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Titelbild:

Corydoras tukano, Aistogramma panduro, Nannostomus mortenthaleri, Otocinclus cocama

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Fish

Corydoras pulcher & Co.

by von Roman Neunkirchen

The season for some of the loveliest mailed catfishes has begun. They include a group of attractively black-striped *Corydoras* that possess a cream-colored dorsal-fin spine.



Corydoras cf. pulcher, specimen with dots.

all photos: F. Schäfer

The first species with this color combination, and one that is well known to aquarists, is *Corydoras pulcher* from the system of the Rio Purus in Brazil. Although the additional species of the *C. pulcher* type discussed here are very similar in coloration, that doesn't mean that they are also closely related to one another.

Beware, poison!

The striking coloration of these mailed catfishes can perhaps be interpreted as warning coloration. But these mailed catfishes are no more likely than other mailed catfishes to harm other fishes. It is in large part their proverbial peaceful nature that makes the mailed catfishes so popular as aquarium fishes. Their very solid bony armor and the hooked, pointed spines of the pectoral and dorsal fins protect these little catfishes very effectively from potential predators, but nevertheless at least

Corydoras cf. pulcher, striped specimen.



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two groups of mailed catfishes have evolved an additional defensive weapon: poison. Some species, externally readily recognizable by the possession of orange pectoral-fin spines, can cause a severe burning pain if you "spike" yourself on them. They include *Corydoras sterbai*, for example. This readily explains why this fish is significantly more popular with aquarists than with the staff in aquarium trade...

The other group of poison-producers are the *Corydoras pulcher*-like species. If they are in transit for a long time then the water begins to foam and develops a strange smell. This can even result in the mailed catfishes dying! So if these mailed catfishes are going to be in transit for any length of time, the transportation water

Corydoras sp. CW 28



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Foto: A. Fischer

needs to be changed several times prior to dispatch and then some activated carbon added in order to avoid poisoning. But again these *Corydoras* do not pose any threat to other fishes in the aquarium.

High fins

The *Corydoras pulcher*-like species have another characteristic in common in addition to their attractive color pattern. At breeding time the first soft dorsal-fin ray in males develops a threadlike extension. However, the scientifically undescribed C 133 exhibits this phenomenon to only a limited degree.

Maintenance in the aquarium

The maintenance of all *Corydoras pulcher*-like species is easy and accords with "standard" mailed catfish procedure. In

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C 133, male above, female below.



other words, at least part of the substrate should consist of fine sand and these sociable little fishes should always be kept in a troop of five individuals or more. The water should be soft and slightly acid, the temperature in the 24-28 °C range. They will eat all the usual fish foods, and should be fed generously. They are particularly fond of *Tubifex*. Breeding these forms isn't

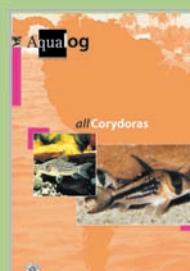
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Male *Corydoras* sp. C141.

very easy, but is fundamentally possible. In the event that these fishes can be induced to spawn at all – prerequisites are simulation of a dry period followed by frequent water changes – then their spawning behavior is similar to that of all other mailed catfishes.

The species

In addition to the species that gives the group its name, *Corydoras pulcher*, the group also contains *C. cf. pulcher*, which is very variably patterned but otherwise resembles *C. pulcher* (both species grow to around 6 cm long); the little C 133 (4-5 cm), which is often confused with *C. schwartzi* but has a cream-colored dorsal-fin spine (colorless or gray in *C. schwartzi*); C 141 (5-6 cm), which is often confused with *C. ornatus* (C 141 can also be reliably recognized by the cream-colored dorsal-fin spine); and the splendid CW 28 (6-7 cm). All these species come from Brazil.



Corydora pulcher, male.

Lexicon

Mailed catfishes

Corydoras: from the ancient Greek, meaning “with helmet and lance”, referring to the external bony armor and the powerful fin spines.

pulcher: Latin, meaning “beautiful”

schwartzi: dedication in honor of Willy Schwartz, an ornamental-fish exporter from Brazil

C-numbers: numbers assigned by the magazine DATZ in order to catalogue mailed catfishes available in the trade but impossible to determine scientifically.

CW-numbers: numbers assigned by Ian Fuller since DATZ stopped assigning C-numbers (see www.ianfuller.com)

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Marine

Gorgeous gobies

by Matthias Reising

The gobies are the most species-rich group of fishes in the world. The vast majority of species live in the sea, but there are also numerous freshwater species. The gobies also include some of the smallest fishes on Earth, and the majority of species remain smaller than 10 cm. The gobies discussed here belong to the wormfishes (Microdesmidae) and the true gobies (Gobiidae), and they are among the most beautiful of all aquarium fishes.



Nemateleotris magnifica

all photos: Frank Schäfer



Nemateleotris decora

The firefish genus (*Nemateleotris*) contains three species and is widespread in the Indo-Pacific. The Fire Goby (*N. magnifica*) has the widest distribution and is also found in the shallowest water of the three species (from 8 m of depth) and is extraordinarily common. Hence these gorgeous fishes, which grow to around 8 cm long, are almost permanently available in the trade, often in large numbers. But you shouldn't be misled by the peaceful co-existence of these fishes in the dealer's tank. This happens only under the relatively bare, overpopulated conditions found in such aquaria, where the fishes abandon their territorial behavior – a



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phenomenon also known from numerous other fishes. In normal-sized tanks with normal décor they should be kept only singly or in pairs, with the latter always the preferred method, as then you will be able to observe the entire behavioral spectrum of these lovely fishes – which is, after all, the main point of the aquarium hobby.

