

# *In Depth*

May 2016



[Getting Excited for Summer Water Gardens](#)

[Keeping Native Fish](#)

[Who's Breeding What in TFCB Tanks](#)

[A Visit to Minnesota Fish Rooms and Betta Shops](#)

*and so much more!*



[Longwood Gardens](#) in Kennett Square, PA, has magnificent water gardens, including this display of waterlilies and marginal plants. Photo by Ann Whitman.

# In Depth

published by The Tropical Fish Club of Burlington

**Established February 1989**

We meet on the second Thursday of each month, September through June, at 6:30 PM at the VFW Hall, 73 Pearl St, Essex Junction, VT.

Our membership consists of adults, children and teens. Many members are very experienced and have been keeping fish for years, and others are just getting started. People of all ages and experience levels are always welcome. Meet and learn from those who share your interests!

## Officers

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# From the President

by David L Banks, Jr

The May TFCB meeting will be Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, starting at 6:30PM at the VFW in Essex Junction. Ann Whitman will talk about water gardening and keeping fish in outdoor tubs. Growing waterlilies and other exotic plants and breeding fish outside is one of her favorite summer activities. She'll share how to choose the right containers, plants and fish for a successful water garden.



We have our annual elections coming up in May. [Collin Sourdiff](#) has offered to head the nominating committee, if you are interested in running for a position, please contact him. All officers and two board members are up for re-election.

I would like to thank Steve Edie for taking the time to travel to VT and speak at all three clubs: TFCB, OVAS and MAS! Sorry if I misled anyone with his title, I got it wrong, his talk wasn't specific to Tanganyikan cichlids, but cichlids in general, but he did cover Tanganyikans. All three clubs had great turnout and all seemed to enjoy Steve's mix of humor and knowledge.

The weekend before Steve's three talks was the NEC convention in CT, so we had a bit of a fish related marathon. It was a great convention with good attendance, great speakers, lots of fun and lots of fish. There were many TFCB members there, lots of old friends and we of course met new friends too. These conventions are as much about the people as it is about the fish, and we look forward to it every year.

Much more to come too: our June meeting, a summer picnic, a fall TFCB auction and a special fall event for TFCB! And don't forget Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, is the OVAS auction in Rutland, hope many TFCB members can help support their auction!

David





# Editorial

## Photographing Fish

By Ann Whitman

I've always enjoyed taking pictures of things that interest me, so capturing good fish photos has become an important, but equally frustrating, pastime. As a longtime outdoor photographer, I'm finding that taking decent photos of moving fish under artificial light is a completely different challenge. Getting a good shot of a lovely sunset, a water droplet on a daffodil, a deer under the apple trees—even tiny insects munching my garden—is pretty simple under natural light. The scenery doesn't move much, so even a point-and-shoot camera or cell phone can do a serviceable job. Add a macro or telephoto lens and you're practically in business.



Photographing fish is a whole 'nother story! They're behind reflective glass, they move, and the lighting is tricky. Those factors haven't stopped me from trying; I've taken thousands of shots, but the results are unsatisfying. Recently, I got that message loud and clear as I scanned through all of these images, looking for something to enter in the NEC Photography Contest. I've attended the photo critique at NEC and heard what the judges look for, what makes a great fish photo. I figured with all the images in my iPhoto library, I must have something worth entering.

I was wrong. Not one single photo was in perfect focus. Okay, some were in focus, but not on the fish. The image perfectly captured the plant behind the fish or the driftwood or the airline tubing. All too often the intended subject was just a blur of movement, or blocked by photo-bombing extras. Many shots were ruined by algae or crud on the glass that I hadn't noticed before pressing the shutter. And how many "selfies" were reflected in the glass? Too many!

Learning how to photograph fish and aquariums is my resolution for this year. I've got some homework to do and some simple equipment to obtain.

- **Step One:** I already have a very good camera, but need to learn how to use all its features. Yes, I finally downloaded the 223-page manual PDF. Looks like a good bedtime read.
- **Step Two:** Add some more equipment. I need a remote flash. Using the built-in flash on the camera to shoot at glass is fine if your only intention is a selfie. A little, specialized photo tank is also in my near future. Goal? Reduce the depth of field and keep those fish from moving out of the frame!
- **Step Three:** Take lessons from the professionals among us. The web is full of helpful sites, tutorials and tips, many of which are specific to our hobby.
- **Step Four:** Practice, practice, practice! Fortunately, digital photographs cost nothing except time. And, with plenty of willing subjects to photograph, I have no excuse.

Look for results of my efforts in future issues of *In Depth*, and wish me luck!

