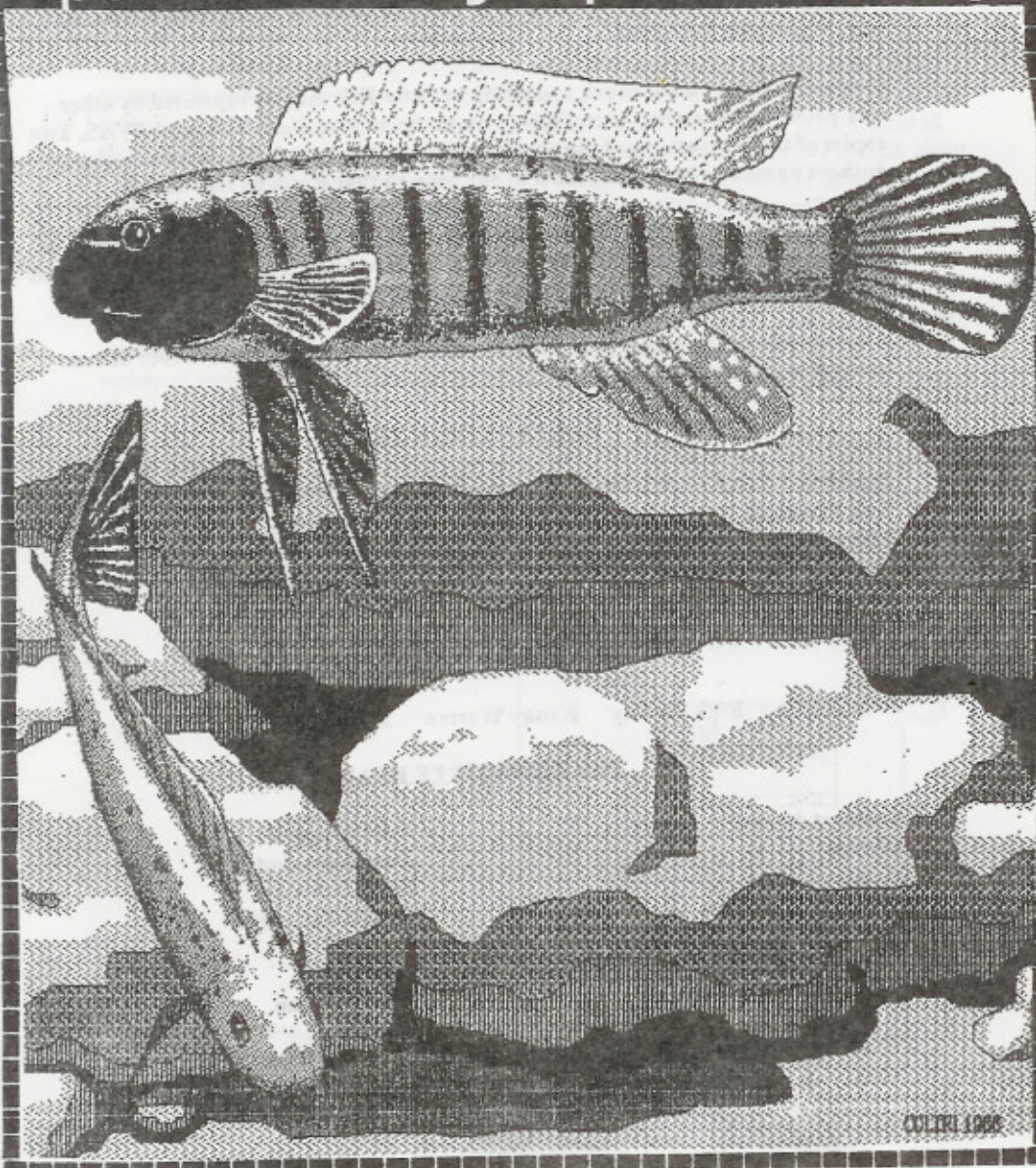


* DELTA TALE *

July/Aug 1996
vol. 27, #4

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

potomac valley aquarium society



CULTRI 1986

The *Delta Tale* is published bimonthly for the benefit of the membership of the POTOMAC VALLEY AQUARIUM SOCIETY INC. , a non-profit educational and social organization . The society was founded in 1960 for the purposes of furthering the aquarium hobby by the dissemination of information and advice, and the promotion of good fellowship among the membership by organized activities and competitions.

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

Original articles and artwork appearing in *Delta Tale* may be reprinted by other non-profit organizations if credit is given to the author, *Delta Tale*, and PVAS. Two copies of the reprinting publication should be sent to PVAS. Please include the authors name on the mailing label of one copy so that it will be forwarded.

PVAS disclaims any responsibility for the content or availability of merchandise or services advertised in *Delta Tale*. Customer satisfaction is a matter to be worked out between the advertiser and the buyer.

All materials for inclusion in *Delta Tale* must reach the editor by the 10th of even numbered months (Feb.,April, etc.).