Sexual dimorphism

This, of course, leads us to the question of how to tell the sexes apart. Unfortunately the answer is, you can't, at least not with certainty. There are, however, two tried and tested ways of obtaining a pair. Firstly, buy two individuals of as different a size as possible. Secondly, buy a group of the youngest individuals possible (no larger than 4 cm) and allow a pair to form



Nematoleotris helfrichi

naturally. The surplus specimens must then be removed, though.

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Lexicon

Gobies

Nemateleotris means "Eleotris with threads". Eleotris is another goby genus
decora means "decorated" or "ornate"
helfrichi: dedication name
magnifica means "magnificent"
Lotilia: etymology unknown
graciliosa means "very graceful"
Alpheus: a river god in Greek mythology
rubromaculatus means "red-spotted"

Other species

The other two species of the genus, the Elegant Firefish, *N. decora*, and Helfrich's Firefish, *N. helfrichi*, are not quite as widely

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tightly. These gobies do not harm invertebrates.

Breeding

Firefishes are short-lived fishes that live to around two years old in the aquarium, but, obviously, rarely attain this age in the wild. These fishes spawn in caves and it is thought that the spawn is guarded, but there have been no actual observations to confirm this. The larvae are pelagic, and to date there have been no reports of successful breeding.

Symbiotic gobies

The tiny (barely 4 cm long), very rarely imported species *Lotilia graciliosa* belongs to a totally different family, namely the true gobies (Gobiidae). The genus *Lotilia* is monotypic, in other words it contains just

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distributed and live mainly at greater depths (around 30 m). Hence they are less common in the trade and more expensive than the Fire Goby. However, their maintenance (in pairs) doesn't differ from that of the Fire Goby.

Feeding

All firefishes are plankton-feeders and hence will enjoy any of the usual fish foods. They usually swim in pairs above a cave, into which they retreat when any presumed danger threatens.

Firefishes are rather nervous and will generally jump out of the aquarium in their panic, so the tank must be covered



this one species, which is distributed in the Red Sea and Western Pacific. This little goby has been imported only extremely rarely, and the same applies, only even more so, to its partner crustacean, the pistol shrimp *Alpheus rubromaculatus*.

There are a relatively large number of species of symbiotic gobies. They live in caves excavated by the shrimp with which they live in symbiosis. In return for the digging work, the gobies protect their almost blind shrimp against potential predators. The interesting thing about this is that every symbiotic goby species lives only with its own specific shrimp species. In theory both goby and shrimp are also capable of living alone, but the fact that this fascinating mode of behavior has apparently developed so frequently via parallel evolution demonstrates that it is very obviously a successful model for survival.

Despite the high prices charged for these little jewels, I can only recommend that you grab them whenever they are available. The maintenance of these oddly-matched teams isn't difficult, but sufficient depth of substrate should be provided for them to carry out their digging activities. Feeding is no problem, as both goby and shrimp will readily accept all the usual foods. Ideally these little creatures should have an aquarium of their own, and it doesn't need to be all



Lotilia graciliosa is very rarely imported and correspondingly expensive.

that large. In such an aquarium the creatures can be observed undisturbed. fascinating behavior of these lovely



Alpheus rubromaculatus, which lives in symbiosis with *Lotilia graciliosa*.

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Focus on Black Sailfins

by John Dawes

I have to admit that, despite my many years in aquarium and pond keeping, and despite the countless thousands of fish I've kept and bred during this time, I'm still particularly impressed whenever I see really good specimens of some of the old favourites.



This splendid male is a hybrid between *Poecilia latipinna* and *P. velifera*.

all photos: Frank Schäfer

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High on the list of these is that stalwart of the freshwater community aquarium, the short-finned black molly (*Poecilia sphenops*), first introduced into Europe just over 100 years ago. In really good specimens, the jet black body has a velvet-like lustre that is magnificent to behold. Sadly, far too many of the mollies (black or otherwise) we see in aquaria fail to live up to this high standard. The same goes for the sailfin species (usually *P. latipinna* and *P. velifera*) or their hybrids, or the numerous varieties developed from these, including those impressive fish exhibiting beautifully velvet-black bodies and a red-edged dorsal fin (which, today, is more often orange or yellow).

Despite their popularity within the hobby,

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many people experience problems with these mollies. How can this be so if, during visits to molly breeders and exporters, the specimens you see are in great condition, with sailfin males incessantly displaying to each other with fully expanded dorsals, and with alert, blemish-free fish in every tank?

Sailfins in the wild are also active, bustling fish which occur in shoals, where males are constantly displaying towards rivals and chasing females. I still vividly remember such a scene during a visit I made to an estuarine river in Florida that was packed with *P. latipinna*. Those fish were spectacular, to put it mildly. They were also robust fish which were, clearly, in peak physical condition.

The fact is that sailfin mollies are tough fish. This may sound a little strange, given the difficulties that many aquarists experience with them, but it is perfectly true. The only proviso is that they must be kept under appropriate conditions for them to remain healthy and robust. This is where most people go wrong.

So...who's to blame for this?

Actually, we can't point the finger at anyone in particular. It's a combination of factors that contribute to the demise of so many aquarium sailfins. One of the most common is that these fish are frequently regarded as good community fish. They are certainly mild-tempered enough for this, but their requirements in terms of water chemistry are not compatible with most home community aquarium set-ups.