Ann

## Speaker of the Month

### Take Your Hobby Outside for the Summer!

**Ann Whitman** keeps water gardens and successfully breeds fish in tubs on her deck and front porch. Waterlilies, exotic lotus, and other native and tropical plants make beautiful, low-maintenance summer displays. And they need less care than an aquarium, hanging basket or window box!

Breeding fish outside can be easier, too. They'll think they're on vacation when you move them into a more natural environment with sun and rain, temperature fluctuations and insect larvae.

Ann will talk about choosing containers and where to put them, how to select, plant and grow floating, submersed and marginal or "edge" plants for a healthy water environment, and which fish groups make the best candidates for tub breeding and how to do it. We'll also cover potential challenges and how to prevent them.

Ann is a horticulturist, designer and writer by trade. She's a lifelong fish hobbyist, and managed a retail fish department for seven years, back in the day. In addition to summer fish tubs, she keeps 30+ tanks of cichlids, killifish, corydoras, suckermouth catfishes, shrimp, schooling fish and other miscellaneous tropicals in the house.



Water gardens make relaxing, low-maintenance centerpieces for your deck, porch or patio. Just add fish and enjoy your hobby outdoors. Photo by Ann Whitman

# Club Meetings and Events

*by Ann Whitman*

April was a busy month. More than a dozen club members traveled to the NEC convention and auction in Connecticut. Conservation, imperiled ecosystems and native fish were hot topics. The killifish and fish tubs/water garden specialty groups also held popular mini auction events. The main auction on Sunday was huge and took over eight hours to finish. Our own well-attended TFCB meeting followed later that week, where Steve Edie gave a humorous talk on an alternative method of grouping and naming fish. The mini auction at the end of our April meeting also had more entries than any in recent memory. Lots of good fish breeding happening around our club! See [page 15](#) for more on that topic.



TFCB members at NEC: (left to right, back) Ira, Andrew, David, Collin. (Front) Gina, Oliver, Janine, Penny, Ann. Missing from group: Joan, Kristi and Collin's family.



David and Janine Banks received the well-deserved Master Breeder II award.



David minded the TFCB club table for part of Saturday afternoon where club members sold plants, shrimp, live food cultures and used equipment.

The huge Sunday auction took more than 8 hours from start to finish. Ted Coletti auctioneered for the first couple of hours. Many rare and sought-after fish exchanged hands at good prices.



# Getting Excited for the May Meeting and Water Flowers!

by Brian Candib

There is something about the May meeting occurring at both OVAS and TFCB that has me, well downright excited. It is not that we don't have exciting programs that often—we do and I am continually educated and rewarded when I attend these monthly meetings. But, the May one is different. I believe it is the one program that even has my wife, Tami, interested. She has always tolerated my basement fish room and rarely criticizes my poor organization. She even goes so far as to pitch in and help me when it comes time to clean up the room. She has the ability to feign interest in attending the NEC and, rarely, the monthly meetings. Tami has been a trooper in this regard.

**We're talking about water plants that flower. The May program even has my wife interested.**

But, back to my excitement for the May meeting. From the first time I mentioned to Tami that the May meeting would be about planting flowering waterlilies in outdoor water tubs, she was interested. It didn't seem to matter that there would also be some fish involved. That's my hobby. But, now we're talking about plants that flower. That's her hobby. This is the first meeting where she actually questioned me further about it. She was interested in the kind of tubs we could use, where we could get the waterlilies and how many to a tub. She came home a couple of different times to say we needed to go check out the outdoor tubs at Lowes and then Big Lots to see which we would like better. Where would we place them? Would they be a poolside accessory or in the driveway or out by the back shed?

After I got the water lilies from Ann's wholesale club order, and brought them home with the care instructions, we decided it best to go get the pots and then river-bottom mud to plant them in. Tami accompanied me on the trip to shovel two five-gallon buckets of muck. She helped me plant the waterlilies as well as bring them in and out of the garage daily to provide some needed sun until they are ready for the eventual (yet to be determined for sure) outdoor location. I know this is not a feigned interest because she even said we need to get another waterlily to make the plants look even and possibly more lilies to start a third container.

So, I'm excited for the May meeting because my wife is also excited, and it's probably the one meeting I will not have trouble getting her to attend. I hope we see you there, too!