1996 PVAS OFFICERS

<u>President</u>	Alex Townsend
<u>Vice President</u>	Pete Thrift
<u>Treasurer</u>	Rich Blumberg
<u>Corresponding Secretary</u>	Mark Kaprow
<u>Recording secretary</u>	Val Spring

1996 BOARD OF GOVERNORS

John Jessup Rick McKay Kenny Warren Ray Hughes

1996 COMMITTEE HEADS

<u>Breeders Award</u>	John Mangan
<u>Library</u>	Alex Townsend
<u>Membership</u>	Gene Aldridge
<u>Bowl Shows</u>	Alex Townsend
<u>Programs</u>	
<u>Ways & Means</u>	Pete Thrift
<u>Delta Tale</u>	John Mangan

Printed by TOP CAT PRINTING, Manassas Park, Va.

Frum the editor's desk

I'm going to be brief this month. It's the middle of summer and not much is happening besides which I'm , as usual, behind schedule and want to get this to the printer today.


I was very impressed at our last monthly meeting by the number of people that were active in or asking about the Breeders Award Program. Also by the number of people expressing an interest in helping out in other areas. We really need an infusion of "new" enthusiastic people to help revive things. Most of us that are in charge of things now have been doing it for so long we are pretty much just cruising along on auto-pilot. It's not all that long until our next election of officers and I hope some of you will start to think about running or consider taking over as a committee chair. If you think you may be interested in doing something see Alex, Pete, or me at a meeting and we'll be glad to answer any questions or steer you to someone who can.

We have our Fall Workshop coming up at the end of Oct. I don't have the exact dates as I'm writing this but keep checking the hotline for info or wait until the next issue when I'll print all of the information on it. We are working on a good selection of speakers on a variety of topics. The workshop will be **FREE** for PVAS members. You should all try to attend. As usual there will also be an auction that Sunday.

Until next time...



WHAT'S HAPPENING!

 For up to the minute information on what's happening call the free PVAS hotline anytime (703) 352-3365.

Aug. 12: PVAS general meeting. Program, bowl show, door prize, raffles, mini-auction, refreshments and more. Doors open at 7:30 meeting starts at 8:00. Note: there is extra parking at the school next door. Exit the Wood parking lot turn right and right again at the light.

Sept. 9: PVAS general meeting. All of the usual good stuff (see above). Be sure to attend.

Oct. ?: PVAS Fall Auction and Workshop. Details are still being worked out for the workshop but there will be a number of well known speakers. Workshop admission is free for PVAS members, there will be a fee for others. Complete details in the next issue or call the hotline.

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. John Mangan, 12633 Oakwood Dr., Woodbridge, VA 22192.

For Sale: *Neolamprologus cylindrus*, proven breeding pair, \$35 Pair.

Cyprichromis leptosoma (Blue Flash), 1", \$5 each.

Heros appendiculatus (Turquoise Severum) 3/4- 1", \$3 each.

Corydoras panda, 3/4- 1", \$3 each.

Contact Jeffrey Burke, (703) 941-3230.

For Sale: Perfecto 70 gal. plate-glass tank, plexiglass top, stained wooden knock-down style stand. Delivery possible. \$100. Pete Thrift (703) 971-0594 after 6 pm.

CHESAPEAKE BAY QUIZ

BY GEORGE WHITE, PVAS

The magnificent Chesapeake Bay stretching for a length of 193 miles between Maryland and Virginia ranks as one of America's most important natural treasures. The Bay, with an area of approximately 3230 square miles, contains some of the most fascinating wildlife in the world. Many of the sea creatures are so unique that they seem like something thought up by Hollywood science fiction writers.

Some fascinating facts about the aqualife of the Chesapeake Bay and other sea habitats are contained in a cute little book, 1001 Questions Answered About the Seashore, by N.J. and J. Berrill, Dover Publications, New York. This is a fun book to read when you have a few minutes to spare, but do not want to get engrossed in reading a book like one on fascinating Cichlids. This quiz on the Chesapeake Bay is based primarily on information derived from the Berrills' book. (The answers are on the next page -- unless our editor has decided to be devious and publish them in the next issue of PVAS.)

- 1) Name at least three rivers that flow into the Chesapeake Bay.
- 2) What gives seawater its distinctive taste?
- 3) Why is the sea blue?
- 4) Why do the northern stretches of the Atlantic sometimes look like diluted green pea soup in the summer?
- 5) Can you eat seaweed?
- 6) Does a starfish have a brain?
- 7) Can clams bore into rock?
- 8) Do oysters have separate sexes?
- 9) Can crabs swim?
- 10) Are Virginians and Marylanders lying when they claim that their crabs are blue-blooded nobility?

