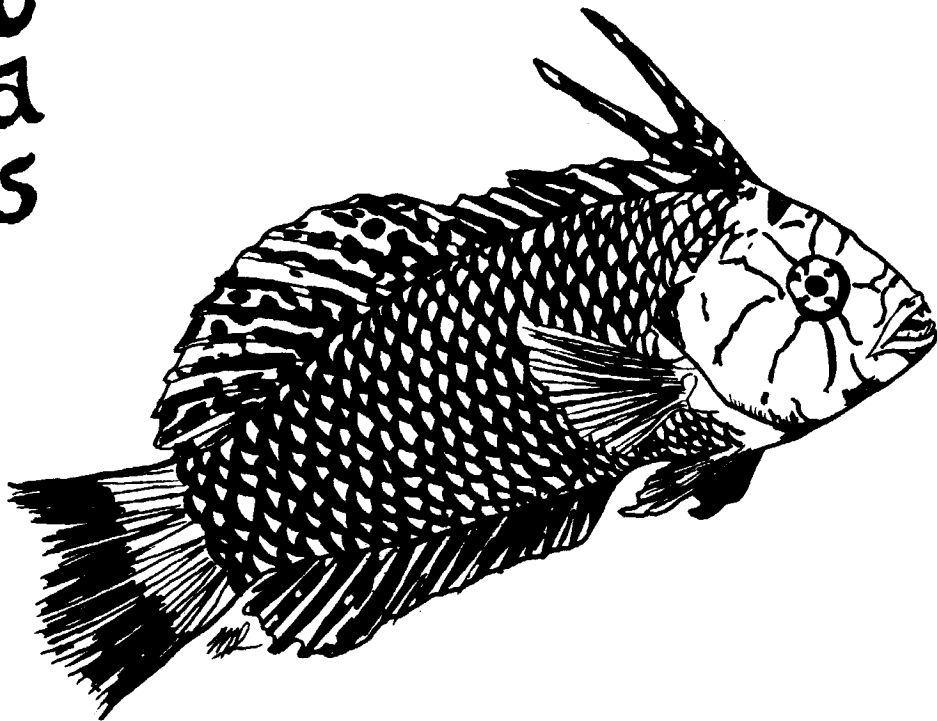


DELTA TALE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF P.V.A.S.

DECEMBER 1976

2025



Volume 7
Issue 12

DELTA TALE is published for the benefit of the Potomac Valley Aquarium Society (formerly the Potomac Valley Guppy Club), a non-profit organization, established in 1960 for the purpose of furthering the aquarium hobby by disseminating information, encouraging friendly competition, soliciting participation in its show, and promoting good fellowship. Correspondence should be addressed to Secretary, P.V.A.S., P.O. Box 6219, Shirlington Station, Arlington, Virginia, 22206. Original articles and drawings may be reprinted if credit is given the author and DELTA TALE. Two copies of the publication in which the reprint appears should be sent to DELTA TALE which will forward one copy to the author. All materials for inclusion in the DELTA TALE must reach the editor no later than the Saturday after the monthly Monday meeting.

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Editor: Ruth Brewer

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This month's cover is a tracing by Michael Sprague of a slide by Gene Aldridge. The fish is the Dragon Wrasse (*Novaculichthys taeniourus*), a native of the Red Sea.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

The Board of Governors' meeting was held November 2, 1976, at the home of Craig Tingen with ten members and two guests present. There was a general discussion concerning the weekend of the dinner and auction. The consensus was that the speaker and dinner were very enjoyable. The auction was our best yet from the standpoint of smoothness of operation. The net loss for the weekend was approximately \$65. The current bank balance at the meeting was \$667.93.

The main order of business centered around the Christmas party. Diane Nixon has offered to be in charge of the party. After much discussion of different ways to hold it, the decision was made to have the club pay for the major food items and probably the condiments. The rest will be supplied by the membership. Every membership will be issued a door prize ticket for a single prize to be determined later. As always, each person attending is expected to bring a wrapped aquarium-related item, not alive, valued at \$1.00 or \$1.00 in cash.