Watertight bowl holds a tropical waterlily, dwarf papyrus, miniature cattail and goldfish. Photo by Ann Whitman

# *Otter Valley Aquarium Society*

## **10TH ANNUAL**

*Tropical Fish Auction & Bowl Show*

**Sunday May 15, 2016**

**Noon - 5:00 PM**

### **NEW LOCATION**

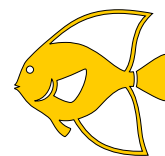
The American Legion Post #31

33 Washington Street

Rutland, VT 05701



Free Admission Door Prizes  
Viewing Lots 9:30am - 11:30am



### **Raffle**

**Aqueon QuietFlow 55/75**

**Ten Gallon Tank Setup**

**50/50**

*Silent Auction Plant Tables*

**Peoples Choice Bowl Show**

**1st Prize \$100 - 2nd \$75 - 3rd \$50**

**Please see bowl show rules on our website**

### **New this Year**

**OVAS will Auction 1 year memberships to:**

*American Livebearer Association*

*International Betta Congress*

*The North American Native Fishes Association*

**PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR AUCTION RULES**

Bowl show rules and Pre-register before May 13th and get a 60/40 split

[www.ovasociety.com](http://www.ovasociety.com)



## Quilt Raffle to Benefit Otter Valley Aquarium Society

Tickets are on sale now for a chance to win this beautiful, 45" x 65" quilt, handmade by local quilters. Proceeds will benefit OVAS. Tickets are \$2 each or \$10 for 6. Contact [Lee Scott](#) for tickets. The winning ticket will be drawn at this year's OVAS auction on May 15th. You do not need to be present to win!



## In My Travels, Minnesota

By David L. Banks, Jr, TFCB

It has been a while since I wrote an entry for “In My Travels” as I am not travelling nearly as much as I once did for work. On this trip, though, I got plenty of fish-related things in, one almost every day. This was not my first trip to Minneapolis, but it had been quite a while. In fact, I have had the chance to visit many hobbyist fishrooms in Minneapolis, attend a Minnesota Aquarium Society annual auction, and even a MAS Board meeting in past trips.

### Visit to Characin Breeder

My first after-work trip was a visit to [Randy Carey](#). I have known him for many years and have been to his fishroom several times, but it has been a few years since our paths have crossed. Randy has concentrated mainly on the barbs, tetras and danios type of fish; the egg scatterers. While some of his tanks were undergoing transformation (not being used currently), others had a variety of things you don't often see. He said he had been too busy lately to spend much time with the fish, but of course he still had fry of a few things. Mostly we just spent time catching up and chatting.



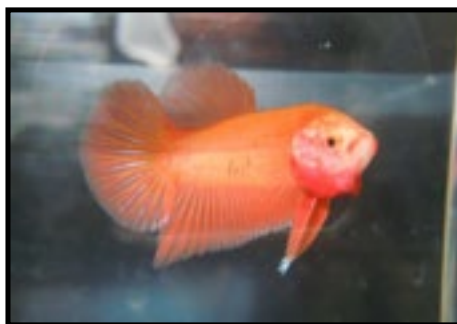
Randy Carey specializes in breeding egg-scattering species, such as the Emperor Tetra (right).



Randy keeps his sleeper goby (*Eleotris* sp.) well fed with culls.

### The Betta Mile

Just before my trip out there, I learned of three small specialty stores all very close to each other on Arcade St. in Saint Paul. They were dubbed the “betta mile” as all three stores specialized in bettas and were all on the same street and less than a mile from each other. These are very small stores, and each has their own niche. BeeJay's has very regular hours and was somewhat larger than the other two and carried more species of fish beyond bettas. The other two stores carried almost exclusively bettas and have more limited hours. Sadly, one of these shops has since closed their business. Visit if you have the chance!



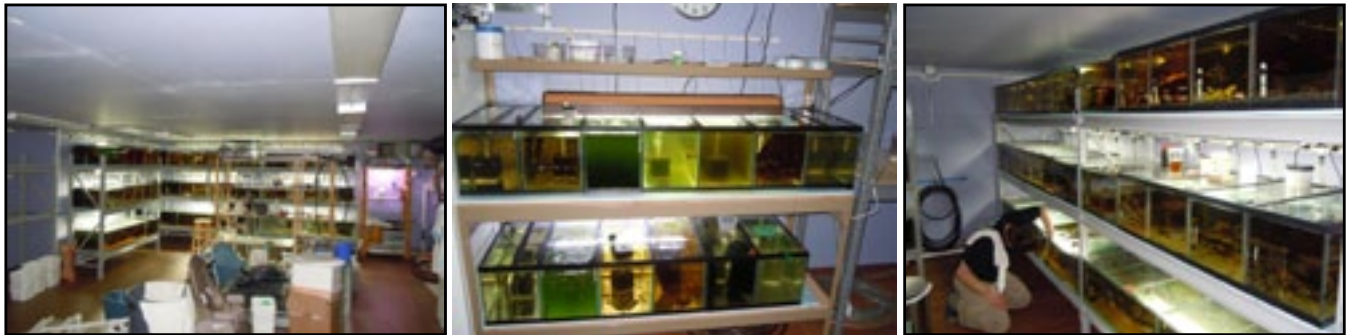
[Betta World](#) and [BeeJay's Bettas and Aquatics](#) are both located on Arcade St. in Saint Paul, MN. It's definitely worth a visit to see all the exotic and rare bettas, shrimp and other fish they offer.