ANSWERS TO CHESAPEAKE BAY QUIZ

- 1) The following rivers flow into the Chesapeake Bay: Susquehanna River in the North, the Patuxent and Potomac on the West, the Chester, Choptank and Nanticoke on the East, and the Rappahannock, York and James Rivers on the Southwest.
- 2) The flavor of seawater comes primarily from its many salts. The predominant one is sodium chloride (common table salt), but magnesium sulphate (Epsom salts) is also a significant factor in the flavor.
- 3) The blue color in the deep sea is caused by the scattering of light among the water molecules in a similar fashion to that occurring in the sky. The emptier the water, the bluer it appears. The deep blue sea is actually a watery desert almost void of life.
- 4) The green color is primarily due to explosive growth of diatoms, which are microscopic, single-celled plants encased in a delicate shell of silica.
- 5) "The purple laver and dulse, which are very thin red seaweeds, like a purple sea-lettuce, make excellent soup and are often eaten raw, particularly in the Canadian Maritime Provinces." (Note: I would not try this unless I were a Canadian who can properly identify seaweed.)
- 6) The starfish has a brain, but not in the usual sense. It has a central nerve ring around the mouth, with a nerve leading from it along each ray. It literally is a "smart mouth."
- 7) Some species, known as "rock-boring clams" can. They attach themselves to a rock with their suction disc foot and slowly cut into the rock by twisting the rough edges of their shells against it. Obviously, this is very slow work. But, hey, the clam isn't going anywhere.
- 8) Virginia oysters mature at five months as males and begin to release spermatozoa. Once the sperm is discharged, they begin to change sexes and by six months are busy producing eggs. In contrast, California clams change sex every few months. (I assume Dr. Berrill knows what he is writing about and is not just spreading another nasty rumor about Californians).
- 9) Some can, others cannot. Both blue and lady crabs are swimmers and have paddle-like last pairs of legs that they use like oars.
- 10) Crabs have a very pale bluish blood in common with all the crustaceans and most mollusks. The respiratory pigment has a copper basis in place of the iron of the red hemoglobin of other creatures.

SHARK: BALA/TRI-COLOR

By Chuck Davis

Since I started in this grand hobby over 40 years ago, the "tri-color shark" has been a favorite of mine. Of course, it's not a shark at all, in fact, it is closer to the carps than anything else.

There are quite a few attributes that make this an attractive fish. Tri-colors are a very active aquarium fish, so they should be given plenty of room in a good size aquarium. Their torpedo shape serves them well as one of the speeding and leaping tropical fishes. *Balantiocheilos melanopterus* (this is the first and last time we'll use the latin name!) has a silvery body with beautiful fins that are transparent orange/red/yellow and trimmed in a striking black edge.

Bala sharks can grow quite large, reaching a whopping ten inches. Though raising one to full size is a monumental task in an aquarium, getting a young one up to six or seven inches is a workable and rewarding task. Many of the large specimens that are offered for sale are either caught wild at that size or are raised in grow out ponds in their native Thailand.

One may notice that the color of the larger specimens tends to be less brilliant than the juveniles, but still very handsome. A proper diet is very important for color and growth. Initially Balas can be picky eaters and will demand special feeding. When the "sharks" are added to a community aquarium the hobbyist should make sure they aren't missing out on their meals. They may not readily accept commercially prepared flake foods or pellets. Because they are often imported directly from the wild, they will be expecting live food. Excellent for the "winning over" of these fish, feedings of live brine shrimp and daphnia is the way to go. Then try mixing small amounts of a good flake food with the live food and then on to just flakes.

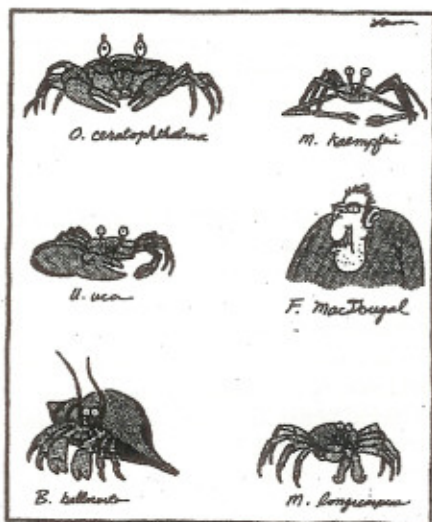
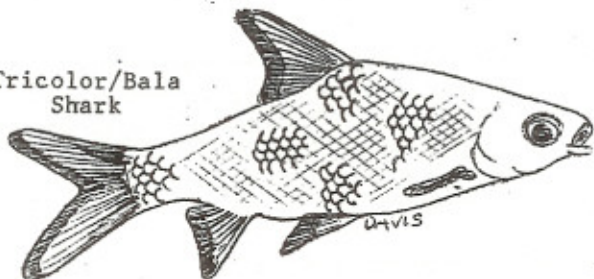
Tricolors are very good community fish, not just because they look good and move a lot, but because they are good tankmates. When kept with fish in their general size category they make the perfect community inhabitant.

Maintenance requirements for these fish is another reason they are so appealing. Simply avoid the extremes in both pH and hardness and they will do nicely. Due to their native habitat, I would suggest a temperature range of 74-80 F. Water quality is the key to keeping these gems. Water should be well filtered and changed on a regular basis - at least 50% per month. Any sluggish behavior or the loss of "sparkle" in the eyes of these fish is a clear indication that the water quality has dropped below an acceptable level and this should be remedied immediately.

At this point in time, I know of no one who has successfully bred these sharks in the hobby. I am quite sure it would require an extremely large tank, plenty of live food and a "school" of tricolors, since they are not sexually dimorphic.

None the less, they are a joy!

Tricolor/Bala
Shark



Some of our common crabs

Breeder's Award Program

BAP Checkers:

Annandale/Falls Church area: Jeff Burke (703) 941-3230
Montgomery County: Ray Hughes (301) 424- 3531
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) 505-2917
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*****

Jeffrey Burke 335***
John Mangan 155**
Don Kinyon 105*
Lorne Williams 50*
Gene Moy 30
Gerry Hoffman 10 +

Recent activity: Don Kinyon receives 15 points for Angelfish. Don spawned the marble strain (note: you only get points for spawning a species once, not each time you spawn a different color- except albino). He also receives 10 points for Blue Gularis killies and 20 points for Albino Corys. Lorne Williams was also very active this month and receives 15 points for *Neolamprologus leleupi*, 15 points for *Julidochromis marlieri*, and 10 points for Zebra Danios. This brings Lorne up to 50 points and Breeders Award status.