Most sailfin mollies require medium-hard to hard water, temperatures around 25-28°C, vegetable in their diet and...very importantly...some salt dissolved in the water (about one teaspoonful per 4.5 litres or so). The reason for the salt is that both sailfin species are often found in brackish water habitats in the wild; some are even found in marine conditions. Further, most commercially-bred sailfins, especially in some Asian countries like

Malaysia, are kept and bred under brackish conditions, either in outdoor or indoor ponds/tanks. Although I have witnessed this myself many times, I

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True Midnight Mollies with a red, orange, or yellow dorsal-fin edging are hardly ever seen in the trade. This is a specimen of *P. latipinna* from a fish farm in Singapore.

checked with some of my friends and colleagues during the preparation of this article and they all confirmed my observations (see Acknowledgements). In Singapore, though, many sailfins are bred in freshwater indoor concrete tanks/ponds.

These methods of breeding and rearing sailfin mollies mean that such fish must either be kept under similar conditions in home aquaria (depending on their origin) or must be acclimatised very carefully to other conditions. Maintained/adapted properly, sailfins are active, delightful,

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robust fish. However, when kept under inappropriate conditions, they will often waste away, contract disease and eventually die.

Turning, more specifically, to the black varieties, there are three main types: the short-finned black molly (*P. sphenops*), the black balloon molly (of varying parentage and finnage, e.g. lyretail) and the sailfin mollies which, again, may exhibit finnage differences. Although all these black mollies are sometimes referred to as midnight mollies, owing to their dark coloration, the term is more frequently

applied to black sailfins with yellow/orange/red dorsal fin edges; these fish are also – though much less frequently – referred to as moonfish mollies.

Among the pure wild-type (note the emphasis) sailfins encountered in the hobby, we mainly find specimens of *P. latipinna* – the sailfin molly, and *P. velifera* – the Yucatán, giant sailfin or (again) sailfin molly. It is quite difficult to distinguish between the two without a detailed examination, though. Such close study will reveal, for example, that *P. velifera* males

Lexicon

Sailfin Mollies

Poecilia: from Ancient Greek, meaning “the colorful one, the manifold one”

latipinna: Latin meaning “broad-finned”

petenensis means “of Peten”, referring to the type locality, Lake Peten in Central America

sphenops: from Ancient Greek, meaning “with a pointed head”

velifera: Latin meaning “bearing a sail”



Black Mollies are best not bred together, but with mottled specimens, as this improves the vitality of the fishes.

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have 18-19 dorsal fin rays, while those of *P. latipinna* have around 14. Most notably, *P. velifera* males can stretch their dorsal fin at an angle of 100-110 °, while *P. latipinna* males can only manage 60-70%. *P. velifera* males can also grow larger (up to 15cm). Both *P. velifera* and *P. latipinna* males can exhibit the above-mentioned orange, yellow, or red margin to the dorsal, so this can't be used as a definitive distinguishing characteristic.

The commercially-bred black (again, note the emphasis) sailfins found in the hobby can belong to either species, their hybrids (in which case, they may exhibit intermediate traits in terms of dorsal fin ray counts and angle), or hybrids between one or other of these species and other mollies – usually *P. sphenops*, but also

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Am 04.12.2011 in den Emslandhallen in Lingen
Am 17.12.2011 in der Rübekamphalle in Pinneberg
www.terraxotica-germany.de



(according to some reports) *P. petenensis*, the Petén molly, which may have been involved in crosses some 70 or so years ago.

We therefore have a situation with today's black sailfins somewhat similar to the one that applies to platies and swordtails in that many of the fish we have in our tanks

are fertile hybrids whose exact parentage is often difficult to determine. Nonetheless, they remain as popular today as they've always been...and are likely to remain so well into the future.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following gentlemen for their willingness to share

their knowledge and views with me during the preparation of this article:

- Dr. Alex Ploeg – Secretary General of Ornamental Fish International (OFI)
- Dr. Gerald Bassleer – President - OFI, and proprietor of Bassleer Biofish, Belgium
- Dr. Ling Kai Huat – Ornamental Fish Specialist at the Agri-food and Veterinary Authority, Singapore

Schlangen

Europe's holy snake

by Thorsten Holtmann

Aesculapius was the god of healing, or more accurately a demigod, as he was fathered by the god Apollo on the mortal Coronis. Hence Aesculapius was himself mortal and was eventually killed by Zeus, the mightiest of the gods, because he perfected healing to such an extent that he brought a dead person back to life, thereby arousing the anger of the gods.



Juveniles of the Aesculapian Snake have contrast-rich patterning, especially on the head.



Aesculapius is always portrayed as a bearded man bearing a staff, which in turn has a snake winding round it. Even today the staff of Aesculapius remains the symbol of the medical profession. Naturally it is impossible to say precisely what species the snake winding round the staff is. But there are comparatively few snake species in Europe that climb regularly. One of these is the Aesculapian Snake, *Elaphe* (or *Zamenis*) *longissima*, which hence has become linked with the god of healing. But its scientific name means nothing of the sort, but simply "the longest". Laurenti, who gave the snake its Latin name, probably didn't believe in the cult...

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Portrait of an adult Aesculapian Snake.

all photos: Frank Schäfer

Snake or worm?

The interpretation of the staff of Aesculapius is, however, not undisputed. Although there is no doubt that the cult of Aesculapius existed in the Mediterranean area, and it is also known for certain that snakes were kept in the temples and the peaceful, non-venomous, and slow-to-bite Aesculapian Snake was surely among them, there is also a completely different explanation for the staff.