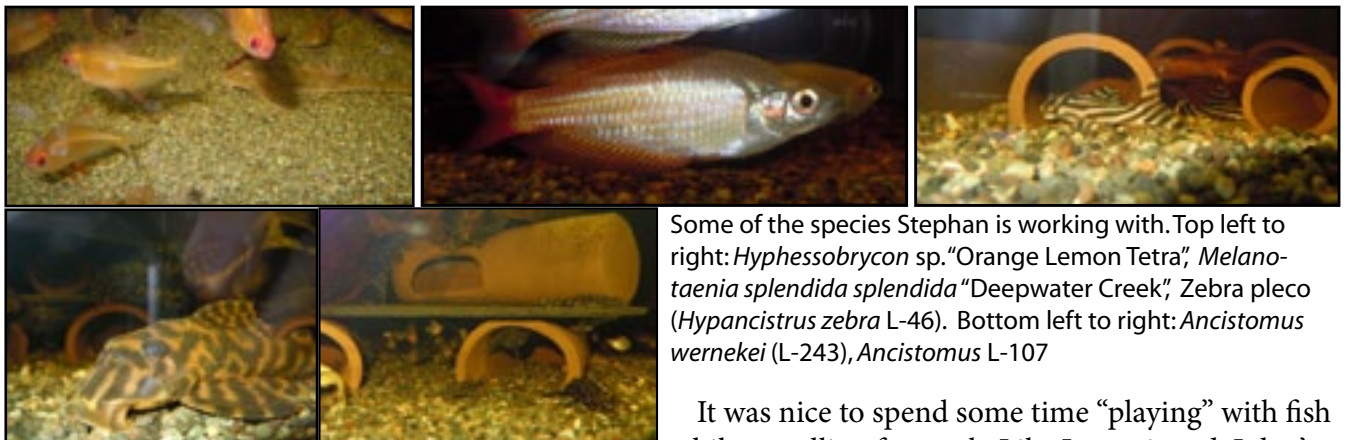


## Swiss Tropicals

Just a little over an hour south of the airport in Rochester, MN, is [Swiss Tropicals](#). Stephan Tanner has made fish his livelihood; now selling Poret foam filters, Repashy gel foods, and other specialty items for the breeder and general fish hobbyist alike. He also has a great assemblage of many very rare fish that he works with and breeds. Since it was so close, and I was flying out the day after my work had been completed, I planned to stay with Stephan that last night. He gave a quick tour of everything while his baby daughter finished her nap. We were then off to Newt's for a very fine burger and great beer choices.



After returning from dinner, we grabbed a beer and headed downstairs. His fishroom is far from complete, even over a year after moving, but it is a great start. So far, he has set up tanks for the fish he was able to bring with him in his move from Ohio to Minnesota, but has room to expand to two to three times as many tanks. The racks and plumbing and electric have all been started for the expansion; he says now all he needs is the time. We spent hours just checking out the fish, feeding and he even did a few water changes while we were there.



Some of the species Stephan is working with. Top left to right: *Hyphessobrycon* sp. "Orange Lemon Tetra", *Melanotaenia splendida splendida* "Deepwater Creek", Zebra pleco (*Hypancistrus zebra* L-46). Bottom left to right: *Ancistomus wernekei* (L-243), *Ancistomus* L-107

It was nice to spend some time "playing" with fish while travelling for work. Like I mentioned, I don't travel very often right now, and I miss being able to visit the many fish friends I have around the country, and always meet more as I go. After this trip, I'm looking forward to my next work trip now!



# The Native Fish Column

## Part 1: Why Keep Native Fish?

By Dwight D. Moody, TFCB

Native fish are wonderful fish to keep in a home aquarium. Early in the hobby, native fish were the type most commonly kept in the home aquarium, as aeration pumps and heaters were just not reliable at the time. Older aquarium books, such as Innes' *Exotic Aquarium Fish*, featured many native species. Current guide books, such as the Golden and Peterson guide books, illustrate the vast variety of native species we have, in full color photos, too.