This was a very busy month for BAP stuff. At the July meeting it seemed like half the people there had some type of BAP business to take care of- asking for forms, getting fish checked, turning forms in... Keep up the good work.

cont. next page...

BAP cont....

I am beginning to work on updating the BAP rules. It's been a long time since they received a good revision. I'd like to ask everyone to look over the current rules (printed in the Jan/Feb issue. I'll bring copies to the next several meetings for anyone that doesn't have one) and let me know of anything you think should be changed. The BAP committee will then discuss the proposed changes and up to date rules will be published in the Jan/Feb 1997 issue of Delta Tale.

MARBLE ANGEL
Pterophyllum scalare

by Don Kinyon, PVAS

One of the most recognizable fish in the aquarium hobby must be the ever popular angel. I am not nearly as experienced in keeping them as many of you reading this are , so I'll keep this report brief.

I bought four young marble angels at a PVAS auction last year because my daughter wouldn't let me stop bidding on them. They were good looking fish, but she thought (and still thinks), that they are beautiful. We took them home and put them in a 55 gallon community tank along with some tetras, *Corydoras*, and smaller cichlids. The tank is fairly well planted, has a lot of wood and stone in it, and is well lit for fourteen hours a day. The temperature is kept at 78 degrees and pH is 7.4.

In April we noticed one of the fish filling up with eggs. This is the only way I knew the fish was a female, as I still can't tell the difference any other way. By the end of April she had paired off with the largest of the other fish (I presumed was a male) and deposited about 150 eggs on a swordplant leaf. When the eggs started to eye up, we were sure we had a pair, so we removed the eggs, leaf and all, to a prepared 15 gallon tank. In three days the eggs hatched, and in four more, the young were swimming.

On a diet of baby brine shrimp, micro worms, and vinegar eels, the young grew quickly , and of course, my little girl is happy with the "baby angels".

SPAWNING THE CHOLATE GOURAMI
A BAP report by Ilene Aivis
Kitsap Aquarium Society

In August of 1993 I purchased four Chocolate Gouramis (*Sphaerichthys osphromemoides*) from my favorite store. I knew very little about them except they are a small species of gourami and I liked them.

When I got them home, and while they were still in the bag, I looked them up in my *Exotic Tropical Fishes* book, (Axelrod, Vordenwinkler, Emmens, Sculthorpe, Pronek, Burgess, 1988, T.F.H. Publications). I learned they are caught from slow moving streams and peaceful and shy, like very soft, slightly acid water and like to be warm, 82 degrees or better.

Using this as a guideline, I placed them in a seven gallon tank that has been running undisturbed for five or six years. It has a small subsand filter, a thin layer of gravel and three water sprite plants that have spread across the surface and shades the light from the 14 watt florescent fixture that sits on top of the glass lid.

The history of this tank is to hold a pH of 3.8 which is considerably lower than the "slightly acid" it says in the book. But I know if I attempted to bring it up to the recommended pH I would be doing a lot of water changes and in such a small tank it would be difficult to control wide and rapid fluctuations. I decided on stability and left it as it was. The temperature is 84 degrees and the humidity in the hatchery is 82 percent. I slowly adjusted my new fish to these radical conditions.

They're not real colorful considering the brilliant colors and patterns displayed by most of the smaller gourami species. They are mostly a dark chocolate brown with three white or yellow stripes circling their short, stubby bodies.

These are shy fish that move slowly and methodically through the tank with their fins, for the most part, held close to their bodies. I offer them small amounts of flake food which I have never seen them eat, preferring instead, baby brine shrimp, frozen adult brine shrimp, frozen blood worms and live mosquito larvae.

There is a lot of disagreement of exactly how to tell the sexes apart. Some of the books mentioned fin shape being different but the few times I saw them spread their fins, I could not see it. Color is also suppose(d) to be a factor, but none of the four fish was colored exactly alike. So I put all four of them together hoping they would sort it out themselves.

They did. Within a month I only had two left. The other two were dead. I never saw torn fins, I never saw anything that told me of any kink of

aggression going on when I wasn't looking. Except two bodies.

By now I had acquired book 3 in the *Breeding Aquarium Fishes* series by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod and Lourdes Burgess. (1973 by T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Ltd.) There are three separate articles about spawning the Chocolate Gourami in this book. From this I learned they are mouth brooders. (A not unknown peculiarity in labyrinth fishes as several species of bettas are also mouth brooders.) I also learned that the water in which they are found is floored with dead leaves and other debris and stained the color of "black coffee". (1906, an article in *Wochenschrift* by Julius Reichelt). So, to more closely emulate their natural environment, I added a handful of dead leaves and 5 milliliters of Tetra's Blackwater Extract. I also turned the air in the tank way down so it only serves to break the surface tension with a few bubbles a second. Since the bottom of the tank is covered with gravel, and the pictures in the book showed the eggs being deposited on a smooth surface. I added a smooth stone for them to spawn on. Finally, I conditioned my prospective breeders on a rich diet heavy with live mosquito larvae.

