

# \* DELTA TALE \*

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## potomac valley aquarium society



CULLEN 1998



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All correspondence to the society and to *Delta Tale* should be directed to P.O. Box 664, Merrifield, VA 22116.

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PVAS Web site: [www.pvas.com](http://www.pvas.com)

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## *Frum the editor's desk*

The first thing I'd like to do this time is ask all of you to please gather up all of your old winter coats, hats, scarves, mittens, etc. and bring them to the next meeting. I am taking up a collection to send to people in need of them. It seems that since I wrote to you last that Hell has frozen over. At least that's the only way I can explain the fact that we will soon

(I hope) have a new *Delta Tale* editor. This should be my last issue. I'd like to thank all of you that have contributed to *Delta Tale* over the 13 years that I have been editor. I hope you will all continue to contribute into the future. It's the quality of the articles that ultimately make or break a publication.

At least for the near future I will staying on as part of the *Delta Tale* staff and handling printing and mailing. I would, however, find someone to take over this job also. This simply involves picking up a box full of *Delta Tales* from our printer, sticking on mailing labels (provided to you by the membership chairman) and stamps, and then taking them to the post office. The only thing that may make this hard is that the printer is located in Manassas Park, VA. So the job needs to be done by someone living in that area, or willing to drive out there about every two months. I know that there are a lot of printers around but I would like to see us keep using this one for as long as possible. He has been very good to us over the years (I'm not sure how many but it was long before I became editor) even printing things for us at cost, and occasionally even for free, during the years when money was scarce.


I am still looking for someone to take over distributing *Delta Tale* to local pet shops. I want someone that I can simply hand a box full of issues to that will then coordinate with other members to get them passed out to shops. This is something that gives us good relations with the various shops plus helps get us known to potential new members.

I guess I should leave with some great last words. Let's see - One small step for... (no that's been used), I will return (no, certainly don't want to use that). Wait, I've got it - no can't print those kind of words, this is a family magazine. I guess I could use my uncle Charlie's last words - "Truck? What tru". Oh well, forget it this is too hard. I'm outa here.

Until next time...



# WHAT'S HAPPENING!

 For up to the minute information check out the PVAS Web site at [www.pvas.com](http://www.pvas.com)

**May 10:** PVAS Monthly Meeting - Program, bowl show, mini-auction, raffles, door prize, refreshments, a chance to socialize with fellow aquarists, and more. Doors open at 7:30, meeting starts at 8:00 pm. Additional parking available next door in the school parking lot if needed.

**May 14 - 16:** American Livebearer Association Convention, Cleveland, OH. For information contact Rich Serva, 5407 S. Celeste View Dr., Stow, OH 44224, (330) 650-4613; or see John Mangan at a PVAS meeting.

**June 13:** PVAS Spring Auction

**July 8 - 11:** American Cichlid Association Convention. Detroit, MI. For more information contact Phil Benes, (248) 685-1317, e-mail [phil@netquest.com](mailto:phil@netquest.com)

**July 12:** PVAS Monthly Meeting

**Aug. 9:** PVAS Monthly Meeting

**Sept. 13:** PVAS Monthly Meeting

**Oct. 18:** PVAS Monthly Meeting

**Nov. 8:** PVAS Monthly Meeting

**Nov. 13 - 14:** PVAS Fall Workshop and Auction

**Dec. 13:** PVAS Holiday Dinner

If you know of any "fishy" happenings let me know and they can be included here.

J.M.

## TRADING POST

PVAS members may advertise in the trading post at no charge. Send ads to *Delta Tale*, c/o John Mangan, 12633, Oakwood Dr. Woodbridge, VA 22192.

For Sale: backissue aquarium magazines. Many different titles. Send SASE for catalog.  
For Sale: Plastic fish bags. Standard thickness and 3 mil extra heavy. Several sizes of each will be available at PVAS monthly meetings and Auctions.  
John Mangan, 12633 Oakwood Dr., Woodbridge, VA 22192.



## SPAWNING

# CORYDORAS HABROSUS

Don Kinyon PVAS

One of the dwarf or "pygmy" *Corydoras* catfishes is the *Corydoras Habrosus*; not usually reaching two inches in length. Otherwise, they are much the same, in my own observation, as any of the other Corys.

These catfish don't seem to show up very often in the pet stores, so when I found a tank full of young ones a year or so ago, I bought eight of them, hoping to get at least one male and one female. Soon after I got the fish home, two died, and when the rest grew up, I found that I had five males and one female left. Not exactly perfect, but a good enough ratio to give it a try.