**Some native fish have parental behaviors like the cichlid species.**

### Colors Rival Many Tropicals

There is an amazing variety of native fish species that can be kept in a home aquarium, and many of the darters and southern minnows are just as colorful as many tropical species. Our various native species are highly sought after by hobbyists in Europe, who are willing to pay upwards of \$100 a pair for some of the fish you can easily get here for free or at much less cost.

### Hardy and Easy to Keep

Unlike many tropical fish, many native fish have wide temperature tolerances, which means you may not need to use a heater to keep them comfortable and happy. Many species have fascinating behaviors and are just as easy to keep as many tropical species. Many of the colorful US minnow species take flake food with gusto! In addition, some US species can take water conditions that would certainly kill tropicals. The Central Mudminnow, for example, can take being in an aquarium with ice on the surface and can live in extremely polluted water that would kill most other fish, so it is the perfect choice for the hobbyist who wants a "tough as nails" fish.

Say you live in an area where you have occasional (or frequent) power outages. Unless you have a wood stove or other form of heat, your fish are going to get cold if the power goes out in the winter. For many tropical species, having your aquarium get down to 60 degrees or even 50 degrees is a death sentence. On the other hand, for many native species, this is not a problem as they are used to wide temperature variations in their native waters. The reverse is also true, I have lost a lot of tropical fish over the years due to my water getting too warm in the summer, especially during power outages. For many native species, water in the low to mid 80's is not a problem.

### Fascinating Breeding Behavior

Another good reason to keep native fish is, that for many species, little is known about them and some may not have ever been bred in captivity, so there is an opportunity to advance scientific knowledge and be the first person to propagate a species. Some have interesting behaviors in the wild, as some species lay their eggs in the nests of other fish, some create nests out of vegetation, others make nests out of piles of pebbles. We have native fish that have parental behaviors like the cichlid species, egg-layer species that have a wide variety of spawning habits. The US also has several species of live-bearing fish that range from one of the world's smallest livebearers, the Least Livebearer (*Heterandria formosa*), which is less than an inch long, to the wild Sailfin Molly (*Poecilia latipinna*) which may grow to over 4 inches long.

The Least Livebearer, some of the small Southern killifish or pygmy sunfish can be perfect for a small desktop aquarium.

### Collecting Native Fish

Obtaining native fish can be as simple as setting out a minnow trap, although bait regulations in Vermont can be particularly troublesome. Actually, Vermont allows you to capture bait fish with a fishing license, they just can't be transported by car. I suggest getting a Scientific Collection Permit from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department if you want to collect your own fish in Vermont. If you want to keep native fish in Vermont, buying them online may be a better option.



Banded Topminnow (*Fundulus cingulatus*) is native to the Florida Panhandle and surrounding States. This peaceful, orange community fish reaches about 2" and is easy to spawn in the aquarium. Photo by Ann Whitman

You can also get fish by collecting when you are visiting another state (Florida has an amazing variety of fish that are easily available for people to collect), as long as you follow regulations and buy a fishing license. Another way to get native species, which I would recommend as a better choice, is to check the Native Fish Species listing on [Aquabid](#). Collectors and breeders from various parts of the country will send you native species of aquarium fish by mail, some may be wild-caught, but others have been propagated in home aquarium systems, so you can have them delivered right to your door. You may also be able to get them at various aquarium club auctions and at the monthly meetings of the Tropical Fish Club of Burlington, from members who are currently breeding native species

(like me), and may have extra stock to auction off at the end of the meeting.

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## Native Fish Resource: NANFA

If you've got "fish collecting" on your bucket list, you don't have to spend big bucks on travel to far away destinations (although that's fun, too). You can start right here at home and find some of the most colorful and interesting fish anywhere. Not sure where to start? Go the North American Native Fishes Association site and poke around to get inspired and see what may be in the brook, lake or pond in your own backyard.

[NANFA](#) maintains a deep, thorough, information-rich website, has an active member [forum](#), and publishes a highly regarded quarterly magazine, [American Currents](#). They are dedicated to the appreciation, study and conservation of the continent's native fishes. Web features include:

- [detailed articles](#) on captive care,
- a [species checklist](#) with endangered/threatened status,
- [photo gallery](#),
- an amazing [fish map](#) that allows you to find local species by typing in your zip code, or the native habitat of fish by searching on its name, and
- links to even [more information](#).

Their [annual conference](#), complete with fish-collecting trips, is being held in Portsmouth, NH, this year. Mark your calendar and plan to attend the June 9-12 event!