On the 3rd of October, I noticed the fish with the least amount of red on the tail fin, looked like it had a mouth full of something it didn't know what to do with. I checked in my *Breeding Aquarium Fishes* book and it looked exactly like the pictures of a fish carrying eggs!

Looking in on them several times a day, (okay, four times an hour) I noticed that while the normal looking fish ate heartily on the baby brine shrimp and mosquito larvae, the one 'carrying' would make a quick little dash toward the food, then quietly retreat to the back corner of the tank without eating.

At this point I began calling the one 'carrying', the female, and the other one the male. But I have also heard from someone whose opinion I respect, that it is the male who broods the fry. Since I did not witness the spawning and don't know which sex did the brooding. (Although if it is the male, then in this instance the female has more color, is larger, and more aggressive than the male.) For simplicity, from this point I will refer to the fish carrying the eggs as the female.

On Wednesday, three days after I noticed her carrying the eggs, I observed her 'flaring' her fins at the male each time he swam past her. I took this to mean she was uncomfortable with

his presence so I removed him to another small tank with a similar pH.

Each day after this I saw her seldom as she spent most of her time hanging quietly among the plants in the back of the tank. But when I did see her, she still looked like she was carrying something in her mouth. A pouch-like area below her chin, and between her gill openings was distended to a small degree. I offered her a little food during this time as a test. Had she eaten, I would have known the eggs, if there had been any, were gone.

I had no idea how long she would carry the eggs and/or fry. The only book I had that talked about spawning Chocolate Gouramis had the female eat the eggs after three days. Then on Friday our club librarian told me the club own a book that has an article on the successful spawning of the Chocolate Gourami. In the book *Gouramis And Other Anabantoids* by Hans-Joachim Richter (1988, T.F.H. Publications, Inc.) he says, "The fry, about 5mm long, emerge from the throat pouch in about 14 days."

By my count that was Sunday, October 17th, "Gourami day!" as my husband called it. Sunday morning I go up early and turned on the lights in the hatchery and took a highly anticipated look in the little tank.

Nothing. Just the female in the back and as far as I could tell by peeking through the plant fronds and algae, she looked no different.

Later in the morning, while doing water changes on other tanks, I started to add a little water to the tank to make up for evaporation. When the first drops of water struck the surface a sudden movement made me stop and look more closely.

I expected to see a tiny, clear sliver with eyes which is what most baby fish look like. But this little guy looked like a miniature duplicate of it's parents. It's chocolate brown with a bale face and a wide white strip that circles its body at about mid length. The most obvious fin that can be seen is what look like two little nubs where its ventral fins are. It's probably the cutest baby fish I've ever seen. I was on my own as what to do next as all of the articles I have found about them ends with the emergence of the fry. The female looks like she is still 'carrying' as her throat pouch is still distended and she has not eaten the mosquito larvae I put in for her.

Do I wait until she looks normal then take her out? Does she eat her fry? Does she care for them after they are free swimming. (As of this point, I think the answer to the last question is "no". The three fry I have seen are as far from her as they can get and still be in the same tank!)

I saw the fry eating the shrimp nauplii. I left the female alone and I'm glad I did because by Monday night there were over thirty fry that I could see.

By then I saw the female also eating the shrimp so I assumed she had spit out the last of her kids. At this point I decided to take her out. First, I really wanted the fry. Second, the fry are not so perfectly camouflaged for nothing. And third, they were all staying well away from her.

I put her in the other 7 gallon tank with the male. It is set up exactly like the first. Within five minutes of putting her in tank, she and the male were getting reacquainted by simulating the spawning embrace. They circled each other slowly a distance, then moved together until they were cupped around each other, then swam apart while gently brushing their tails against each other.

They repeated this behavior a half dozen times in the 10 minutes I watched. Then the female decided enough was enough, and chased him to the back of the tank.

At three days old the fry are eating brine shrimp nauplii and microworms. I have counted over thirty of them and watch fascinated as they move in the same slow motion as their parents.

At 10 days I notice there are less of them and while I have seen one dead one, I can see nothing obviously wrong with the others. Thinking perhaps the small ones are not able to eat the shrimp, I start feeding microworms several times a day.

At 20 days there are few fry left and I am concerned I won't have the 6 necessary to qualify them as a confirmed spawning. I still can see nothing wrong with what fry is left, but they are still disappearing. There are three fry that are easily larger than the others, perhaps the ones that emerged first. But they certainly are not large enough to eat their siblings.

On day number 25 I spend a long time peering into the small, dim tank and I finally get an answer to the disappearing fry.

By now there are only seven or eight of them left. And I watch as two of them approach each

other in their slow motion fashion when suddenly one of them darts forward and runs head-on into the other! The both jump off in opposite directions like colliding ping-pong balls.

Is this why I have so few of them left? Is this how the adults and the fry have killed each other without leaving torn fins or missing scales? By inflicting internal injuries? I think so. Maybe the food opportunities in their natural habitat is so few, competition among breeding pairs, and growing fry demand this culling process.

I don't know for sure, but I do know the next time I them up it will be in a much larger tank so the adults can avoid each other. And, if I am successful in getting them to spawn again, so the fry can spread out enough I can raise more than 6 of these pretty by mysterious little fish.