Michael Sprague was asked to present a letter to the management of the coke plant concerning the dates for our general meetings and two weekends for shows or other special activities.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Sprague, Recording Secretary

* * * * *

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING
December 7, 1976

Pat Mahoney
3011 Aspen Lane
Falls Church, VA
534-0006

CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 13, 1976

NO BOWL SHOW

* * * * *

THE THRILL OF VICTORY AND THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

By: Dave McInturff, PVAS

Imagine the joy and the frustration of seeing your albino Corydoras spawn for the first time in a community tank and watching a foot-long plecostomus clean them off the sides of the tank as quickly as they are laid. Well, that's what happened to us.

After I gathered my wits about me and figured out what I was going to do, I started in on my plan to save as many of the eggs as possible. With both hands submerged and a single-edged razor blade in one hand and the box portion of a plastic box filter in the other, I proceeded to remove the eggs, a few at a time, with the razor blade and attempted to deposit them on the inside of the filter box, while at the same time chasing away the plecostomus. Fortunately, none of the other fish seemed to know what was going on and didn't attempt to eat any of the eggs. The eggs were very adhesive, but the adhesion varied from surface to surface and seemed to be proportional to the amount of aggravation caused, that is, the eggs stuck to glass better than to fingers better than to the razor blade better than to the plastic box. (Think about it!) The eggs were fairly tough, somewhat rubbery, but definitely more delicate than killifish eggs.

After having placed approximately one hundred eggs in the filter box and having no room to put any more, I removed the filter box full of water from the tank. Next I set up a bare 5 1/2 gallon tank with an airstone. Dechlorinated tap water was used. The filter box with eggs was placed in the tank and turned over on one side. Meanwhile the spawning continued, so back I went with the razor blade. As I removed the eggs from the glass, I redeposited them on the glass in the 5 1/2 gallon tank. About one hundred and fifty more eggs were collected in this manner at which point the spawning ceased. The tank with the eggs was covered on the top and four sides with black construction paper to keep out the light. After peeking into the tank for three days, I saw the first signs of wigglers on the bottom. After the fourth day, I removed all of the black paper and those eggs that had not yet hatched. There were approximately forty to fifty newly hatched fry. After the yolk sac was absorbed, the fry were fed microworms. Three weeks later the fry were attacked by fungus, and all but twenty died. Two weeks after I was successful in stopping the fungus, my microworm cultures stopped producing, and I had to subculture them. During the week it took for the new cultures to begin producing sufficient quantities of microworms, I fed the fry finely crushed Tetramin. They didn't seem to like the flake food, and eight of them evidently starved to death. At sixty days eleven (one died that morning) albino Corydoras fry about an inch long were still swimming around the bottom of the tanks; so we made it with one to spare.

As a point of information, there were five males and one female, although only two or three of the males seemed to be participating. Before depositing the eggs on the glass, the female carried three or four of them at a time between her ventral fins just like it says in the books.

EXPERT: WHAT'S THAT?

By: Roger Postley
(Reprinted from the
Blue Grass Aquarama,
February, 1975) ✓

Everyone involved in tropical fish find that they are constantly beseiged by the advice of "experts". Upon trying the offered suggestions, each individual finds that only a small percentage of their suggestions actually works. This frequently causes each hobbyist to either swear off (or at) all advice or pick one expert and religiously follow his "words of wisdom". Let us examine the reasons for the vast amount of controversy in the opinions of "experts".

A wag once defined an expert as follows: "EX is from the Latin word for 'from' or 'has been' and, as everyone knows, a "SPURT" is a small drip under great pressure"! Perhaps this definition fits a small number of self-acclaimed authorities, but the majority of knowledgeable hobbyists are both well-meaning and sincere in the advice they offer. Therefore, why is there usch a large discrepancy and conflict between the supposed experts???

First, let us examine the qualities that a true tropical fish "expert" must have. This individual must be endowed with superhuman qualities. He (or she) must have practical maintenance experience with every known species of tropical fish. He must be omniscient on genetics, water chemistry, fish pathology, piscine nutrition, animal behaviour, and ichthyology, to name just a few areas. It should be obvious to all that I have described a mythical being. There is no conceivable way that any one individual would hope to be competent in all these areas.