# Hobby History

## Aquarium Hobby Historical Society of America (AHHS)

*By David L. Banks, Jr.*

The group was started by Ted Coletti, from NJ, in 2002, and has many members with firsthand knowledge of the hobby's historical events, from the heyday of the aquarium hobby to present. Like in any group, we have lulls and periods of extensive conversation. Many members have uploaded files for viewing by other members. Al Klee, the author of the *Toy Fish, The First Hundred Years* and many other articles, has uploaded a tremendous amount of material to the AHHS website.

The AHHS has two separate resources, the Aquarium Hobby Historical Society of America [Facebook group](#) with 453 current members and the [Yahoo group](#) with 193 members.

This description is from the Facebook group first pinned post from Feb 2015:

“Established in 2002, the Aquarium Hobby Historical Society of America (AHHS) is a fellowship of collectors and amateur historians of the US & global aquarium hobby. Our goal is to reminisce, exchange ideas, educate, and archive hobby history through message postings and file uploads. Trading posts are also welcomed. While our group tends to skew towards North American hobby trends shared in English, we welcome hobbyists from around the Globe! Active members have included several of the U.S. hobby's legends from the 1940's onward, including Rosario LaCorte, Al Klee, Wayne Leibel, Jim Langhammer, Lee Finley, and Alan Fletcher among others.

Our first site is on [Yahoo Groups](#) where we have archived thousands of discussions and dozens of white papers and images on the history of the aquarium hobby for keyword and file searching. As an AHHS member, we encourage you to access and search BOTH portals - and to add YOUR OWN files. Both are “closed” groups whose content is only open to AHHS members, and all new members must be approved by the AHHS Admin.”

As you can also see by the number of members, and since it is our way of sharing today, Facebook has seen much more activity lately than the Yahoo group, but both offer a great way to visit the past.

The early Yahoo group messages are all available and searchable; you could spend weeks going thru these and finding all kinds of interesting tidbits of history around our hobby. Although the Facebook page doesn't have searchable features, its format makes it far easier to include pictures and images, so it's full of things not found in the Yahoo group.

If you are at all interested in the history of our aquarium hobby, I strongly recommend joining AHHS and checking both of these related, but separate, resources.



# Nursery News

## What's Happening in TFCB Tanks

By Ann Whitman

TFCB members are raising next generations of fish! Take credit for your successes and let others know what you've got. Send [me](#) your current list of fry and juveniles and I'll post them here. It's a great way to get to know your fellow hobbyists' interests and find sources of information and locally bred fish.

### Dwight Moody

- Everglades Pygmy Sunfish (*Elassoma evergladi*)
- Tequila Splitfin (Endangered) (*Zoogeneticus tequila*)
- Dusky Splitfin (Endangered) (*Goodea gracilis*)
- Melanistic Eastern Mosquitofish (*Gambusia holbrooki*, var. melanistic)
- Salt and Pepper Cory (*Corydoras paleatus*)
- Blue-Tailed Goodeid (Endangered) (*Ataeniobius toweri*)
- Honey Gourami (*Trichogaster chuna*)
- Tiger Teddies (*Neoheterandria elegans*)
- Least Livebearer (*Heterandria formosa*)
- White Cloud Mountain Minnows (*Tanichthys albonubes*)

### Ann Whitman

- *Pelvicachromis taeniatus* Lokoundje
- *Apistogramma cacatuoides* Triple Red
- Angelfish, Philippine Blue types
- Guppies, various
- Pygmy Corydoras (*Corydoras pygmaeus*)
- Bushynose plecostomus, super red, calico, brown and albino (*Ancistrus* sp.)
- *Aphyosemion campomaanense* ABK 07/181
- *Epiplatys fasciolatus fasciolatus*
- *Epiplatys roloffii* (Endangered)
- Banded Topminnow (*Fundulus cingulatus*)
- *Fundulopanchax gardneri* Innidere
- *Fundulopanchax scheeli* (Endangered)
- Featherfin Pearlfish (*Simpsonichthys constanciae*)
- Fire Red cherry shrimp

- Red Rilli shrimp
- Crystal Red shrimp

### Terrence Delaney

- *Synodontis petricola*

### David Banks

- *Synodontis petricola*
- Ancistrus / Albino Ancistrus
- *Hypancistrus* L236
- *Pundamilia nyerrerei* Ruti Island
- *Cryptoheros nanoluteus*
- Southern Egyptian Mouthbrooder (*Pseudocrenilebrus victoriae*)
- Redhump Geophagus (*Geophagus steindachneri*)
- Barred Splitfin *Chapalichthys encaustus*
- Shortfin Molly (*Poecilia mexicana*)
- Tequila Splitfin (Endangered) *Zoogeneticus tequila*
- *Epiplatys singa*
- Popondetta Blue-eye Rainbow (*Pseudomugil connieae*)
- Red cherry shrimp