"Hey! Look what Zog do!"

Come to a PVAS Meeting.
Learn something new.

his presence so I removed him to another small tank with a similar pH.

Each day after this I saw her seldom as she spent most of her time hanging quietly among the plants in the back of the tank. But when I did see her, she still looked like she was carrying something in her mouth. A pouch-like area below her chin, and between her gill openings was distended to a small degree. I offered her a little food during this time as a test. Had she eaten, I would have known the eggs, if there had been any, were gone.

I had no idea how long she would carry the eggs and/or fry. The only book I had that talked about spawning Chocolate Gouramis had the female eat the eggs after three days. Then on Friday our club librarian told me the club own a book that has an article on the successful spawning of the Chocolate Gourami. In the book *Gouramis And Other Anabantoids* by Hans-Joachim Richter (1988, T.F.H. Publications, Inc.) he says, "The fry, about 5mm long, emerge from the throat pouch in about 14 days."

By my count that was Sunday, October 17th, "Gourami day!" as my husband called it. Sunday morning I go up early and turned on the lights in the hatchery and took a highly anticipated look in the little tank.

Nothing. Just the female in the back and as far as I could tell by peeking through the plant fronds and algae, she looked no different.

Later in the morning, while doing water changes on other tanks, I started to add a little water to the tank to make up for evaporation. When the first drops of water struck the surface a sudden movement made me stop and look more closely.

I expected to see a tiny, clear sliver with eyes which is what most baby fish look like. But this little guy looked like a miniature duplicate of it's parents. It's chocolate brown with a bale face and a wide white strip that circles its body at about mid length. The most obvious fin that can be seen is what look like two little nubs where its ventral fins are. It's probably the cutest baby fish I've ever seen. I was on my own as what to do next as all of the articles I have found about them ends with the emergence of the fry. The female looks like she is still 'carrying' as her throat pouch is still distended and she has not eaten the mosquito larvae I put in for her.

Do I wait until she looks normal then take her out? Does she eat her fry? Does she care for them after they are free swimming. (As of this point, I think the answer to the last question is "no". The three fry I have seen are as far from her as they can get and still be in the same tank!)

I saw the fry eating the shrimp nauplii. I left the female alone and I'm glad I did because by Monday night there were over thirty fry that I could see.

By then I saw the female also eating the shrimp so I assumed she had spit out the last of her kids. At this point I decided to take her out. First, I really wanted the fry. Second, the fry are not so perfectly camouflaged for nothing. And third, they were all staying well away from her.

I put her in the other 7 gallon tank with the male. It is set up exactly like the first. Within five minutes of putting her in tank, she and the male were getting reacquainted by simulating the spawning embrace. They circled each other slowly a distance, then moved together until they were cupped around each other, then swam apart while gently brushing their tails against each other.

They repeated this behavior a half dozen times in the 10 minutes I watched. Then the female decided enough was enough, and chased him to the back of the tank.

At three days old the fry are eating brine shrimp nauplii and microworms. I have counted over thirty of them and watch fascinated as they move in the same slow motion as their parents.

At 10 days I notice there are less of them and while I have seen one dead one, I can see nothing obviously wrong with the others. Thinking perhaps the small ones are not able to eat the shrimp, I start feeding microworms several times a day.

At 20 days there are few fry left and I am concerned I won't have the 6 necessary to qualify them as a confirmed spawning. I still can see nothing wrong with what fry is left, but they are still disappearing. There are three fry that are easily larger than the others, perhaps the ones that emerged first. But they certainly are not large enough to eat their siblings.

On day number 25 I spend a long time peering into the small, dim tank and I finally get an answer to the disappearing fry.

By now there are only seven or eight of them left. And I watch as two of them approach each

Waiting on "Their Majesties"

Melanotaenia praecox: Fish of the Century

by Cary Hostrawser

(Reprinted from *Aqua News* - The Minnesota Aquarium Society)

The praecox has been a hidden beauty that was re-discovered by Heiko Bleher in 1992. Known originally from 31 specimens collected in 1920 from the Mamberano River, northern Irian Jaya in New Guinea, its preserved colors left a lot to be desired. Looking at the drawings of this fish in the book *Rainbowfishes of Australia and Papua New Guinea* (Cross & Allen) it's a wonder it wasn't re-described when it was rediscovered. The colors of the drawn fish are a green top half, silver bottom half, and a slight pinkish tinge to the fins. Even the shape looks wrong when I look at my living fish.

The area this fish comes from is a strictly controlled area in Indonesia. Outsiders are just plain not allowed to go there. Also with good intentions, exportation or collection of wildlife is strictly forbidden in Indonesian New Guinea. This is to prevent exploitation, and the destruction of the native environment. On the other hand, with the need to raise revenues, this same government issues mining licenses with no restrictions. Raw ore is treated and the tailings are dumped directly into the waterways. This has wiped out all life in some waterways. To make a point on the seriousness of this situation, many species have been found in a single waterway in New Guinea, and nowhere else. It's impossible to guess how many beautiful species will never be known because of these actions. We are lucky that the praecox was rediscovered and some way was found to get them out of the country.