Therefore, let us limit our definition to: "An expert is an individual who demonstrates high competence in one aspect of the tropical fish hobby, whether it be maintenance, breeding, development of specialized equipment, or some such field." But why, if an individual's competence can be shown, do so many "experts" disagree on identical subjects?

Once again, let us redefine the qualities of a supposed expert. This individual must have practical experience in the limited area to which he claims expertise. While I have no complaints with theory and research of a technical nature, it does not meet the needs for information raised by all tropical fish hobbyists. He must also have reasonable skills in related fields to assist his practical knowledge. Again we encounter a problem, because even these individuals do not agree.

The key to the dilemma lies in how and where the practical experience is gained. It is here that we find the large number

of variables which can never be resolved. Practical knowledge can only be gained through the experience one has with one's own tanks and fish. This introduces the multiple problems of local water chemistry and environmental factors, regional strains of fish species and other factors which, by their very nature, MUST be different for each region.

It is because of the local factors, which naturally affect one's opinions, that causes the majority of controversies. When this is coupled with the fact that when dealing with living organisms, it is frequently possible to gain identical results with totally different methods, an understanding of the disagreements becomes clearer. However, I do NOT mean to imply that an "expert's" opinions are wrong!!

This leaves the hobbyist with one final question: "Who is right?" To this there is no answer. As each expert has done nothing except relay the information on WHAT HAS WORKED SUCCESSFULLY FOR HIM, all opinions are valid. It is then up to the individual hobbyist to find all the solutions which different experts have put forth to solve his immediate problem and try them. It is hopeful that at least one of the experts' proposals will work, and the hobbyist can then accept it as a valid solution for his problem, in his own region, with his strain of fish.

In conclusion we can now state an absolute definition of a tropical fish expert: "An expert is a hobbyist, who through practical experience, has found answers to problems which affect his own fish and equipment." He freely transmits his findings by word of mouth, hobby-related publications, or workshop seminars in the hopes that his results will prove equally valid for other individuals elsewhere. Be glad that so many EXPERTS DO disagree, as this increases your chances on finding opinions and methods which WILL work for you.

#

JANUARY BOWL SHOW

January 10, 1977

Guppies: Green, Half black red, AOC

Cichlids: Central & S. Amer. large, Mbuna, Other

Other: Bettas, Corydoras, Other

#

DON'T FORGET THE CHRISTMAS PARTY, DECEMBER 13. (And the Party Chairperson, Diane Nixon, says "Don't forget food, and a spoon to dish up with!")

MEMBERSHIP & THINGS

The November meeting was a good one for membership. In addition to membership renewals by Gudrun Droege and Ruth Brewer, we had new memberships from Richard Garrett, Robert Garrett, Tom Heflin and Wendy Morrison. Other recent new memberships have been received from Michael Brocato, Tom Russell and George & Mikki White.

The following memberships expired in November and have not yet been renewed:

D. M. Fisher
Steve Siska
Chuck & Genny Story

The following membership is due for renewal in December:

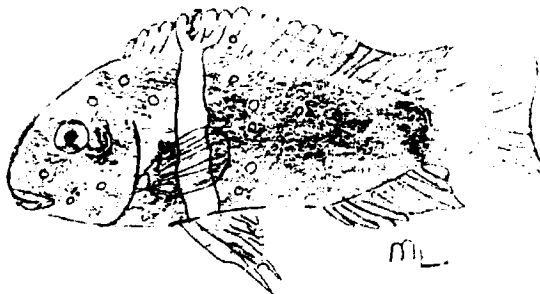
Ronald & Carolyn Lorusso.

I hope to see all of you at the Christmas Party. Although the party is totally a social, I plan on having my records with me so I can update ID cards.

See you at the party.

Mike Sprague
Ass't Corresponding Secretary

+ - + - + - + - + - + - + - + - + - + - + - + - + - + - +



Tropheus duboisi
(Drawing by Marc Lenzen)

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COUNTER

By: Peter J. Tietjen, PVAS

When you walk into your favorite fish store to look for a new specimen or get a can of TetraMin or find out what will cure those white spots on Geronimo, your cute gold ram, have you ever wondered how those fish get in the tanks -- the TetraMin gets on the shelves -- and the right medicine in your hand? The answer is a lot of hard work on the part of the staff of that shop.