There is a horrible parasite of humans known as the Medina Worm (*Dracunculus medinæ*). Humans can become infected if they drink unfiltered water and thus swallow the small copepods (*Cyclops*, etc) that are intermediate hosts for the Medina Worm. Once swallowed, the worm larva hatches in the stomach of the human, bores

through the intestinal wall, and migrates into the body cavity. Here the male, which is only 3 cm long, mates with the up to 120 cm long female and then dies. The human body encapsulates it and it poses no danger. But the female migrates through the tissue of the afflicted person and heads for an area where the victim comes into contact with water, where she causes a pigeon-sized "boil". If the area comes into contact with water, the thin skin covering the top of the boil bursts and the female protrudes the end of her body and releases hundreds of larvae into the water, where they parasitize Cyclops – and the cycle is complete.

The removal of the worm is possible only by fixing the end of the female's body to a stick and carefully winding it round the latter – no more than 10 cm per day. If the worm

ruptures, dangerous infection may follow. The removal of the worm (which is virtually extinct today, but was widespread in the Mediterranean area – Egypt, for example – in historic times) was reserved for specialists. The theory that these specialists used a rod with a worm wound round it as the emblem of their profession, and that subsequently this symbol was metamorphosed into the staff and snake in Greece (where the Medina Worm didn't occur), is at least plausible.

Aesculapian Snakes in the terrarium

This splendid, up to 2 meters long, snake is



Aesculapian Snakes lurk in bushes in this posture, lying in wait for birds.



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Lexicon

Aesculapian Snake

Elaphe: the Greek word elaphos means "deer"
Zamenis: an ancient snake name
longissima: Latin meaning "longest"



an ideal terrarium occupant, whose maintenance can also be warmly recommended to beginners. It can be fed on mice. The terrarium for Aesculapian Snakes should be tall and contain plenty of branches for climbing. The Aesculapian Snake isn't sensitive to temperature (it occurs even in Germany) and doesn't require a lot of warmth. A daytime temperature of 20-24°C and a heat lamp will be completely adequate, but it is essential to make sure the snake can't wind itself round the lamp and suffer serious burns as a result.

If you are now filled with the desire to keep Aesculapian Snakes then your pet dealer can undoubtedly order them for you from a wholesaler of his acquaintance, for example from Tropenparadies in Oberhausen, Fax +49 208-665997.



Aesculapian Snakes are exceptionally good climbers.



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Aistogramma panduro

by Karl Lang

The first 12 issues of AQUALOG News appeared in a single bilingual version from November 1996 to October 1997, following the appearance of a test issue in May 1996 at the Interzoo. The very first regular issue portrayed a real stunner, *Aistogramma panduro*, which had just been imported for the first time.

Displaying male, *Apistogramma panduro*.

photo: Dieter Bork

At that time the species was as yet not scientifically described – that took place in the following year. Back then Karl Lang (unfortunately now deceased) reported on this spectacular fish in the News as follows:

On 24.06.1996 I obtained three pairs of a dwarf cichlid from Aquarium Glaser. The species had just been imported for the first

time under the trade name *Apistogramma* sp. "Pandurini", and all I know about its provenance is that it supposedly comes from the highlands of Peru.

The fishes initially went into the obligatory quarantine tank, where to my astonishment a pair had formed by the very next day and were vehemently defending a piece of bogwood against the



remaining specimens. I straightaway placed the pair in a specially prepared tank of dimensions 80 x 50 cm x 25 cm. The décor consisted of a number of pieces of bogwood and small flowerpots as spawning caves. The water's surface was shaded with floating plants and an air-powered sponge filter ensured clear water. Fine dark sand was introduced as substrate, and the fishes constantly foraged in this for anything edible.

The fishes were fed generously with live mosquito larvae in order to bring them into proper spawning condition, and only a week after purchase I observed them spawning. The water parameters were as follows: temperature 24-25 °C, pH 6.2, carbonate hardness 3 °KH, conductivity 150 µS/cm. The around 80 cherry-red eggs were attached randomly to the ceiling of the breeding cave. After three days the larvae began to hatch, and after another six days the fry started to become free-swimming.

The larvae were occasionally transferred to other breeding caves and cracks in the wood by the female. Worth mentioning are the relatively peaceful nature of the

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Female *A. panduro* with fry.

courtship, the male being tolerated in the breeding cave, and his active participation in the brood care. The male's endeavors involved not only the guarding of the periphery of the breeding territory but also retrieving stragglers and returning them to the shoal.

During brood care the male lost his sky-blue coloration and adopted a pale yellow color. A small round dark spot was visible on the lateral line.

Newly-hatched *Artemia nauplii* are a suitable first food for the fry, and were eaten immediately. Nine weeks after becoming free-swimming the fry have attained a length of around 2.5-3 cm, and the beginnings of sexual dimorphism are already visible. Meanwhile the other pairs have also spawned and successfully reared



Male in brood-care coloration.

their broods, at a much higher carbonate hardness as well as a pH of around 7.

