

# DELTA TALE

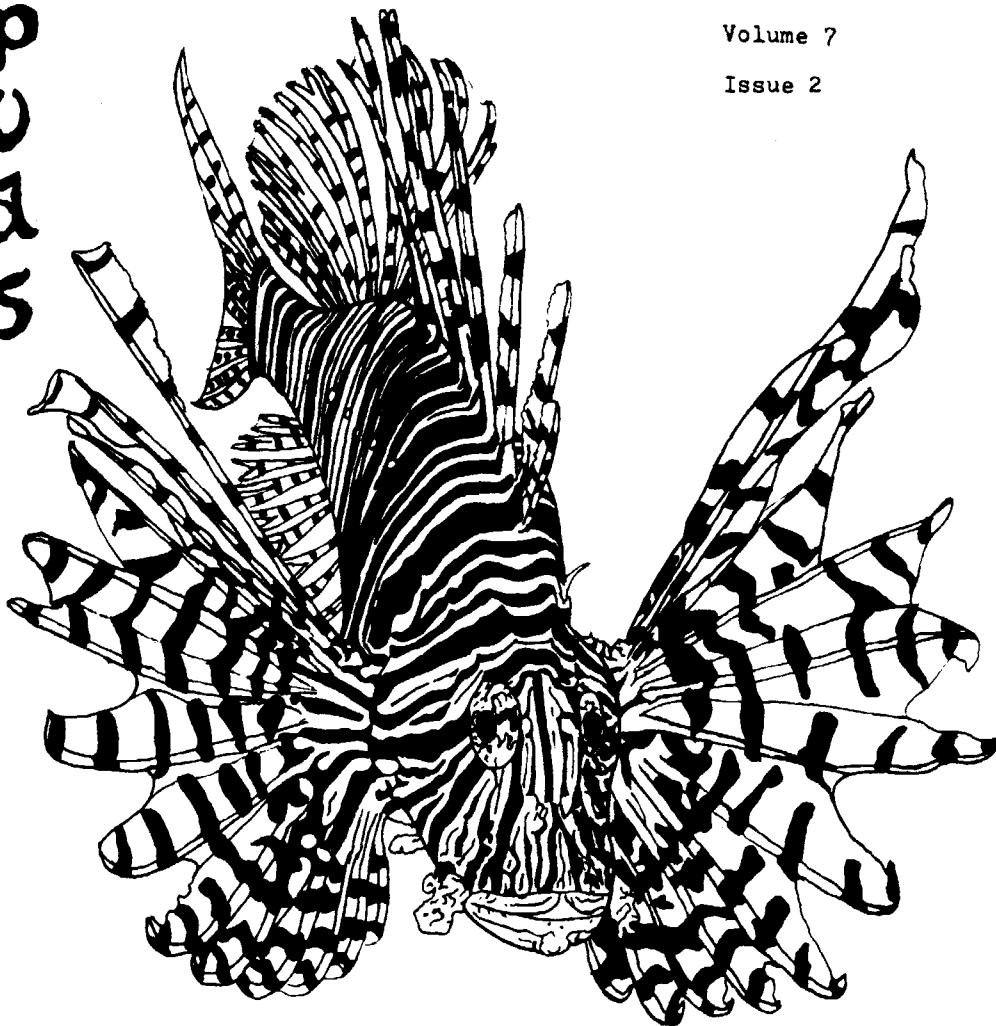
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words

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Editor: Susan Sprague  
Staff Artist: Tony Rizzuto

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Dave McInturff	Jan McInturff

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This month's cover is of a Lionfish.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

The Board of Governors met January 6 at the Tietjen home with nine members present. The Minutes of the December 3 meeting were corrected as follows: Reference to "raffle tickets at \$1 each or 3 for \$1" should have read: "door prize tickets at 50¢ each or 3 for \$1".

The Treasurer reported a bank balance of approximately \$570 after payment of one bill and receipt of current dues. Since there is to be a mini-auction in February and no bowl show or program, the President directed Pete Tietjen and Dave McInturff to begin planning for the mini-auction. Entries are to be limited to 3 per person. Chuck Story received approval to spend \$6 for two letters in connection with the Spring Show. It was agreed that publicity for the Spring Show must begin early and be followed through. There was a discussion of the raffle and it was agreed that the prize would be a 125-gallon all glass tank (neither stand nor accessories to be included) or \$125 in cash. Pete Tietjen is to get a quote on printing raffle tickets to be sold at \$1 each -- no discount. The Ways & Means Committee is to have the responsibility for keeping track of ticket books. It was agreed by majority vote that if additional tickets are needed, the President would be contacted and he would make the decision about further printing. The President brought up the suggestion of appointing a select committee to go over the PVAS constitution with a view toward modernizing it and possibly incorporating. It was agreed that this would be taken up at the February membership meeting. Pete Tietjen is to look into the problems and requirements of incorporation. Chuck Story turned in a proposed letter re the "Guppies to Groupers" TV series.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth Brewer, Recdg. Secy.