What chore do you least like to do in your own fish room? If you said "Change the filters" you agree with most people. Imagine having to do that for 250 tanks of various sizes about twice a month. That's what a store must do. When a fish dies or becomes sick, does it upset you? It does a fish shop owner for a dead fish is one he cannot sell and a sick one is one he should not sell (though some do), and that is lost money, and heaven knows there are lots of ways to lose money in the fish business.

I have worked in a store since last March, first only on weekends and evenings, full time since July. This is to be the first report in a series on what goes on behind the scenes at a fish store. This month I will concentrate on how the fish get in the tanks.

Retail stores get their fish from two sources -- local wholesalers or directly from the Florida fish farms. (Less than 5% of the fish in a store come from the area's hobbyists. Sometime I hope to do an article on this subject since I feel it is of interest to many other hobbyists.) Each way has its pros and cons. The main ones are that while Florida or the Far East (Singapore or Hong Kong) have a wide selection of fish at low prices, they sell in 100 lots and you must pay the freight and you can't see the fish. Local prices are higher, but what you see is what you get, to coin a phrase. We usually try to combine both methods with the emphasis on seeing the fish we buy.

Fish wholesalers are usually located in big warehouse like buildings. The floors are always wet with running water. The holding tanks, usually 30 flats, are stacked four or five high on wooden or metal racks. Sometimes the fish are labeled as to variety and price, sometimes just as to price and in one place both are absent. You pick out what you want, write a list and give it to them. Then they catch and bag and pack what you want. If you are suspicious, keep an eye on them. The fish are bagged, oxygen added to the bags, and the bags are packed in styrofoam boxes. Now comes the real chore for the store owner. All those fish have to be taken back to the store and unpacked. They don't just swim into the tank, you know. When you get fish home from an auction or a store, it's a simple matter to acclimatize your fish. Once again, multiply that by over 100 bags of fish, including marine species and you have an idea of what the store owner goes through.

All the bags have to be floated, then opened and mixed. Then the fish have to be let out, and, most importantly, they must be priced. The pricing is a very important part. But more on pricing structure later in the series.

Finally, after much work, wet arms and frayed tempers, the fish are ready for sale. Bring on the customers!

(TO BE CONTINUED)

bap REPORT

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>POINTS</u> |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Susan & Mike Sprague | 155** |
| Ruth Brewer | 170** |
| Gene Aldridge | 80 |
| John Jessup | 55* |
| Diane Nixon | 70* |
| Pat & Pete Tietjen | 15 |
| Jan & Dave McInturff | 275** |
| Jerry Donnelly | 10 |

* Breeder Award

** Intermediate Breeder Award

Gene Aldridge
BAP Chairman



Datnoides microlepis
(Watercolor by Jerry Donnelly)

CYNOLEBIAS NIGRIPINNIS
A BAP Report

By: Ruth Brewer, PVAS

Cynolebias nigrripinnis is a small, very pretty South American killie with a dark blue, almost black body covered with numerous silvery sparkles. It is a peat spawner with an incubation time of five months which is a real test of the breeder's patience. It is also a true annual which means that once the fish reaches maturity, you'd better get them set up for spawning and get your eggs before it's too late. The fish is hatched, matures, reproduces and dies in less than a year.

I obtained a trio of this beautiful killie from a local hobbyist in late July, 1975. I set them up in a bare-bottomed 2-1/2 gallon tank with some floating plants and a sponge filter. I used a one pint refrigerator dish with a tight fitting cover for a spawning receptacle. A hole about an inch and a half in diameter was cut in the top and the container was filled about two-thirds full of peat with a small stone buried in it to keep the round container from rolling when it was turned on the side. The container was positioned on its side and with the hole at the top so that the fish could swim in and out without spilling out too much of the peat. I used Jiffy-7's which had the plastic netting pulled off and had been soaked in very hot water until they dissolved. After cooling, the peat was piled into the refrigerator container and the trio was on its own.