Lexicon

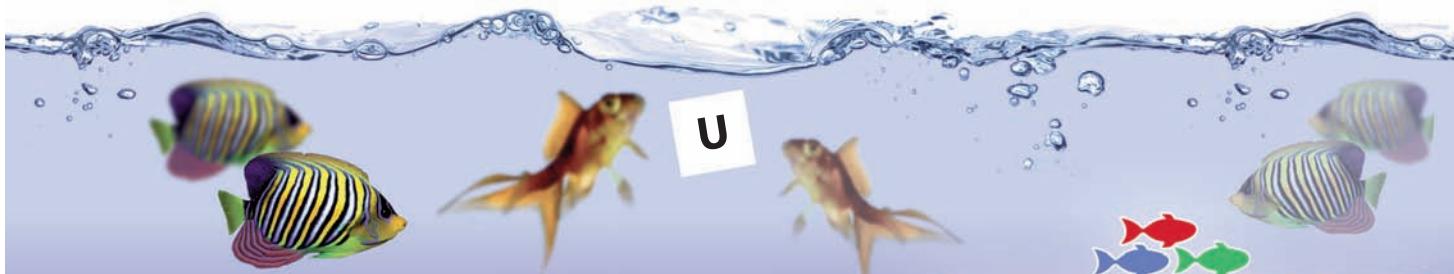
Apistogramma panduro

Apistogramma: From the Greek meaning "with an unreliable line"; it is unclear whether this refers to the lateral line organ or pattern elements.

panduro: dedication in honor of the collector



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(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1832)

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Corydoras tukano

by Frank Schäfer

Issues 13-55 of the AQUALOG News appeared from November 1997 to November 2003, and were now in single-language versions, in other words there were separate German and English versions. These issues of the News had a newspaper format with eight pages of content. In issue 13 we presented one of the loveliest mailed catfishes, *Corydoras tukano*, for the first time, in an exclusive article. This species too was still scientifically undescribed at the time, and was known as *Corydoras* sp. aff. *reynoldsi*.

Pair of *C. tukano*, male left.

individual that had been photographed at an export station in Brazil. The fish in the photo was labeled *Corydoras* sp. "Asher". Asher is the name of the exporter. From that time on every mailed catfish enthusiast has dreamed of seeing these attractive fishes at least once in the flesh."

So much for the report on the first importation back then in News 13. The scientific description took place in 2003, ie 6 years later. We also published the first breeding report on the new species in News 24 (see next page).

The "real" *C. reynoldsi* from Colombia.Male *Corydoras tukano*, still known as *C. sp. aff. reynoldsi* or *C. sp. "Asher"* back then.

With some 150 described species, the genus *Corydoras*, the mailed catfishes, is a very species-rich group of catfishes. Nevertheless species are repeatedly imported to Europe that cannot be ascribed to any of the existing described species. Often, however, they

are very similar to previously imported species. By contrast, the species presented here for the first time is an aquarium-hobby sensation. The aquarium world became aware of this fish via a photo in the Japanese magazine Aquamagazine, Vol 33, in spring 97, which showed an

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World premiere!

The maintenance and first spawning of *Corydoras sp. aff. reynoldsi*

by Peter Schwabe

These beautiful mailed catfishes have me under their spell. In July 1998 I bought 10 specimens on impulse, 6 males and 4 females. My first experiences as regards maintenance and breeding are recorded here. No details regarding the origins of these fishes are given, as a very good article on the species appeared in AQUALOG News no. 20.

The males are easily distinguished from the females as they have a very high dorsal and are more slender in body shape.

Returning home in a state of some excitement, a number of questions now came to mind. How was I to keep these fishes, what did they eat, what sort of substrate did they require? What sort of décor? And above all, what water parameters were necessary for their successful maintenance? And because I had bought them on impulse, I naturally had no previously set-up and matured aquarium ready for them.

Thus I decided on the spot to house them in a tank already containing bristlenose catfish (*Ancistrus* species L107). Because the 200-liter tank housed no fish apart from 5 large L107, there was no danger of crowding. The water in the tank had a temperature of 26 °C, a pH of 6.8, a hardness of 1 °KH and 4 °dGH. At the time

the conductivity was 220 µS/cm.

The planting consisted of a large Java Fern attached to a piece of bogwood. For reasons of cleanliness there was no substrate in the aquarium. The water was filtered by a large, 3-chambered, internal filter, which also provided adequate current in the aquarium. The fish swam around in all their glory. Now all I had to do was to hope and pray that I had not introduced any disease with them. I therefore kept them under close observation.



Juvenile *Corydoras tukano* at the age of 6 weeks.
Photos: Dieter Bork



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A difficult start

Unfortunately by the second day a gray coating was visible on the fishes. They were obviously unwell – they all rested beneath the internal filter and refused to feed. What was wrong with them? I checked the bristlenoses, but they seemed fine. So luckily the disease was not very infectious. What was I to do? I didn't want to add any medication without making an exact diagnosis. Judging by the mucus hyperproduction, the water was giving them a lot of trouble. Perhaps there were too many bacteria present? So I tried the wisest and often most effective method of treatment: I changed 60% of the water and added salt. This raised the conductivity to 1,500 µS/cm. After 2 days I could see a visible improvement in the state of the fishes. They had become more active, and, most important, they were taking food again. The latter consisted of bloodworm, *Artemia*, *Cyclops*, and food tablets.

First success

During the following 6 weeks I didn't alter the water parameters, in order to let the fishes settle in properly. The high conductivity seemed to suit them, as they were evidently in good health. What particularly struck me at this time was the fact that the fishes didn't swim around much and liked to remain in the shade of the plants. After 6 weeks of observation I had accumulated a few basic data which I could think about when trying to provide the conditions needed for breeding.



