. There's no way you can miss with these wonderful little cichlids. I think everyone should at least try them.

■ Lisa Boorman



Photo by Robert De Leon

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Species Profile:***Orthochromis stormsi***

In recent years, the African interior has opened up to the cichlid hobbyist and we have been most fortunate to have a myriad of amazingly beautiful animals make their way to our tanks. From the Congo River system in West Africa comes the "goby type" cichlid *Orthochromis stormsi*. In its native range, *Orthochromis stormsi* inhabits slow moving waters and is common in the shallows



Photo by Dave Hansen

near to shore (Fermon per comm). A small swim bladder hampers the efforts of this species to remain buoyant for extended periods. Darting about along the substrate is the preferred method of motion. These sometimes humorous movements only add to the allure of maintaining *Orthochromis stormsi* for the aquarist.

There is not a great deal of information in regards to the feeding habits of *Orthochromis stormsi* in the wild. Consensus leans towards a herbivorous diet of algae and the food associated therein

(Lamboj, 2004). In the aquarium, a spirulina based flake with a low protein percentage (below 10%) will suffice nicely. This cichlid is particularly susceptible to bloat and disease if these nutritional needs coupled with pristine water quality are not met.

Orthochromis stormsi is a moderately sized cichlid with males growing to 12cm in length. Females remain slightly smaller at 10.5cm. The body coloration varies from olive-green to a lightly tan-brown. Dissecting the flank laterally is a solid black bar that runs from the base of the caudal peduncle to the gill plate. At this point, the horizontal line thins along the cheek and ends at the eye. Merging at the eye is another black line that streaks to the upper corner of the mouth, around the lips and ending on the lower jaw. There are 8-9 faint vertical bars spaced the length of the torso. A faint bar follows the lateral line across the upper portion of the body. The belly is lighter in color becoming white along the bottom of the fish. Males have a golden-yellow hue behind the gill plate towards the belly. The forehead region is a dark purple coloration. There is a bright red spot at

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the bottom of the eye orbit. The lips are thickened. Fins are mostly translucent. The dorsal fin has a black tip to each fin ray with a dark spotting running its length. The anal fin contains no ocelli.

In the aquarium *Orthochromis stormsi* is a rather robust seemingly aggressive cichlid with its own



Photo by Dave Hansen

kind. Most squabbles are territorial in nature and usually enacts nothing more than a series of bluffs between similarly sized males. Rarely is there any serious physical contact between conspecifics. The most serious fight I have witnessed was jaw locking between two similar sized males. This was only after the two had tried to settle their differences by jetting advances on one another with fins erect. It seems when one has found a spot he is happy with, all the other *Orthochromis stormsi* suddenly want this area as well. This behavior alone should entice most aquarists towards this species. They

have provided me with hours of entertainment watching an individual claim a rock or pit he has excavated.

In order to maintain *Orthochromis stormsi* in a comfortable environment, an aquarium of at least 55 gallons should be used. This will nicely house a small group of six young fish. As the fish grows it may become necessary to move the colony to larger quarters or to reduce the individuals to a mated pair. There is much individual variation with regards to behavior when dealing with this species so sensible observation on the part of the aquarist (as with most other cichlids) is needed as the fish reaches adulthood. Tank décor can consist of a small grain gravel or sand. Rockwork will allow for territorial possession. Additionally, plantings of the various *Anubias* species will enhance the comfort level of *Orthochromis stormsi*. Power filtration coupled with regular weekly 25% water changes maintains quality at an acceptable level. A temperate

24-28°C is a suitable temperature for this species. Our group is housed with a group of the Lake Victorian cichlid *Paralabidochromis* sp.

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"rock krib" and the charming little catfish *Synodontis tourei*. These three species, although not geographically accurate as fish that might be encountered in the wild, work very well together and create a diverse display. Our water has a pH of 8.0. This is substantially higher than that of the Congo River which has had readings below 5.0. No apparent adverse effects are known from hard water maintenance.

Male *Orthochromis stormsi* will eventually excavate a pit near the base of a rock or plant. This activity is associated with reproduction. Once a pit is dug to the satisfaction of the male, the attempt to entice a gravid female into spawning commences. The male will dart out (never too far from his pit) and "shimmy" to his female. Ultimately she will hop over to his excavation to see his handy work. If the site suits her approval she will succumb to his advances and engage him in the act of spawning. The act of reproduction is typical of haplochromines involving the two fish circling one another. The female drops an egg or two and quickly turns around to retrieve them. As the male releases milt, the female ingests it fertilizing her eggs. On occasion the male has been seen incubating eggs as well (Staeck, 1989). It has not been observed or known for a male to hold eggs to term. Gestation takes about 20 days with further parental care by the female for another week. Brood sizes are generally small (in my experience) in the range of 8-15 fry. Perhaps my hard water has some bearing on the number of eggs that become fertilized and eventually hatch.