## BAP REPORT

By: Gene Aldridge, Chrmn.

With each passing month, the BAP is becoming more and more popular. If you are not interested in writing an article, contact Pete Tietjen or me so you can make a short oral presentation. If writing is your bag, okay, we can still accept articles on any spawning. JUST TRY. You are the loser by not trying. I wish you all a prosperous year.

The current totals are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Firm</u>	<u>Points</u>
		<u>In Process</u>
Susan & Mike Sprague	115*	-
Ruth Brewer	50	-
Gene Aldridge	80	15
John Jessup	55	105
Walt Lilley	125*	-
Diane Nixon	50	-
Pat & Pete Tietjen	15	-

\* Breeder Award

Sprague - Guppy, Killifish, Julido., Swords  
Nixon - Molly, Platy  
Jessup - Ch. guentheri  
Aldridge - P. macrophthalmus  
Tietjen - P. socolofi

ETA

### PSEUDOTROPHEUS SOCOLOFI

By: Peter Tietjen, PVAS

*Ps. socolofi* is a medium-sized rift lake cichlid. It is a Lake Malawi mbuna, meaning it lives in the rocks in fairly shallow water, eating the long algae that grows abundantly. The fish is a light blue in color and the male has a black edging along the dorsal and caudal fins and solid black pectorals.

*P. socolofi* is a peaceful mbuna. I purchased four, 2 pairs, as fry, last m

*P. socolofi* is a peaceful mbuna. I purchased four, 2 pairs, as fry, last May. They grew on a diet of Tetra basic, squid flakes and frozen brine shrimp. The fish were approx. 9 mos. old when this spawning took place. The male fish dug a deep pit under the rockwork in the 80 gal. tank in which they lived. The water was kept at 80°-82° with a pH of 7.4+ and a hardness of 200-300ppm. The fish spawned under the rocks at night and the actual spawning was not witnessed. The female was noticed carrying eggs the next day. She was removed from the tank after carrying for about 10 days and was put in a 5½ gal. tank. The fry were dropped 20 days after spawning and 16 fry had hatched. The fry were about 1/8 in. long. For the first two days they would retreat to mama at night. On the third day the fry took egglayer fry food and very finely ground Tetramin. Mama was removed to a holding tank to be fattened up. The fry grew quickly and uneventfully and now are about 1 inch in size.

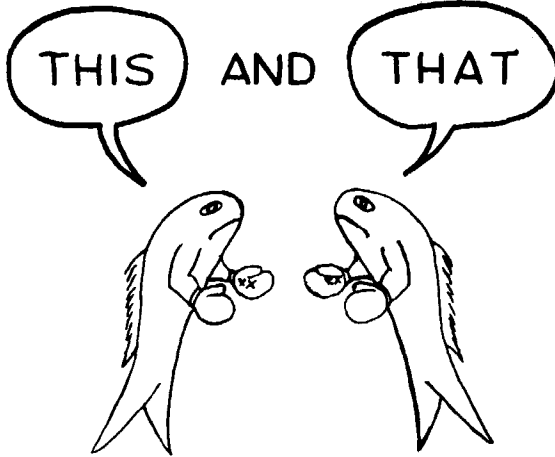
*P. socolofi* is a good African community fish and I would recommend it to anyone interested in Africans.

### Trading Post

Wayne Mathias  
1133 Courtney Rd.  
Baltimore, Md. 21227  
(301) 247-5635

For sale Conde II air compressor;  
1 yr. old; direct drive; plus air-  
line and fittings (easily runs 100  
tanks). \$200.00.

## A-BOUT



By: Susan Sprague, PVAS

We are at that time of the year again when the annual Winter Weekend Workshop of SEFAS is just around the corner. This year's hosts are the Central Kentucky Aquarium Society in Lexington, Ky. The dates are February 20-22. Friday is Hospitality Day; Saturday the seminars are presented; and on Sunday morning they have their auction scheduled. They seem to have some good people lined up, such as: Charles Mendenhall, Pat Mussatto, Dave Perry, Stu Wheeler and many others. It sounds like a fun and informative weekend. I figure it to be about 500 mi. from here. If you are interested in more information, write to: Louise Postley, 104 Brigadoon Pkwy., Lexington, Kentucky 40503 (606)272-3142.