The fish were fed a combination of flake, paste and live foods. They were very light eaters and I had to be extremely careful not to overfeed and to clean up leftovers after meals since I did not want to add either catfish or snails as scavengers for fear of having the eggs scavenged as well. A sponge filter was used and had to be cleared of peat build-up from time to time in spite of my careful preparations in setting up the spawning receptacle.

No heater was used and the water temperature stayed about 70° to 72°. One teaspoon of Kosher salt per gallon was used and the pH remained fairly constant at about 7.0. Water changes of approximately 50% were made every couple of weeks using aged tap water with the addition of Kosher salt.

The male took up his position near the hole in the container and spent most of his time there waiting for the females to show up which they did with great regularity. The female would swim up to the hole and with no particular ado the pair would enter the spawning receptacle. Almost immediately there would be a puff of peat from the hole followed in a few seconds by the pair. The female would swim off and the male would remain until the other female came over. Occasionally, usually only at feeding time, he would leave his post and wander around the tank.

Once a week I would remove the container, rinse the peat through a fine mesh net in cool tap water and dry it for storage. I found the easiest way to do this was to put a couple of layers of paper toweling on top of one section of the newspaper and pile the peat on the toweling. I spread it out in a more or less even layer and waited until most of the moisture had evaporated. (I have never been able to find out just what is meant by "the moisture of good pipe tobacco" -- this seems to have about as many definitions as there are breeders. Mine is that the peat is not sloppy wet nor is it bone dry.) The peat was then placed in a plastic bag, marked with the date of collection, the type of fish and the suggested wetting date. The bag was placed in a cool, dark place and left for five months.

When the waiting period was up, I filled a plastic shoe box with tap water and the same salt content that had been used in the parent's tank and let it sit for a couple of days. The peat was then crumbled into the water and allowed to stand for about 24 hours at which time I could see very tiny fry darting about. I used a oven baster to remove the fry to clean aged water, again with salt added. This process continued over the next day until I was fairly sure that I had all the fry (22 in this case).

The fry were fed infusoria and green water at first. Later, shrimp nauplii and Tetramin-E were added to the diet. At 60 days there were 12 fry about 1/2 inch long.

I found this to be an easy killie to raise. My ratio of male-to-female was poor, I got almost no females, but the males are very beautiful. I have seen the recommendation that these fish be kept to themselves -- not mixed into a community tank. I never tried mixing them with other fish, so I cannot speak from personal experience, however, I would be inclined to believe the recommendation valid since they do seem to be shy and retiring and I would be afraid they could not hold their own in the competition of the community tank.

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TANK-KEEPING TIP

If you've never had the experience of having the "out" hose of your diatom filter slip off while running the contraption, you probably have no idea how fast you can move in getting to the plug to pull it before the whole house is flooded. The small rubber bands supplied with the filter will rot in time and become inefficient at holding the siphon firmly to the filter outlet. The other day I ran across an excellent suggestion in an old "Tank Topics and Straight Tips" by Stu Wheeler in the Valley Stream; small sized stainless steel hose clamps from an auto supply store will hold the two parts tightly together. I tried the hold with another gadget -- the #100 large binder clip which is an old office standby.

BOWL SHOW RESULTS AND STANDINGS
November 15, 1976

| | <u>1st</u> | <u>2nd</u> | <u>3rd</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <u>Guppy:</u> | | | |
| Multi | Walsh | - | - |
| 2 matched | | | |
| males | Walsh | Walsh | - |
| AOC | Walsh | - | - |
| <u>Cichlid:</u> | | | |
| M'brooder/ | | | |
| New World | - | - | - |
| Other Afr/Asia | - | - | - |
| Open | Walsh | Terwilliger | - |
| <u>Egglayer/</u> | | | |
| <u>Livebearer:</u> | | | |
| Tetras | Mahoney, P | Mahoney, M. | McInturff, D. |
| Characins | McInturff, D. | McInturff, D. | Brocato |
| Open | Mahoney, M. | Lenzen | McInturff, D. |