I tried several methods over the next few months to get the fish to spawn, with little success. While the Corys in adjacent tanks on both sides of the Habrosus went into breeding frenzies, these fish refused. I gave up for a few more months.

In the spring of this year, I decided to give it another try before the fish were too old. I don't know how old is too old for a *Corydoras*, and I've heard they can live a very long time, but the fish had stopped growing, the female was heavy, and it seemed like a good time to try again.

I set up a ten gallon tank in another part of the basement, away from the 80+ degrees of the fish room, where the air stays cooler; about 72 to 78 degrees. The water was straight out of the tap, about 7.4 pH, and 8 degrees total hardness. No heater was used. An outside filter was added, with a thin sponge wrapped around the intake strainer. A few round stones, and some Java Fern attached to a piece of driftwood completed the setup.

The fish had not been conditioned any differently than before; feeding on a mixture of live, frozen, and dry prepared foods. The water in their tank had had 25% changed every week.

When the Corys were moved into the prepared tank, I started changing water daily, or at least every second day, with rain water. In ten days they

## SPAWNING CORYDORAS HABROSUS

started to spawn, and in four more days the female appeared to be depleted, so I removed all the adults.

It took ten days for the young to hatch, and they immediately started scouring the tank bottom for food in *Corydoras* fashion. There were a lot of places for the babies to hide, so it was difficult to tell how many there were.

The young ate micro worms for their first few days and newly hatched brine shrimp were added after that. They don't grow very quickly, but at present are almost three months old and the largest are about one-half inch in length.

**Spawning the Eastern Mosquitofish;  
*Gambusia holbrooki* (Girard, 1859)**

by R. Shane Linder, PVAS

I have the distinct pleasure of having one of the best Virginia native fish experts as my friend. Mike Thennet is the Virginia Representative of the North American Native Fish Association. Mike and I spend summer days knee deep (and often deeper!) in the swamps, creeks, rivers, ponds, canals, and lakes of Virginia on the hunt for native fishes. This fall (1998) we headed down south to the Rappahanock in the area on the north side of Fort A. P. Hill. One of the areas we collected in was Ware creek. The location is less than five miles from the birthplace of Robert E. Lee.

The creek was four to six feet wide and from six inches to two feet deep. In one section about four feet wide the current was fast enough to make soft riffles over the gravel substrate. This section lacked over head canopy and also was choked with aquatic plants. Mike and I ran the seine through the middle in order to capture a large school of mosquito fish. I planned to take them home and use them as feeders. The school held about a hundred fish and I took away about thirty. The ambient temperature was hot and humid. The water was about 72F and quite soft and acidic.

The fish went into quarantine and most eventually met their fate in the food chain. However, I picked a male and a female and moved them off to a ten gallon tank because I wanted to keep them around for awhile and observe them. All of the fish caught were around an inch long. After four months the male is about an inch long and the female is close to two inches. Eventually, the fish were placed with some schooling cyprinids. The mosquitofish has a reputation as a fighter. However, among the fast rasboras and danios they caused no problems.

I noticed the female would become full of young about every thirty days. Undoubtedly she was giving live birth but the cyprinids were eating all the fry before I could even see them. The next month, when she became full of young, I moved her to her own ten gallon tank stuffed with Java moss. In a few days she gave birth to ten fry. The birth cycle seems to be about every thirty days, but I have not kept careful track of it. I also believe that as with

other livebearers, the female will produce larger broods as she gets larger herself.

The newborn fry look just like guppies and are easy to raise. They are large enough to eat fine ground dry foods right after birth. The fry have grown quickly and after just over a month are close to one inch long. At this size they eat anything offered.

This is a great little fish and I have come to like it so much that I still have the original pair. If you are looking to spawn a native, this is the one.



# TATEURNDINA OCELLICAUDA

## THE PEACOCK GOBY

Don Kinyon  
PVAS

How about a fish that has color to rival an *Aphyosemion*, practices parental care like the cichlids, is easy to breed, and thrives in tap water? This fish is the one you want.

I first saw these "new" fish in a pet shop display tank, and was immediately sold on them. Though they didn't have any for sale at the time, the owners of the store were able to give me the name of the breeder. Luckily, he was interested in some of the fish I was working with at the time.

It was a few months before the breeder had any fish to trade, and in that time I read up on them, and talked to many other hobbyists about the fish. This is when I found the Goby had been around the hobby a very long time, and had gone through periods of popularity and periods of rarity.