The room reservations need to be in by February 1 to be sure of getting a place to stay.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ann Garnar has passed along some information she received from the Marine Hobbyist News. They are holding what is called a "Marine Eggs to Adult Contest." After a successful spawning and raising of marine fry, an article with pictures is to be submitted to MHN. The winner will receive a \$50.00 prize, and a complete set of MHN. The July 1976 issue will contain the winning article plus the author's picture and bibliography (I think they mean biography-Ed.). The closing date of the contest is May 1, 1976. More information can be obtained by contacting, "Marine Eggs to Adult Contest", Marine Hobbyist News, 205 Orr Dr., Normal, Ill. 61761.

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

Feb. 9, 1976 is the date of PVAS' 2nd mini auction. The rules are a little different this time. The limit on bags of fish is 3 bags per person. We will have no program or bowl show this month.

& & & &

We are forming a committee to review the constitution with the idea of modernizing it. Anyone with suggestions concerning changes to the constitution or people interested in being on the committee, may call any of the following:

G. Aldridge  
J. Jessup  
S. Siska

S. Sprague  
P. Tietjen

H O  
S P  
A D  
R N  
O U

By: Pete Tietjen, PVAS

Last October I visited Atlantis Aquarium in Gaithersburg, Md. Having heard good things about this store, I was very disappointed with the condition it was in. However, since it was clear that the reason for much of the disarray was due to a reconstruction program, I felt that the shop deserved another look before I wrote a review. Accordingly, I revisited the store in December, and what a difference! Where once had been a wall of empty tanks, now was a bank of saltwater tanks. Where once all the Africans were put in one tank, regardless of which lake they were from, now were over twenty tanks, with at most 2 species per tank. In short, the change was almost miraculous and showed a lot of hard work by the owner and his crew.

A central feature of Atlantis is a 1000 gal. show tank which contains large South American fish - severums, pacu, clarius cats, plecostomus, etc. The one problem with this tank is its location - very close to the cash register which results in some very cramped conditions when paying for merchandise. The tanks themselves are arranged three high and are of about 20 gal. in size. They are clean and there were no signs of dead fish in the tanks. The fish themselves run the whole spectrum of species, from goldfish (of the fancy varieties) through the tetras and barbs and into the cichlids (from all locations - S.A., Africa & Asia). Many of the cichlids are tank-bred and the store will buy fry from the hobbyist. In fact, our own John Jessup and Gene Aldridge raised some of the fish being sold.

The saltwater area was quite extensive, but somewhat depleted owing to the airline strike and the fact that a big sale had taken place the preceding weekend. They stock both Atlantic and Pacific marine specimens, both fish and invertebrates. When the saltwater facility is fully stocked and operating, it will be outstanding.

Atlantis stocks a full line of supplies, including O'Dell and Rainbow tanks at very reasonable prices. Supreme equipment, filters and heaters, is also stocked, but the prices are a bit high. Other prices vary.

Atlantis is a bit far for Virginians to reach, but it is worth the trip. It is a fine store.

PSEUDOTROPHEUS macrophthalmus

By Eugene T. Aldridge, Jr.

The PSEUDOTROPHEUS macrophthalmus is one of the older described fish from Lake Malawi. This cichlid was described by Ahl, in 1927, based on 15 specimens from the Dr. Cuthbert Christy collection accumulated during an expedition to the lake in 1925-1926. Dr. E. Trewavas examined the fish Ahl used to describe this and other species on a visit to Berlin during the late 1920's. I have not heard specifically, but I am sure the whole collection was lost during WW II in the same way the holotypes of Lake Victoria were lost.