| | <u>POINT STATUS</u> | | | | <u>Nov.</u> | <u>Qtr.</u> | <u>Ann.</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>Nov.</u> | <u>Qtr.</u> | <u>Ann.</u> | | | | |
| <u>Guppy:</u> | | | | | | | |
| Walsh | 30 | 37 | 155* | <u>Egglayer/</u> | | | |
| McInturff, S. | - | - | 12 | <u>Livebearer:</u> | | | |
| Nixon | - | - | 2 | McInturff, D. | 24 | 42 | 141 |
| Hardy, B. | - | - | 5 | Donnelly | - | - | 13 |
| Hardy, Don | - | - | 4 | Lenzen | 6 | 6 | 31 |
| Hardy, Dan | - | - | 2 | Nixon | - | - | 4 |
| | | | | Warren | - | - | 2 |
| | | | | Mahoney, P. | 12 | 12 | 27 |
| | | | | Mahoney, M. | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| | | | | Brocato | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| <u>Cichlid:</u> | | | | | | | |
| McInturff, J. | - | 11 | 95 | | | | |
| Warren | - | - | 36 | | | | |
| Sprague | - | - | 9 | | | | |
| Nixon | - | - | 6 | | | | |
| Lenzen | - | - | 5 | | | | |
| Tietjen | - | - | 3 | | | | |
| Mahoney | - | - | 5 | | | | |
| Donnelly | - | - | 1 | | | | |
| Walsh | 8 | 8 | 8 | | | | |
| Terwilliger | 6 | 6 | 6 | | | | |

*Annual High Points Award

My apologies to Dave McInturff: His annual points at the end of October should have been 117 instead of the 110 reported in the November Delta Tale. -- Ed.

NO BOWL SHOW IN DECEMBER BECAUSE OF THE CHRISTMAS PARTY. Y'ALL COME!

THE BRACKISH AQUARIUM

By: Michael W. Gos
(Reprinted from Looking Through
The Glass. Greater Lafayette
Aquarium Society, June 1974) ✓

Probably the first thing noticed by the new brackish water buff is the tremendous lack of information on the subject. I have been unable to find any information at all that is geared to the hobbyist, and only slight bits geared toward the scientist. The best way to learn about this forgotten (or perhaps, never discovered) branch of the hobby, appears to be trial and error. Pieces of information can be gotten from books on specific breeds of the fish you wish to keep, and some general information can be found in oceanography texts, for those scientifically oriented.

The brackish water system combines the best features of both fresh and marine systems. From fresh water it has the breedability of the fish, the lower cost, and probably the best of all, live plants. Many brackish water fish are as colorful as saltwater fish.

Water

The first task in setting up the brackish tank is the tank itself and its water. I chose a 29 gallon tank to begin with since I bought all the fish very young. I began with straight tap water. Since our water has a pH of 7.6 and a hardness of 20 DH, it is useless for all but brackish and saltwater. It should be said that water of less hardness or alkalinity can be used since most gravels cause increases in pH and hardness anyway.

Once the water is obtained, I strongly suggest that you check the store you plan to purchase your fish from. It has been my experience that most stores keep brackish water fish in either fresh or salt water. As a result, you will have to acclimate them back to brackish gradually. I bought my fish before adding the salt.

If the fish were in saltwater, you must set up the tank for saltwater and then make periodic water changes with fresh water until you reach the desired salinity. For this, a hydrometer is necessary. Oceanographers define brackish as: in the vicinity of 10-20 parts salt per thousand.

If you were fortunate enough to have a dealer who keeps his fish in fresh water, the task is easier, and less expensive, since you won't need a hydrometer.

In my 29 gallon tank, I added two teaspoons of salt per day. The salt should be sea salts from your dealer, but coarse rock salt or non-iodized salt will do. Keep track of how much salt you are putting in. The goal is one to three teaspoons per gallon. Mollies, swordtails, and some cichlids do best at the lower end, and puffers, archerfish, and bumblebee gobies prefer the higher salinity. Once the salinity is correct, any evaporation can be corrected with fresh water since the

salt is still in solution, but after siphoning, the replacement water should have the same salinity as the tank.