Finally, the time came to trade fish. I ended up with a bag of healthy young gobies, fourteen in all. By the time they were about three quarters grown, it appeared that there were five males and nine females. This was also the time they started laying eggs like crazy.

All the fish were in a thirty gallon long tank, along with a few *Corydoras* catfish. The water was straight out of the tap; pH of 7.4, and 8 degrees total hardness. There was no heater, so the temp varied between 72 and 76 degrees. All the fish were fed twice a day on a diet of frozen, dry, and live foods.

The breeder that gave me the fish told me to use varied size PVC pipe cut to two or three inch lengths for the fish to lay eggs in. They seem to prefer the more cramped quarters of 1/2 inch diameter pipe; only once have the fish put eggs anywhere else.

The male goby claims one of the lengths of pipe, and coaxes a ripe female to it. Once the eggs are laid and fertilized, the female's job is done. The male stays with the eggs in the tube, fanning and protecting them. This is a

good opportunity to remove him, the tube, and the eggs to another tank. He'll watch over the eggs until they hatch, about twelve days, then pretty much ignore them. If there are other fish in the tank, the male will make no move to protect the fry. There can be a lot of young. In the few spawns that I've raised, one was over one hundred, and none were under sixty.

The fry are small, but will eat micro worms and baby brine shrimp as first foods. They grow steadily if not quickly, and don't seem to need any special conditions to stay healthy. A twenty-five percent water change once a week will suffice.

In a planted tank, these fish show great colors, and their behavior is always interesting.



*Brachydanio rerio*  
**Zebra Danio**

by Gene Moy, PVAS

Zebra Danios are one of the easiest to keep and breed of all tropical fishes. Besides that, zebras are very inexpensive, usually less than one dollar a piece. These fish have been a part of the hobby for many years. Zebras are very streamlined and swim constantly back and forth near the top of the aquarium. They have several blue horizontal stripes running through their body and even in their anal and caudal fins. Long-finned and albino varieties are available in the hobby. These fish are hardy. They are not picky eaters and will accept just about all foods.

Zebra Danios prefer to be kept as a school of four or more and continually chase each other. Males are skinnier, while females are fatter in the belly region. Danios are egg eaters, and the older literature (such as the Innes book) recommend using a layer of marbles or glass rods at the bottom of the breeding tank. A thicket of plants such as java moss can also be used to keep some of the eggs away from the parents.

My first experience with zebra danios came many years ago when I couldn't resist a bargain of four fish for one dollar. A week later I found very small slivers in one of my filters. Upon closer inspection, I determined they were fish fry and guessed that they were probably baby zebra danios. Although I could not raise these young, this experience validated the information on how easy these fish are to breed.

More recently I purchased four zebras while wandering through one of the local stores. They were a bargain at 49 cents each (inflation had set in). I wanted some dither fish for a couple of my shyer cichlids. Zebras are usually fast enough not to become food for the cichlids. I ended up with one female and two males after losing one of the four.

When I finally managed to breed some *Corydoras* catfish, I had to remove all of the inhabitants, including the zebras. Two days later, I noticed some tiny fry in the middle part of the aquarium. My initial thoughts were that the *Corydoras* had hatched. This was contrary to what I had read about cory fry,

but did not think much of it until a week later. The fry had grown from a three millimeter sliver to an almost recognizable seven millimeters. In the meantime, the cory fry did show up on the bottom of the tank, where they were supposed to be. The largest of the zebras now sported a metallic blue streak and blue eyes. Examining these fish closely confirmed the development of several small horizontal lines. This confirmed my suspicion that the mid-level swimming fry were zebras.

I had a total of nine zebra danio fry, with two only half the size of the others. This number is short of what I needed for the Breeder's Award Program, so I'll probably attempt to breed these fish again. The next attempt will be a little less haphazard.

Well, my accidental breeding of zebra danios continued for several more generations, and two years. I gave away the parents, and kept a few of the fry. I am currently on the fifth generation.

I finally decided to breed these fish on purpose, and set up a 5 1/2 gallon tank with java moss. I introduced the female, then added two males the next day. The two males spent more time chasing each other than interacting with the female. After half a day I removed all of the adults. I looked for but did not see any eggs.

Two days later I see about ten slivers hanging on the side of the glass. The next day I see another 30 or so slivers. By the fourth day I see at least 60 slivers in different parts of the tank. The early fry are free swimming at this stage, while their later brethren are still stuck to the glass.