### Brian Candib

- Ancistrus
- Butterfly Splitfin (Extinct in the wild) (*Ameca splendens*)
- Guppies

continued on next page

### Collin Sourdiff

- Yellow Labs (*Labidochromis*)
- *Jacobfreibergi alunocara* (Hansbaeschi)
- Dragon Blood Peacocks (*Aulonocara*)
- Guppies—Nebula Steel, Blue Mosaic, Yellow Leopardskin, Purple Mosaic
- Bristlenose Pleco, brown and albino (*Ancistrus cirrhosus*)
- Pidgeonblood Checkerboard Discus (*Symphysodon* sp.)
- Veil Tail Angelfish
- Marble Philippine Blue Angelfish
- Cherry Shrimp (*Neocaridina davidi*)

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## Submit Your Stories, Columns, DIY Projects, Photos and Illustrations

To increase newsletter contributions, the Board created an incentive program. Beginning with the February 2016 newsletter, each submission will earn one raffle ticket.

- A submission is defined as an original, stand-alone photograph or illustration, an article or column.
- A column or article that is submitted with original, supporting photos or illustrations will earn two tickets.

The submissions must be published to earn the tickets. At the June 2016 meeting, six tickets will be drawn. In subsequent years, ten tickets will be drawn at the June meeting.

Each winning ticket is worth \$20 in TFCB bucks that can be redeemed for membership dues or used at auctions and events for which the club charges a fee.

Send submissions to Ann Whitman at [awhitman@madriver.com](mailto:awhitman@madriver.com) by the last day of the month for inclusion in the following month's *In Depth* newsletter.

# “Wow!”



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**CORAL**

Volume 12, Number 5  
Sep/Oct 2015

**AMAZONAS**

Volume 4, Number 5  
Sep/Oct 2015

## Don't miss a single issue!

# Breeding Endangered Dusky Splitfin (*Goodea gracilis*) and Tequila Splitfin (*Zoogoneticus tequila*)

By Dwight D. Moody, TFCB

Goodeids are live-bearing fish that have a placenta-like structure that provides oxygen and nourishment to the growing fry, much like a mammalian placenta. As a result, goodeids tend to have just a few fry, but the fry are much larger. Due to the larger size of the fry, the mother keeps them for a lot longer and may only have a few groups of offspring a year, numbering 5 to 30, unlike many live bearers which have a new brood every month and may birth dozens or hundreds of fry at a time. Native to the highlands of Mexico, most Goodeid species are in trouble due to pollution, habitat destruction and other factors. Many are threatened or critically endangered in the wild, so captive breeding may be the only way some of these species survive. Aquarists can play an important role in preventing the extinction of these and other endangered fish species.

I obtained a pair of *Goodea gracilis* from a vendor on [AquaBid](#). Both males and females have blue iridescent sides with orange fins. I obtained my *Zoogoneticus tequila* at the OVAS auction in Rutland, VT, last year. Males are black with an orange-bordered tail fin, females have a brown mottled pattern with a few golden scales. Each species was put into its own ten gallon tank with aragonite substrate to keep the pH high. In their native habitat, the pH range is 7.0 to 7.8. I also added a large quantity of Guppy Grass (*Najas*). Each tank was equipped with a corner bubble filter with activated charcoal and filter floss. Fish were fed daphnia, newly hatched brine shrimp, frozen bloodworms (Hikari brand, highly recommended) and TetraFlake prepared food. Algae was never a problem as these fish love it, and appreciate getting a big ball of it from another tank so they can graze on it.

Propagation was slow, but this is normal with Goodeids. As they do not bother their fry, population growth was steady. Currently, each tank has a significant population, so I added a power filter to each tank to ensure adequate aeration and water quality. In the near future, I'll move each population to a larger tank, at least 20 gallons, to provide plenty of space and swimming room to encourage growth. Full grown adults can range from 2" for the Tequila Splitfin to over 4" for the Dusky Splitfin.

I have started to bring some pairs to the TFCB auction to share with others as both species are listed as critically endangered in the wild. I also have obtained some Blue-Tailed Goodeids (*Ataeniobius toweri*), also known as Blue-Tailed Splitfins, and also endangered in the wild, which I got from an AquaBid vendor and which I hope to propagate and share in the near future.