The long-snouted form resembling *Corydoras tukano* from Brazil is extremely popular. Photo: Erwin Schraml

Preparations for breeding

In August I moved the fishes to a separate 120-liter tank, which was, however, only 60% full of water. I initially provided water with no salt added and a conductivity of 200 µS/cm, but after just 3 days it was clear that the fishes were unwell again. Out of the blue they developed another bacterial infection, whose signs were slightly reddened areas. This time I used a medication whose active ingredient was Nifurpirinol. After 5 days the fishes were better again. I kept them together, under observation, for another 10 days, then I split the group, as I thought that even this tank was still too large.

I divided the fishes into two groups, each with 3 males and 2 females. The tanks used this time (30 x 25 x 25 cm) had no

significant current, just a small air-powered internal filter. The tanks were dimly lit and had just a sprinkling of sand as substrate. A small *Cryptocoryne* and a small *Anubias* completed the décor in each case. The temperature was set at 26 ° and the soft water was again treated with salt, which had already proved itself beneficial to the well-being of these fishes. They were fed mainly on live *Artemia* and bloodworm.

The first breeding – itself not without problems!

On 29th September 98, towards 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the fishes spawned in one of the tanks. The eggs were up to 3 mm in diameter and colorless. About 25 eggs were laid, but only 12 were fertilized. I have found "Cilex" very effective against

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The long-snouted form resembling *C.reynoldsi* from Colombia.

egg fungus, so I as usual added this treatment to the water.

The hatching of the eggs and the development of the larvae did not differ from that I had seen in other *Corydoras* species and which is described in the relevant literature. What was unusual about this spawning of *Corydoras* sp. aff. *reynoldsi* was that the conductivity was around 1,100 µS/cm. The pH was 7.2 and the KH at 1 degree. The conductivity was so high because of the salt that had been added to the water.

From then on the fishes spawned regularly every 3–4 days, always with a 50% fertilization rate. Experimentation showed that they stopped spawning at a conductivity of 135 µS/cm. After a water change and the addition of salt, which brought the conductivity up to 1,600 µS, they again spawned readily. In the meantime I had bought myself an additional 10 specimens and now had 4 tanks with 5 individuals in each case. But it was always the same fishes that spawned,

a phenomenon I am at a loss to explain.

Rearing the young was problem-free up until the time they started accessory breathing (using the gut in *Corydoras*). From this point on they were extremely susceptible to bacterial infections, which accounted for the majority of the fry. The addition of antibiotics proved effective only in the short term. After a while a few more of the young fishes would die. Eventually I moved the survivors to the tank containing the adults, where they grew on without any further problems. I never saw any signs of egg cannibalism by the adults, who were also extremely peaceful towards very small fry.

Corydoras sp. aff. *reynoldsi* – outlook as regards the aquarium hobby

The fry grew very, very slowly despite being well fed. It took them 4 months to attain 2 cm. Because breeding them is unlikely to be a viable economic proposition for the commercial breeder, in the long term these splendid mailed catfishes are likely to be available to the aquarist only in relatively small numbers.



Corydoras tukano

Photos: Frank Schäfer



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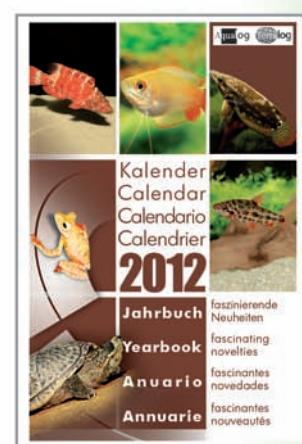
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Retro: Minifische

Fantastic Dwarf Badis Discovered in Assam!

by Frank Schäfer

Some of the species that we have brought you for the first time in the AQUALOG News gone on to a stellar aquarium-hobby career. We first presented the Scarlet Badis in News 26 (July 1999). Nowadays we know that it is actually the species *Dario dario*, described by Francis Hamilton as long ago as 1822. But here is the original article from News 26:

The fishes of the genus *Badis* have found devoted fans right from the birth of the aquarium hobby. At present three forms are known to science, while several more are in the process of being scientifically described.

The dwarf species pictured here for the first time was imported at the beginning of June 1999: eight specimens, seven males and a female, were sent to me by my friend Deepak Nopany for identification.

The fish grows to a maximum length of 2 cm. A single glance at this dazzling jewel of a fish was enough for me to realize that it must be a species previously unknown to scientists and aquarists alike.

Photos can give only a rough idea of the splendor of this fish, but its true splendor can be gauged by the fact that Norbert Keller, who has been in the ornamental fish wholesale trade for decades and is



definitely not easily impressed, immediately contacted Deepak to reserve all his available stock for Aquarium Glaser.

So you will probably be able to acquire a few of these treasures by the time you read this News; if not you will not have long to wait.

The scientific description of this species is likely to take 6-12 months but is already in progress. Pending which it has been given the hobby name *Badis* sp. "Scarlet".

Maintenance is easy. Soft to medium-hard water, a pH of 6.5–7.5, and a temperature around 24°C, are recommended. Like all *Badis* these little creatures will accept only live and frozen foods.

They have not yet been bred, but doubtless you will not have to wait long for news of breeding success. Our female is full to the brim with eggs. All the *Badis* known to date are cave-spawners with parental care by the male."

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That was the position in 1999. Nowadays the genus *Dario* contains three described and two undescribed species, while its sister genus *Badis* has increased to 12 species. *Dario* species have turned out to be plant-spawners, and – unlike *Badis* – don't spawn in caves. Breeding is best achieved by leaving the fishes to their own devices in their

normal quarters, but they can also be put to breed in pairs once they become sexable. Because these are sub-tropical fishes it is beneficial to let the temperature drop to below 18 °C (minimum temperature 14 °C, with slow acclimatization) for a number of weeks each year. The fishes will respond by living long and healthy lives.