Lake Malawi is one of the largest and deepest lakes in the world. It covers about 11,000 square miles and is about 5,000 feet deep. Just to give you an idea of size, think of the Grand Canyon full of water, and you have it. The Great Rift Valley extends from Jordan, in Arabia, southward to Mozambique, in South-east Africa. This rift was created over a period of several hundreds of thousand of years about a half a million years ago. This geologic action in addition to creating the rift lakes also created the monstrous saucer lake, Lake Victoria, which is nearly 2½ times as big as Lake Malawi. Figure 1 is a drawing giving the relative sizes and places of the major lakes in the system. There is a very good chapter in Fryer and Iles giving a relatively detailed explanation of what happened. The genus PSEUDOTROPHEUS is one of the ten Lake Malawi endemic genera making up the very broad group labeled "mbuna". The genus PSEUDOTROPHEUS can very easily be described as the "central constellation" of the mbuna galaxy. More cichlids have been described and assigned to this genus than has been assigned to the other nine genera put together. Mbuna is one of the native names assigned to this group of rock-inhabiting cichlid from Lake Malawi. This cichlid is also a part of the tropeops group.

This tropeops group is made up of very closely related species of the genus PSEUDOTROPHEUS. They are *Ps. tropeops*, *Ps. microstoma*, *Ps. macrophthalmus*, *Ps. novemfaciatus*, *Ps. elongatus*, *Ps. modestus*, and *Ps. fuscus*. Various authors add different species as fringe members. As closely related as this taxonomic grouping is, its habitat covers most of the lake range from steep rocks, rock/sand, and to weeds. The term "weeds" as used here applies specifically to the short *Vallisneria* and the tall forest-like *Potamogeton*. The *Pseudotropheus* genus has no open water fish, and the areas mentioned above are all very close to each other and the fish will not move from one rock grouping to another.

This taxon is very closely related and forms a "superspecies", that does not have the stature of a genus. Based on information in "Mbuna", no one has really worked out all of the ramifications of an area like Monkey Bay. One interesting clarification that could come out of a complete area study would be "why are certain species absent from various places." This type of study must be done at the lake shore, not behind

some museum desk. Based on the fact that collectors are currently getting fish from all parts of the lake tends to indicate beyond a doubt that the *Ps. macrophthalmus* is available throughout all of the lake shore areas. Fish coming from various areas of the lake are being imported in different color forms. I am sure that the first *Ps. macrophthalmus* that came to this area 5 to 6 years ago came from the Monkey Bay area of the lake. Currently a smaller size and different color *Ps. macrophthalmus* is being imported from the Likoma Island area of the lake. Likoma Island is about 150 miles north of Monkey Bay. I have seen in the local stores different color varieties of this species. Due to local water conditions, the colors are changing with each locality collections are made from. A good example of this is the *Ps. zebra* in its many color morphs. The mouth and head structures tend to indicate that this fish eats off rocks at about a 45 degree angle.

The first Rift Lake cichlids I ever owned were a pair of *Ps. macrophthalmus* bought from Pisces and Aquarius five years ago. The female was about 8 cm in total length and the male about 10 cm. The female was a very dark almost black with even darker bars. The male was a bright blue with yellow-gold head, shoulders, and chest. There are bright indistinct bars. Figure 2 gives a rough idea of the size and how the colors are distributed. These fish were very beautiful. It took several months to get the pair into condition because they were a little thin when I bought them. They they started to breed. The female, being a maternal mouth brooder, carried the babies from 21 to 28 days depending on the time of year. The babies are about 1 cm long when released. After release I kept the female by herself for from 30 to 60 days for reconditioning. After conditioning she was returned to my big breeding community tank. Within 48 hours, she had another mouthful. Within a month or two, I was able to secure a second female. Between them they produced well over 300 babies in their first 3 spawns each. Forty-eight babies was the smallest spawn. I am now working on my fifth generation. It takes from 9 months to a year for these fish to really take an interest in breeding. I do not keep more than a pair or two. When the next generation starts to breed they way they should, I sell the parents. Over the past five years each new generation has gotten slightly larger. The babies are on the dark, side, consequently they do not sell that well. After the first three or four months, I made no effort to save the babies. They must be nearly a year old before the male starts to show his real colors.

These fish, like all endemic Mbunas from Lake Malawi, prefer hard alkaline water conditions with a pH of 7.4<sup>0</sup> to 8.2<sup>0</sup> and with a hardness of value of over 200 ppm. I use Instant Ocean marine salts to buffer the water. I have found that the Mbuna do fine so long as the water does not turn acid. They get very very unhappy in acid water. I don't know what would happen to these fish in soft water, I do know they do quite well in water of 80 ppm or over. In acid water they just seem to come apart at the seams. They are definitely an alkaline water fish.



The temperature range of the Lake is between 70° to 84°, and *Ps. macrophthalmus* will be very happy in this range. Remember this lake is pretty good sized and the temperature of the water will fluctuate during the year. I have no heaters in my tanks, thus the water can change as much as 4 degrees a day. In winter time the temperature can go up to 85° or 86° (the colder the weather, the higher it goes) and in the summer it gets down to 74° to 75°. In the higher temperatures these fish are much more active than at lower ones.