If you are willing to put a little effort in husbandry, *Orthochromis stormsi* is certain to be a pleaser. While not especially brightly colored,

their amusing antics more than make up for any shortcomings in dress. Whether adding to an existing community tank, or kept as a species only display, *Orthochromis stormsi* is a welcome addition to any cichlid hobbyist's collection.



Photo by Greg Steeves

References:

- Lamboj, A. 2004. "The Cichlid Fishes of Western Africa." Bergit Schmettkamp Verlag, Bornheim.
- Staeck, W. & H. Linke. 1994. "African Cichlids I: Cichlid from West Africa." Tetra Press, Melle.

■ Greg Steeves

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Species Profile:***Altolamprologus calvus***

Altolamprologus calvus is a cave brooder native to the rocky habitat of Lake Tanganyika, Zaire. The climate is subtropical and hot. The native waters for this fish is a pH 7-8 and hard. I obtained 3 wild caught pair from Bluechip Aquatics. The males were 4 inches and the females were 2.25-2.5 inches. Both sexes exhibit the same color pattern, black compressed body with white spots.

The fish were placed in 100gal tank which contained several species of cichlids. The tank décor consisted of several pieces of holey rock and pool filter sand. The tank was filtered by a magnum 350 with bio wheels and sponge filter with penguin 550 powerhead. The tank temperature is 78 degrees and a pH of 7-8. I perform weekly water changes equal to 30% of the tank volume. I use fluorescent lighting for duration of 12-14 hours each day. I feed the fish hbh krill pellets and omega one cichlid flake.

When spawning, the colors of both sexes intensify. The female choose a small conch shell in which to spawn. First the female would enter followed closely by the male. At some point the eggs are laid deep inside the shell and fertilized by the male.

The pair laid an unknown number of eggs. After spawning the female stayed inside the shell, rarely to be seen, except for brief moments to feed. The male's demeanor really changed, he would attack any and everything that threaten the spawning area. After 14days I would take the shell, with female still inside and remove the fry. There was approximately 25-30 1/8th inch fry. The fry were light in color.

The fry were placed in a 10gallon tank with several small pieces of lava rock. I used a mature air driven sponge filter for filtration. After a few

hours I started to feed them cyclopeeze. The fry are very slow growing.

The above method will work for all geographical variants *calvus* as well as its close relative the *compressiceps*. They can be kept in a community type setting with no problems but if you're looking for numbers of fry a breeding setup would be best. There are a several variants of a *calvus* available to the hobbyist, the black, white, and yellow, but which ever one you decide to keep, you will not be disappointed.

■ *Charles Skillern*

Current BAP Standings	
Name	YTD
Greg S.	360
Charles	310
Jim	120
David D.	115
Diane	105
Nick A.	105
Jennifer	90
Lisa Bo.	55

Current Standings (cont)	
Name	YTD
Dave H.	50
Greg W.	50
Robert	50
Greg W.	30
Eric	40
Duc	25
Walter	20
Lisa Bl.	15

Event Calendar:**Upcoming Events in Texas**

This is a new feature we hope to include periodically in future issues of the Lateral Line. All of the information has been obtained from other club's websites. I have not confirmed any dates and times. Please check with each club if you plan to attend any of their events. This list may not be complete so don't assume every event is included here. If anyone has any input or knows contacts from other cichlid clubs in Texas, please let me know. I would also like to include contact information for each club.

September:

September 15-17th

Texas Cichlid Association Fall Workshop and Auction. Confirmed speakers to date include Steve Lundblad and Dan Woodland. For more information, visit the TCA website at <http://home.flash.net/~tcichlid/>

October:

October 15th

Time: 12:00 P.M.

Hill Country Cichlid Club monthly meeting. Darby's Tropical Fish is hosting. 5514 IH 35 South, New Braunfels.

October 20-22nd

The **Houston Aquarium Society** is hosting F.O.T.A.S. 2006. Speakers will include Heiko Bleher, Rusty Wessel and Jeff Senske. The 3 day event will be held at The Hotel Sofitel. For

more information visit

www.HoustonAquariumSociety.org and www.fotasonline.com. Information has not been updated on these sites, but visit as the event date gets closer for more information.

December:

December 16th

Time: 5 P.M.— 9 P.M.

Hill Country Cichlid Club Christmas Party. Our year end bash. We will be holding it at the same place as last year (Bracken United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall). Open to club members and their families only. Additional details to be worked out.



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