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Retro: Seewasser

The Emperor's new clothes

by Frank Schäfer

In AQUALOG News no. 18 we brought you an exclusive on a new marine angelfish from the coast of Brazil. That was in July 1998. Unfortunately nothing more is known about this splendid fish to the present day...

The new angel, *Holacanthus sp.* "Gladstone", green phase.

Photo: Gladstone Aquarium



This portrait of a yellow-phase Gladstone Angel shows the unique facial mask of this species.

Photo: Gladstone Aquarium

Angelfishes are without doubt some of the most beautiful of marine fishes. Six species are found on the west coast of the Atlantic, and the discovery there of a new angel must rank as an absolute sensation.

The six species are: the Pygmy Angel *Centropyge argi*, the Rock Beauty, *Holacanthus tricolor*, the Gray Angelfish, *Pomacanthus arcuatus*, the French

Angelfish, *Pomacanthus paru*, the Blue Angelfish, *Holacanthus isabelita*, and the Queen Angel, *Holacanthus ciliaris*. It should be noted that the last two species can be differentiated only on the basis of their differing coloration.

Why is the discovery of a new angelfish such a sensation?

One or two of our readers may think that the

discovery of a new species is nothing particularly out of the ordinary. But that is only partly true. As a rule new fish species are discovered when previously unexplored areas are collected, or when the fish are first seen alive – numerous new discoveries have turned out to have been preserved in museums for decades, without it being realized that they were distinct species.

The situation is, however, quite different as regards angelfishes, which have been very well researched. *H. ciliaris* and *H. isabelita*, both striking and common species, were scientifically described as long ago as 1758 and 1898 respectively, and the long delay in describing the latter species was only

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because the differences between the two species are so slight.

In 1968 it was discovered that the two species in fact cross-breed; the hybrids were, moreover, formerly described as separate species, specifically *Holacanthus bermudensis* Goode, 1876 and *Holacanthus townsendi* (NICHOLS & MOWBRAY, 1914). In short, the likelihood of discovering a new, large angelfish on the Atlantic coast of Brazil is about as small as that of finding a new species of deer in the forests of Germany.

How did the new angel come to light?

Luis Gladstone Neto and Hudson Crizanto, from Fortaleza in Brazil, visited our editorial offices after Interzoo, and asked me to



A close relative of *H. ciliaris*: an adult Blue Angel, *H. isabelita*.

Photo: Tomizana/Archiv A.C.S.

identify an angelfish which, they said, was found at Fortaleza. It was, however, very rare; there were several hundred *Holacanthus ciliaris* for every one of the new species. When I looked at the photos my first reaction was that it might be a hybrid between *Holacanthus* species: the study of hybrids is my great passion.



Unfortunately this is not a very good photo, but it provides a unique record of the 3 types of *Holacanthus* from Fortaleza. Left: the yellow phase of *H. ciliaris* – this fish exhibits very clearly the crown-like marking typical of the species, to which it owes its name "Queen Angel". Right: in the foreground, *H. sp. "Gladstone"*, in the background another *H. ciliaris*, both fish in the green phase.

Photo: Gladstone Aquarium

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However, this new angel, which I will call the Gladstone Angel, appears to be no hybrid.

Apart from the unusual facial mask and the color of the eye-ring, the color pattern is almost identical to that of the Queen Angel, *H. ciliaris*. Moreover, just as in the Queen Angel, there are two color types: one with a yellow, and one with a green, body base color. Such variations are known as "color phases".

So what happens now regarding the Gladstone Angel?

The next step is to determine whether this fish is a hybrid, a color variant, or a new species. But this task will take time. I hope very shortly to obtain both live and preserved specimens of *Holacanthus ciliaris* and the Gladstone Angel from Fortaleza, in order to provide an answer to this open question. But I did not want to keep this splendid new angel from AQUALOG News readers for that long.

Is El Niño to blame for it all?

It is possible that the weather phenomenon "El Niño" may be responsible for the discovery of the new angelfish. Angelfishes do not practice brood care, simply spawning in the open water.

The eggs and larvae are left to the mercy of the ocean currents. The Gladstone Angel may be a truly previously unknown island form whose eggs and larvae have been carried to the coast of Brazil, but this is so far



A juvenile yellow-phase *H. ciliaris* in transitional coloration from juvenile to adult.

Photo: Nakano/Archiv A.C.S.

an unproven hypothesis.

Aquarium care of angelfishes

Holacanthus ciliaris can readily be maintained in the aquarium. Although this species, in common with other large angels, feeds mainly on sponges in the wild, these creatures very quickly become accustomed to the artificial foods offered them in captivity. In fact *H. ciliaris* is something of a glutton. CAMPBELL (1981) stresses the necessity of including at least 50% greenstuff in the diet of *Holacanthus* species, in order to avoid an otherwise inevitable loss of vision resulting from the inability to synthesize vitamin A. As angels are reluctant to eat such food, a degree of inventiveness is required. The best method is to utilize a special gelatin- or agar-based food.

Holacanthus ciliaris grows to some 45 cm in length and requires a suitably large aquarium. While juveniles (and this applies to large angels in general) are extremely territorial and correspondingly aggressive, adults are relatively peaceful fishes – provided, of course, that they are given sufficient living space.