Feeding the young zebra danios is not a problem. For the first several days after being free swimming, they seem to be able to find whatever morsels are in the gravel or on the plants. After that I start them on powdered fry food. The young danios double their size each week.

The fry are fed primarily with dry foods, starting with prepared egglayer fry food and gradually increasing to crumbled staple flakes. The young are not picky and eat most anything that they can get in their mouths.

Zebra danios are certainly easy to keep and breed. Now, what should I do with the 100 fry?





# APISTOGRAMMA SPECIES

## "RIO NANAY"

Don Kinyon  
PVAS

I'm very lucky to be associated with a collector, importer, breeder, and just a generally knowledgeable guy about most any ornamental tropical fish; particularly from South America. It's good to have someone to go to if I can't find what water conditions a certain *Apistogramma* is native to, to give me advice if something's gone wrong with a fish that I'm not familiar with, or give the benefit of his experience when I've got a pair that will not cooperate and spawn.

And on top of all that, I get some really cool fish!

These particular Cichlids came from somewhere on the Rio Nanay River, near the city of Iquitos, on Julio Melgar's most recent collecting trip to Peru. They're on the large side, for *Apistos*; the male being close to three and a half inches long. The coloration isn't extreme, but certainly not unattractive, either; blue markings on the face, orange tints to the tail and top of the dorsal fin, and bright yellow ventral and pectoral fins.

Julio was good enough to let me keep some of the "new" fish and see if I had any luck with them. He gave me a large male, two females, and one small fish that may have been another male, but disappeared before I could tell.

All the fish were housed in a 28 gallon, bare-bottom tank with and outside power filter. A lot of sunken wood, clay pots and leaf litter were added for cover. The water was collected rain water; pH of 6.2, and hardness of next-to-nothing, and the heater was set at eighty degrees. The fish were healthy and active from the start.

It was only a matter of a few days before the first female spawned with the male, then, three days later, the other female laid her eggs in the opposite corner of the tank. All the fish remained in the tank for the time being. Both females defended their nests from all threats, even the male, who was content to intimidate the remaining fish (smaller fish, probably a male) and keep him in hiding.

I don't know exactly when the eggs hatched, but it took seven days to see free-swimming fry in the corner of female number one. About three days later, the same for female two. Both mother fish proved to be excellent parents, herding their young around the tank bottom to feed and protecting the immediate territory. The male still patrolled the rest of the tank, and about this time the lone smaller fish disappeared.

I did no special work after the young hatched, just changed one third of the tank water every week, fed them and enjoyed watching the parents and fry.

The young fish ate well. They were fed micro worms and newly hatched brine shrimp as first foods, but soon would take dry prepared foods and chopped worms. These fish grew quickly, as far as *Apistos* go, reaching about three-eighths of an inch the first month. Soon after the month was up, the young stopped paying attention to the mother fish, so all the adults were removed.

By the end of the second month, the juveniles needed no special attention at all. They eat almost anything fed to them, including dry foods, and continue to grow fairly rapidly.

I can imagine these fish will become popular in the hobby before too long.



# APISTOGRAMMA BITAENIATA

Don Kinyon PVAS

This attractive dwarf cichlid seems to be in and out of the hobby on an irregular schedule. Either they're coming out of the woodwork, or no one knows where some can be found.

I had tried once before to raise some of these fish, but had no success. Through a business venture, I acquired more of the species, but I was a little disappointed to see the color of the fish when they came in. The ones I'd had in the past were shades of dark blue, where these were mostly brown; not totally unattractive, but not nearly as colorful. I was pleased to see that eventually the young fish grew to resemble the ones I'd had earlier. It wasn't until the fish were fully mature and a home with their surroundings that the dark blue coloration came out.

I was lucky enough to have a good number of fish to start with, and let them pick their own mates in the 26 gallon tank they were housed in. The temperature was 76 degrees F., and pH was kept at about 6.3. When they paired up, one of the better pairs was removed to another tank of the same size and same water.

I fed the breeding pair on live, frozen, freeze-dried, and dry food for about a week when I found the female had turned the bright yellow color most apisto females turn during mating and fry raising. She had laid eggs on the tank sides under a piece of submerged wood and was guarding them. The male was on the other side of the tank, and seemed to be in no danger. I left both parents in the tank for the time being.

In two days, the eggs hatched, about thirty, and the female moved the larvae to a hole in the wood. She moved them from one place to another at least once every day, and at this time the male had to be removed because he was constantly being harassed. In seven days from spawning, the young swam on their own. They took newly hatched brine shrimp and micro worms immediately.