The next step in getting the praecox in hobby tanks was to breed these first specimens. Of the original spawning, I know nothing but that it was achieved. Now with a fish this beautiful, someone decided "let's make some big bucks. Let's sell only males. They look the best anyhow, and if no one has females we can charge what we like". Next we get Aquarium Rio (Germany) the *Exclusive Worldwide Distributor* and Ekk Will the *U.S.A. Exclusive Distributor* per an ad in *Aqua Geographia* (GRRRRR). Sorry, I don't understand or agree with the idea of exclusive distribution of a naturally occurring species.

Well somehow females came into the hobby outside of this exclusive relationship. When I saw some pictures of this fish, I know some day I had to have some. I heard about females being in Europe and a few hobbyists were breeding them. Next, I actually found out about a mop of eggs in America. In fact I was with the person receiving them when word came they were at the post office. Ahh, in 6 months to a year, he should be spawning them. In another 6 months to a year maybe I can finally get a pair. Well I've seen a lot of fish in fish books that I waited at least, if not longer before I got some, so I've learned patience. Then one day I'm reading my e-mail, and at the end was a by the way from this same person - "My other option of getting praecox (live pairs) just come through. I couldn't resist getting some more and have 1 extra pair available. Do you want the? Let me know soon because they're on their way from Germany and I have to find a home for them."

I couldn't believe it, *do I want them?* Well does a bear ____ in the woods? Is the Pope _____? H____ yea, I want them. I jump up, grab the phone and start dialing. Yes, they are supposed to make it into the country on Thursday and he'll re-bag and ship them the next week if everything goes well. Yes, I know, I assume all risks. Dead from Germany and they're mine. Death at Minneapolis airport and they're still mine. A week and a couple days and I'm on my way to the airport. I get to the counter, get fish, and open up the box, and they are alive. finally I back home with my prizes, which my wife quickly deems with the title "Their Majesties". They are all I've talked about since I got the e-mail. They are going into a tank I just set up for them. 20 gallons, UGF, established sponge filter, pH 7.0 with 5 or 6 DH. I wasn't taking any chances. The fish looked a little stressed after the trip but immediately accepted baby brine shrimp and ate well. The next day they looked like they had been living their whole life in that tank. And they seemed to love both the baby brine shrimp and the spirulina flake I fed twice a day.

In a couple of days I've got eggs in the mop. I return the mop with the eggs and go to check it the next day. Now I have new eggs, but yesterday's eggs seem to have fallen off, or been eaten. This goes on for about a week when I decide to start picking the eggs daily and moving them to a hatching container. It seems that my praecox's eggs aren't all that adhesive. They come off the mop extremely easily. And each day when Their Majesties spawn they knock off the previous days spawn.

My hatching container is actually a floating light plastic container that some fish food came in. I've punched some small holes in the sides to allow the tank water to pass through, but not large enough for fry to leave or eggs to fall out.

After a few days of harvesting eggs, I open up the tank top to harvest the mop and notice something small dart on the top. I get down and look through the glass at the surface, and sure enough those eggs that were knocked off during their Majesties pleasures have been hatching. There are about a dozen fry swimming on the water's surface. Well now I've got a big dilemma, move the parents or the fry? I've never had much luck moving rainbow fry. Seems the smallest change in water conditions wipes them out. Move the parents and something goes wrong, (fish flops out of net, cat grabs fish, cat dies) and no more fry. Well I decided to move the parents. The cat, I sent outside. I took half the water from the parents tank, and put it in an identical set up, with the other water fresh and the same pH and hardness. Their Majesties didn't even cat the least bit stressed. Is it up a slow drip to replace the water in the old tank and all the fry lived Or I think they did, because each day I was getting more fry. I ended up with about 50 in that tank.

The fry needed micro-food to start with. I used O.S.I.'s APR and the fry were eating baby brine within a week. They grew very quickly and I began to see orange lines on the top and bottom of the fry. This seems to be related to the growth of the fins and fades shortly after the fins become present. Also, the harvesting was going well. The first picked eggs were hatching (it seems to take about 7 to 17 days) depending on temperature. And as my picking skills got better I got 100% fertility on the eggs. Or, maybe the pair just matured a little and threw a little stronger eggs. When I first started picking I'd get all fertile one day, half fertile the next, 3/4 the next, the fertility of the eggs just wasn't consistent. As soon as the fry got big enough I began supplementing the brine shrimp with the same flake food the parents got. At about 2 months of age I was able to begin sexing the fastest growers of the spawn. I always seem to get mix of growth rates with my rainbow fry. The fast group (40% of the fry) grow at twice the rate of the center group, the center group contains about 50% of the fry, and the slow group (usually about 10%) grows at half the rate of the center group. If you've seen pictures of this fish, let (me) point out that there is no way the complete beauty of these fish can be caught by camera. Even my female, with a good diet, has out-colored many photographs of males I've seen. And the male is hard to believe. You just don't find a fish with a red as deep and rich. Combine that with the reflective neon blue and I understand why these are being called "The Fish of the Century". I can hardly wait to have a school of mature adults flashing away in a tank. I do believe you would be hard pressed to find a more beautiful display.

PVAS MONTHLY BOWL SHOW

RULES:

1. Any PVAS member may participate.
2. Each participant may enter up to three (3) fishes per month.
3. Fish must be displayed in a clear container with at least two flat sides to allow easy viewing by the judge(s). The container should be of an appropriate size for the fish being displayed. Covers are strongly recommended. Some containers will be available on a first come first served basis.