For more information:

- [Goodeid Working Group](#)
- [Tequila Splitfin](#)
- [Dusky Splitfin](#)
- [The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#)



# Fish Happen

by Brian Candib

I should not be considered any kind of a purposeful fish breeder. I believe that in many of my tanks, a certain amount of propagation may be happening, but what happens to many of those offspring is something I never really like to think about. Oh sure, there is the obvious surprise when I find a baby Molly or Platy swimming around in a community tank. Of no surprise is the never ending baby Guppies that just appear on a weekly basis.

At one time, I made a deliberate attempt to successfully breed my Albino Cory Catfish (I had three at the time), but I managed to frighten the parents when separating the fry that instantly turned into a race to remove the parents before they could eat all of the little buggers (they are extremely fast). So, while breeding fish may come to others easily, for me it is like trying to navigate the rapids of the White River on an inner tube and hoping I do not get hung up on the rocks in the process.

That said, I have found a certain amount of satisfaction in just letting the fish be fish in two specific cases. The first is a tank specifically for my Ancistrus. It's a 10-gallon tank and they are the only inhabitants. I provide enough caves, broken pots and plants, as well as a chunk of drift wood, for them to thrive in. They do their thing and my only thing is to remove young ones from time to time and spread them around to my other tanks in the fish room or give them to others, as needed. I also took a couple of them to work to cleanup my dirty looking fish bowl, which has done wonders and gotten a lot of compliments from coworkers.

The second case is my 30-gallon bow front tank in which I have many Butterfly Splitfin (*Ameca splendens*) living. The nice, or should I say, easy thing about them is that they are live bearers. So, having baby fish come out a fairly good size kind of takes the pressure off. I just let them thrive among the loads of plants (Java Fern, Java Moss and Anubias) and nature does the rest. I am proud of doing what I can to help that species as they are a critically endangered fish. I feel strongly we all should have at least one tank devoted to propagating a [CARES-listed fish](#), and to promoting this idea to as many of our fellow hobbyists as we can.

I wish I could say that I am instrumental in the propagation of fish breeding and raising but, alas, in my fish room the motto is, fish happen.



Before and After. A water change and a couple of small bushynose plecos turned Brian's desktop bowl around and earned him some compliments from coworkers.



*Ameca splendens*, A CARES-listed species, reproduces in Brian's planted bow front aquarium. Photos by Brian Candib.

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

- May 10 [OVAS meeting](#), Ann Whitman speaking on outdoor fish and water gardens, 7:00 Maclure Public Library, Pittsford, VT
- May 12 [TFCB meeting](#), Ann Whitman speaking on outdoor fish and water gardens, 6:30, VFW, Essex Jct, VT
- May 13 [Brooklyn Aquarium Society](#) (BASNY), Giant Spring Auction, NY Aquarium
- May 14 - 15 [South Jersey Guppy Group](#), IFGA Sanctioned Show & Auction, Griggstown, NJ
- May 15 [OVAS Auction](#), registration at 9:30, auction at noon, new location! American Legion Post #31, Rutland, VT
- May 15 [Greater Hartford Aquarium Society](#), Auction, Windsor Locks, CT
- May 20-22 [Canadian Association of Aquarium Clubs](#) convention, East London, Ontario, CA
- May 27- 29 [American Killifish Assoc. Convention](#) (AKA), Denver, CO
- June 7 [OVAS meeting](#), Carolyn Estes speaker, 7:00, Maclure Library, Pittsford, VT
- June 9-12 [North American Native Fishes Assoc.](#) convention, Portsmouth, NH
- June 9 [TFCB meeting](#), Carolyn Estes speaker, 6:30, VFW, Essex Jct, VT
- July 7-10 [American Cichlid Assoc. Convention](#) (ACA), Cincinnati, OH
- July 9 [Pioneer Valley Water Garden & Koi Club](#) pond tour, Western MA
- August 21 [NEC Summer Auction](#), Westport, CT
- Sept 8 [TFCB meeting](#), 6:30, VFW, Essex Jct, VT
- Oct 9 [North Jersey Aquarium Society](#) fall auction
- Oct 13 - 16 [All Aquarium Catfish Convention](#) (CatCon), Hyatt Dulles, Herndon, VA
- Oct 30 [TFCB annual auction](#)
- Nov 4 - 6 [Aquatic Experience](#), Schaumburg, IL
- Nov 6 [Boston Aquarium Society](#) 100th Anniversary show and auction



# Fun and Games

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Photo by David Banks

BICOLOR  
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