Three weeks after the fry began to swim, they no longer followed the mother, so she was also removed. The young grew fairly quickly on live and prepared foods, and at six weeks, looked like smaller versions of the adults. At this time they were feeding on much the same foods as the parents, but more finely chopped.

## Breeder's Award Program

### BAP Checkers:

Annandale/Falls Church area: Jeff Burke (703) 941-3230  
Centreville/Chantilly/Manassas area: David Snell (703) 968-9084  
Centreville: Michael Cardaci (703) 222-3833  
Frederick: Dov Goldstein (301) 694-7582  
Montgomery County: Ray Hughes (301) 424- 3531  
Montgomery County: Wayne Considine (301) 977-5973  
Mt. Vernon/Olde Town area: Gene Moy (703) 765- 0865  
Oakton/Vienna area: Rick Mckay (703) 281- 1647  
Occoquan/Lake Ridge area: John Mangan (703) 491-4980  
Prince George's County: Lorne E. Williams (301) 630-7674  
Springfield/Franconia area: Pete Thrift (703) 971-0594  
Warrenton/Manassas area: Gerry Hoffman (540) 347-7486

We still could use some more checkers. There are a number of areas where we don't have anyone. Even if there is someone already listed for your area we could always use someone else to help spread the work around.

### BAP Standings:

Breeders Award \*  
Intermediate Breeder \*\*  
Advanced Breeder\*\*\*  
Master Breeder\*\*\*\*  
Grand Master Breeder\*\*\*\*\*

Gerry Hoffman 905\*\*\*\*  
Don Kinyon 535\*\*\*\*  
Jeffrey Burke 445\*\*\*  
John Mangan 165\*\*  
Gene Moy 195\*\*  
Lorne Williams 155\*\*  
Shane Linder 85\*  
Dave Snell 75\*

Recent activity: Gene Moy receives 15 points for *Julidochromis malieri*. Don Kinyon receives 15 points for *Apistogramma* sp. "Rio Nanay", 15 points for *Apistogramma viejita*, 15 points for *Apistogramma iniridae*, and 15 points for *Badis badis*. This puts Don into the **Master Breeder** category. If anyone deserves this title Don does. ☺  
CongratulATIONS! Next I'd like to welcome Shane Linder to the program. Shane receives 10 points for leopard danios, 10 points for guppies, 10 points for pearl danios, 10 points for red tail goodeids, 30 points for bushynose pleco (*Ancistrus* sp.), and 15 points for *Gambusia holbrooki*. This puts Shane at the **Breeder** level. It's about time we saw a new name added to the program. Let's see some more in the coming months.



# POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

PO BOX 664, Merrifield, VA 22116

## Application for Membership

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Optional information:

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you hear about PVAS/get this application? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of aquariums: \_\_\_\_\_ Time in the hobby: \_\_\_\_\_

Special interests: (e.g., catfish, cichlids, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for joining: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues for PVAS are:

Individual/Family: \$12/yr

Corresponding: \$ 9/yr

Junior (under 18) \$ 5/yr

Please send application and check to the address above.

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Annandale, VA 22031  
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### ANIMAL EXCHANGE

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Rockville, MD 20852  
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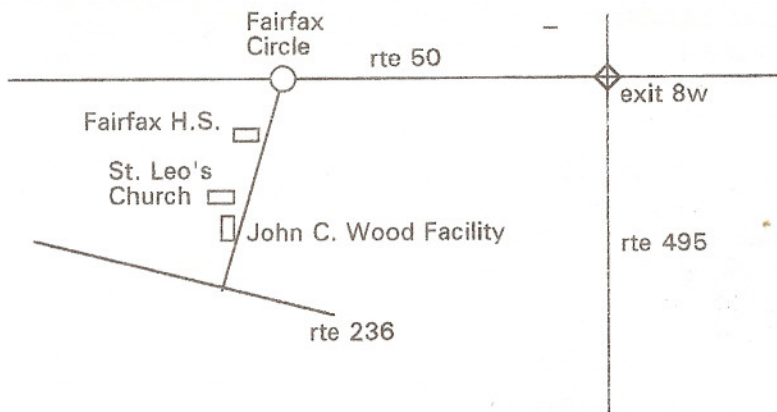
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Meetings are held at the John C. Wood Facility, 3730 Old Lee Hgwy. (rte 237), Fairfax City, VA. Room 7 (in the rear of the building). Doors open at 7:30, meetings start at 8:00. Everyone is welcome.