Though these fish will breed before they are a year old, they are better off if they do not breed. Watching them grow is quite an experience. With a 30 gallon tank and 20 to 30 young ones; as they grow, the social structure begins to evolve. One male will gradually become dominate, and when he is big enough to breed he will breed to most of the females. As a general rule this fish is not mean and is not hard on the females. However, the males can get a little rough when only one female is present and he has his adoration going full speed and wants to breed. It is best to have 3 or 4 females to cut down some on roughness. I have had my male breed with 4 females within 48 hours. There should be plenty places for the females to hide and get out of the way. The males tend to roam, as do most mbuna's, so room and hiding places are necessary. Two full sized males can not be housed in a 40 gallon tank. When they are this big submission colors and behavior do not go over very well, the dominate male will drive the other one out. If the males grow up together the problems are not so bad. I have not seen any actual matings take place. However, I have seen many of my males and females go through preliminaries many times. They will go-round in circles periodically nudging each other in the ventral region. This will take place over a rock or in any open place of about 4 to 6 inches in diameter. This circling can go on for quite a while, I have seen it go for an hour once. The male will stop and chase away any fish becoming to nosey. During the sparring period, both fish will become very colorful especially the male as his blue and gold-dress becomes unbelievable with its intensity.

The sexual and emotional state of these fish does affect the coloration of both sexes. These fish, once they are full grown, are really quite easily sexed. The males are a bright blue and gold while the females are a dark blue-black. As there are so many more brightly colored fish in Lake Malawi the *Ps. macrophthalmus* would make an excellent background fish. Why not add a few to your collection.

#### REFERENCES

- FRYER, G. & ILES, T.D. (1972), *The Cichlid Fishes of the Great Lakes of Africa*.
- JACKSON, P.B.N. & RIBBINCK, T. (1975), *Mbuna*.
- TREWAVAS, E. (1935), "A synopsis of the cichlid fishes of Lake Nyasa", Annual Magazine of Natural History, (10) 16:65-118.