4. POINTS:

Each participant will receive 1 point for each fish entered (up to 3).

First place will earn an additional 3 points.

Second place will earn 2 points.

Third place will earn 1 additional point.

Prizes will be awarded to the persons with the highest number of points at the end of the year.

Additions may be added to these rules as needed.

To encourage participation in starting this program back up we will be giving a small prize to everyone entering (a can of fish food most likely). The end of the year prizes haven't been decided on yet but will be something good.

STANDINGS: as of July.

Alex Townsend: 23

John Mangan: 16

Don Kinyon: 13

Gene Moy: 7

Mark Kaprow: 1

Scott Saunders: 1

George White: 1

Lorne Williams: 1

I'd like to encourage more of you to participate. If we can get enough interest generated in showing it will help convince the board to try having a "real" fish show again. If you need any advice just see Alex or John. Either of us will be glad to help get you started.

SUPPORTING SHOPS

ANNANDALE PET SHOP

7406 Little River Trnpl.
Annandale, VA 22031
256-2400

AQUATIC ENHANCEMENT

PO Box 22677
Alexandria, VA 22304
765-4620

CREATURES 'N CRITTERS

9575 Braddock Rd.
Fairfax, Va
978-0745

DISCOUNT PET CENTER

9028 Mathis Ave.
Manassas, VA 22110
361-7769

NATIONAL PET & AQUARIUM

6168 Arlington Blvd.
Falls Church, VA 22046
533-7828

OAKTON PET SHOP

Rt. 123 & Hunter Mill Rd.
Oakton, VA 22124
281-9622

PET MART-TYSONS

8417 Old Courthouse Rd.
Vienna, VA 22180
281-8181

VIRGINIA

PETS ETC-ALEXANDRIA

7688-B Richmond Hgwy.
Alexandria, VA 22306
768-2200

PETS ETC-CHANTILLY

13932 Lee Jackson Hgwy
Chantilly, Va 22021
378-2777

PETS ETC-HERNDON

462 Eiden St.
Herndon, VA 22171
437-9667

PETS ETC-STERLING

243-C Harry Flood Byrd Hgwy.
Sterling, VA 22170
430-9667

CUSTOM AQUARIUM CONCEPTS

293 Sunset Park Drive
Herndon, VA 22094
(703) 689-2815

SUPPORTING SHOPS

ANIMAL EXCHANGE

765-A Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
424-PETS

AQUARIUM CENTER

Liberty Rd. at Offit Rd.
Randlestown, MD
521-4529

BROTHER'S PETS

13810 Georgia Ave.
Aspen Hill, MD 20906
460-4600

CONGRESSIONAL AQUARIUM

162 Congressional Ln
Rockville, MD 20852
881-6182

DISCOUNT PET SUPER- MARKET

1321 A&B Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
309-9110

FISH FACTORY AQUARIUM

582 N. Frederick Ave.
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
977-7500

HOUSE OF TROPICALS

7389F Baltimore-Annapolis Blvd.
Glen Burnie, MD 21061
761-1113

MARINE CARE SPECIALISTS

16065 N. Frederick Rd.
Rockville, MD 20855
330-0720

MARYLAND

MARYLAND TROPICALS

13884 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904
879-0200

MONTGOMERY TROPICALS

7845-G Airpark Rd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20879
670-0886

RICK'S FISH & PET SUPPLY

1003J West Patrick St.
Frederick, MD 21702
694-9664 831-6866

SHOWCASE AQUARIUM

11248-11250 Triangle Ln
Wheaton, MD 20902
942-6464

TOTALLY FISH

14332 Layhill Rd.
Silver Spring, MD 20906
598-2229

TROPICAL FISH WORLD

16529 S. Frederick Center
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
921-0000

TROPICAL LAGOON

9439 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
585-6562

AQUATIC CREATIONS LTD

2909 Urbana Pike
Ijamsville, MD 21754
(301) 831-8200

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 here 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:

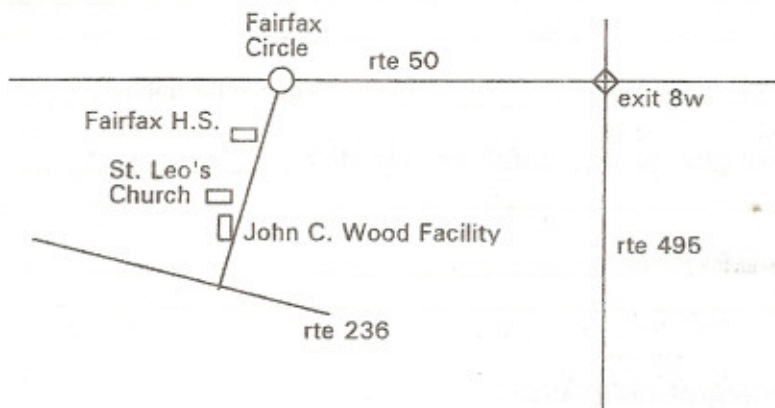
Individual/Family: \$12/yr

Corresponding: \$ 9/yr

Junior (under 18) \$ 5/yr

Please send application and check to the address above.

Potomac Valley Aquarium Society
PO Box 664
Merrifield, VA 22116



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.