Plants

Most hardy plants will thrive in the brackish tank. I keep my tank at two teaspoons salt per gallon. In it I maintain temple plants, Val, Anacharis, hornwort, water sprite, hairgrass, and a banana plant. All do well in this salinity, as I'm sure do a lot of other plants that I haven't tried yet. Again, the plants should be in while the water is still fresh so they too can be acclimated slowly. One word of warning, mollies love Anacharis, so if you keep more than a pair, you can expect stripped branches.

Fishes

These fish are only a few that can be kept in a brackish tank. I'm listing only the ones that specifically belong in brackish water. Many fish can be adapted to any type of water, but since Nature is perfect they'll do best in their native habitats, or in this case, in an ecosystem as close to Nature as possible.

Mollies: One of the reasons aquarists (especially beginners) have problems with mollies is because they either don't know, or choose to ignore, the fact that mollies need brackish water. This is partly the fault of the pet shop owners for not telling the buyer, and partly of the buyer for not researching the fish beforehand.

Mollies seem susceptible to ich, fungus and mainly, shimmy. It has been my experience that shimmy can be cured by raising the water temperature to 90° F for two or three days. This temperature doesn't hurt any of the other fish, as I normally keep my tank at 80° F anyway.

Mollies need a partial vegetable diet. They love to pick at algae in the tank, as well as Anacharis. They also appreciate some cooked spinach as a treat. One word of warning though. Use only organically grown spinach since the biocides used on most vegetables are deadly to fish.

Mono or Malayan Angel: This fish, along with the red scat, is responsible for my interest in brackish water. Both are as beautiful and as colorful as saltwater fish. And their quick darting movements are truly magnificent. When buying this fish, I suggest getting the very young, less than one inch in diameter. The body should be pure white with two vertical black stripes on the front half, and a brilliant canary-yellow dorsal fin.

When monos are in distress, they blacken. This can be caused by fear, or illness. If he is black in the tank at the store, pass him by. If he is black when you put him in your tank, don't be concerned unless it lasts for more than a couple of hours.

The mono has a bad reputation for not eating. It is an undeserved one. My monos eat anything from vestigial winged Drosophila, through

flake foods and frozen shrimp, to fingers in the tank. . . They'll even eat newly hatched brine shrimp. I'm concerned about their appetites when they reach adulthood. They'll eat me out of house and home. When full grown, they're about the size of an adult angelfish.

Puffer Fish: There are three species of this fish commonly kept in the brackish tank -- the green, the leopard, and the figure 8. I chose the figure 8 because of its markings and colorings. Mine was about 1/2 inch long when I got him, but they grow fast. This little fellow also has a tremendous appetite and after a meal is so bloated he can hardly move.

He would have to be considered a novelty. When removed from the water, he blows himself up like a porcupine fish. This is the only fish I've ever seen that doesn't use his tail for propulsion. All propulsion comes from movement of the dorsal and anal fins. He uses his tail just like the rudder on a boat. It is really a cute sight.

Scats: There are several types of scats available to the hobbyist. My favorite is the red scat. Its color rivals many saltwater fish. The green and brown varieties are less colorful, though. These fish are susceptible to ich, so check the fish carefully before you buy it. This fish is also very active and can uproot plants.

Archer Fish: This is another novelty fish whose excellent marksmanship is well known. There is only one problem. This fellow is rather playful and is fond of shooting passersby just for the fun of it. As a result, the tank should be covered at all times.

While he is not a pretty fish, he is interesting enough to make up for his lack of color. Again, I'd suggest getting him when small. About two inches is a good size.

Bumblebee Goby: This little fish is pretty hard to find. I've found a store in Lake County that carries them occasionally. His bright yellow and black stripes give him his name. He too is as colorful as a saltwater fish, but has a temper, and should be kept one to a tank.

There are other fish that need brackish water, including some cichlids, these are the ones usually kept. There is, however, another group that can be kept. These are animals other than fish. These novelty animals include oysters, worms, and baby whales.

Some research should be done before buying any of these to determine the salinity required.

The best part of the brackish tank is cost. For 11¢ you can get a box of non-iodized salt and convert an ordinary set-up to brackish. For 11¢, you can't go wrong.