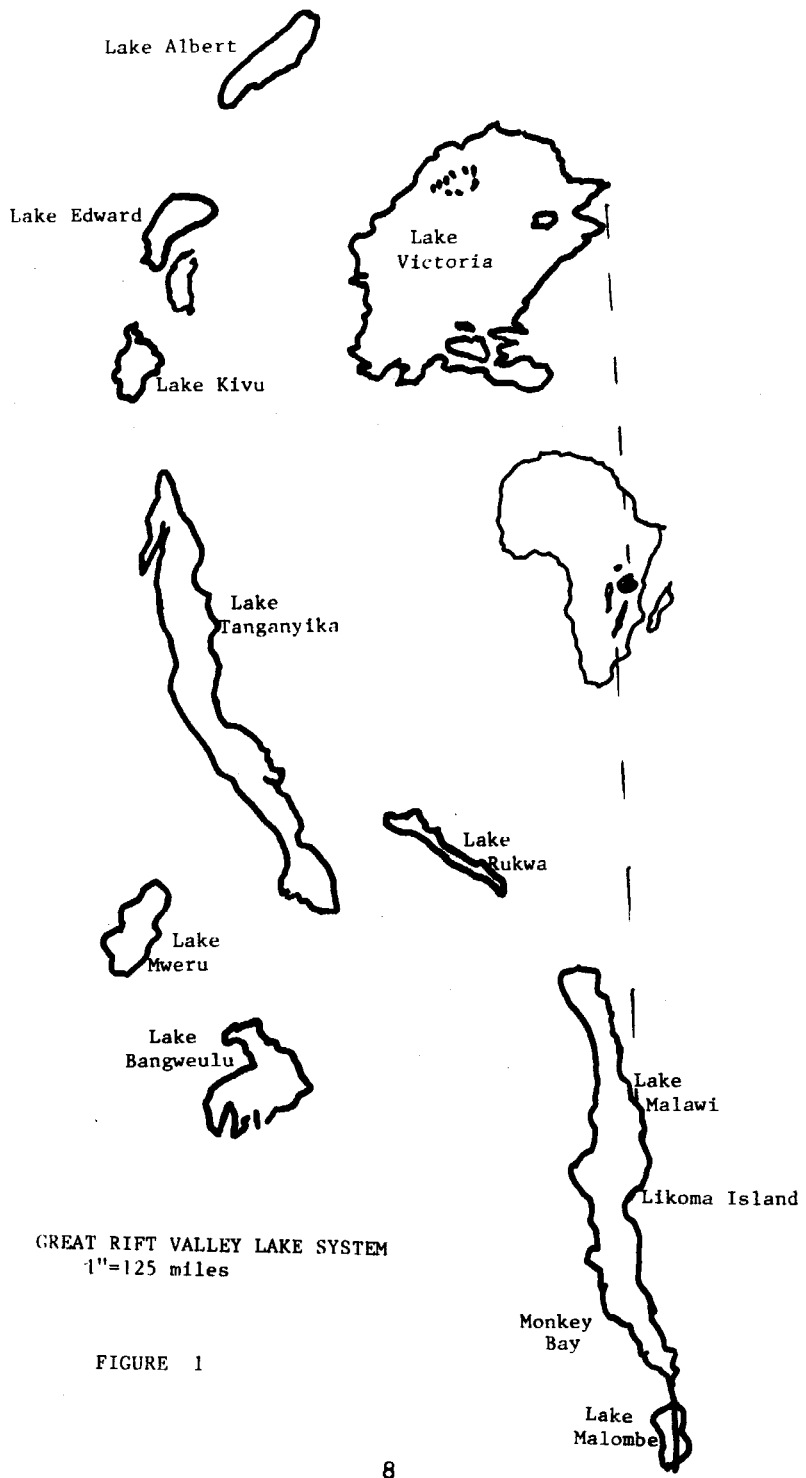


FIGURE 1

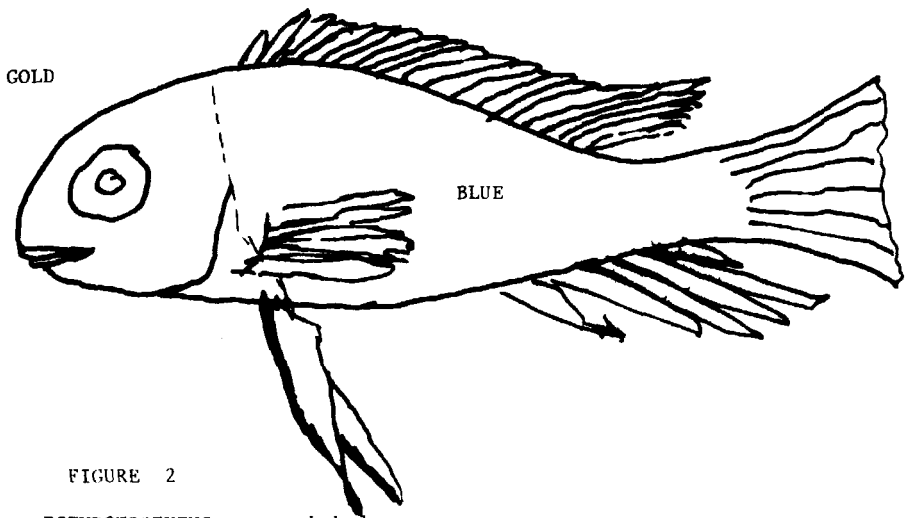


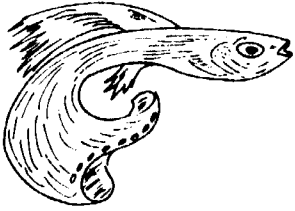
FIGURE 2  
PSEUDOTROPHEUS macrophthalmus

Feb. 9, 1976  
Regular Meeting of PVAS  
MINI-AUCTION  
Limited to 3 bags of fish per person.  
75% individual - 25% to PVAS

Board of Governors  
Feb. 3 8:00pm  
Susan Sprague  
6708 N. 18th St.  
Arlington, Va.  
534-7487

MEETING DATES  
Cichlid Group  
To Be  
Announced

Saltwater Group  
To Be  
Announced  
Any inquiries  
to be made  
to Larry  
Wilson 451-5935



**POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY  
PO BOX 6219, SHIRLINGTON STATION  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22206**

**SHOW NOTICE!**

The Potomac Valley Aquarium Society has scheduled its next fish show for the 22nd and 23rd of May. The show will be held in the Hospitality Room of the Coca-Cola Bottling Plant located at 5401 Seminary Road, Alexandria, Virginia. Details of the classes, hours and show rules will be published in the near future.

Please publish our show notice in your publication.