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Retro:Terraristik

Born free – the tale of a Tokeh

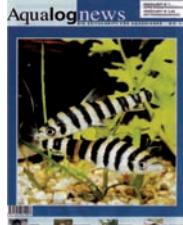
by Paul Menzler

Tokehs are nothing out of the ordinary. These followers of human civilization are numerous everywhere, even in the metropolises of tropical Asia. But one of these geckos was immortalized in AQUALOG News 36...



It is rather unusual to form an attachment to an aquarium or terrarium occupant. As a rule they are merely "specimens", which we maintain

and look after, but with scientific observation the main object rather than the appreciation of their individual personalities.



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Eve so, in the course of decades of keeping such animals, you inevitably encounter exceptions from time to time, creatures whose individual personality is so pronounced that all your good intentions, and your resolve to avoid anthropomorphizing your pets, go out the door.

One such personality was a Tokeh, who moved house with me four times and never spent more than at most a few days in a terrarium. It all started with a piece of cork bark to which a Tokeh female had attached her eggs. These large geckos (scientific name *Gekko gecko*) usually lay two eggs. A special adhesive sticks the lime-rich and hence very fragile reptilian eggs securely to the substrate such that they cannot be removed without damaging them. The bark was too large for the available breeding equipment, and so my friend Thomas Petsch of the company City-Zoo (at that time still in Darmstadt) asked me whether I could try and incubate the eggs at home.

I was keen to try. Thus I filled an aquarium with water to a depth of 10 cm, installed a heater-stat, positioned three bricks such that their upper edges protruded above the water's surface, and placed the bark, with eggs, on top.

Two months later I moved out of my parents' home. The bark found itself on a pile of bogwood which I was to collect



Baby Tokehs (*Gekko gecko*) have an attractively ringed tail.

later. "Later" became "much later", and four weeks after my departure my mother phoned me to tell me there was a lizard running around my former room. I immediately checked my terraria, but no specimen was missing. It turned out to be a delightful little Tokeh, banded as is typical in juveniles of this species.

Despite the rather less than favorable conditions, it had hatched from the forgotten eggs!

I packed my little "wild-caught" in a transportation container and, back home, put it in a terrarium with a number of Turkish lizards. However, the Tokeh didn't think too much of that idea, as a few days later it made good its escape at feeding

time. Right from the start its favorite spot was the gap between two terraria stacked one above the other. There it would sit in a gap that was not quite wide enough for me to get my hand in, and look at me contemptuously with its slit-eyes. My terrarium room, like every other such on the planet, is home to large numbers of free-range crickets, so there were no problems as regards feeding, and the Tokeh grew on apace.

About a year later I moved again. This time, however, it was my intention that the Tokeh should mutate into a normal terrarium occupant and spend its days behind glass. I didn't even get as far as trying it! I had just started unpacking my snakes in the new room (before they had

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a chance, as is their wont, to escape from their boxes and turn up in the TV room, to the probable non-amusement of my new landlord. This tends to lead to unpleasant conversations along the lines, "You've got snakes as well? You told me you had only fish and turtles!" The ruse of telling the landlord that they must be native Ring Snakes that had accidentally wandered into his house works only when one species at a time has escaped....)

Then the lid of the box containing the Tokeh slipped open, and the latter promptly disappeared behind a pile of terraria.

Next time I moved, again about a year later, I actually succeeded in getting the by now adult Tokeh into a terrarium. But it didn't stay there long. A few days later, during my evening rounds, I found one of the two sliding panes open just a crack, and the terrarium empty. It would appear that the little monster had kept on trying to move the pane so long that he actually succeeded! He could not have done so without the suckers on his feet, which allowed him to run up the vertical glass walls.

So, again he was free. However, this time his presence loose in the terrarium room was not without problems.. At this time I was also keeping a lot of birds, and breeding pairs were allowed to fly free in the room, as this was the most convenient method of allowing them to

catch small insects for their young. One day a much-prized finch disappeared down the throat of the Tokeh.

His appetite was also eventually his downfall. Four years and another move later (this time I didn't even try to confine him, but let him loose in the terrarium room right away), I had a serious problem with mice. They were gnawing electric cables, and that could have been really dangerous. The vermin exterminator was summoned and duly laid poison, and my Tokeh must have eaten a poisoned and dying mouse. A few days later I found him lying in the open in the full light of day, not even resisting being picked up. Ten minutes later he was dead.

Rarely has the demise of a lizard affected me so deeply as that of this "ordinary" little Tokeh – he was without doubt a real personality.

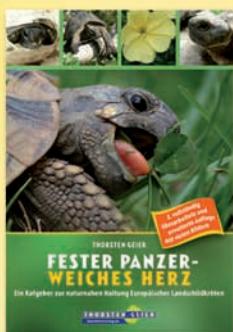


Hatched Gecko eggs.



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Retro: Vermischtes

Delicacies....

by Roman Neunkirchen

The News has always had the character of a newspaper as well. And thus we have not only long articles, but also – because of our unique links with the import trade – short items on the new and unusual. Here are just two examples of the import highlights that only AQUALOG News can offer in this form.



One of the prettiest new imports recently is the Red Dwarf Pencilfish from Peru. The experts are still arguing as to whether it is a distinct, undescribed species or a geographical variant of *Nannostomus marginatus*, the Dwarf Pencilfish. Unfortunately these little gems are still very expensive, but they are not especially delicate."

This news item appeared in News 37.

Nowadays the species has been scientifically

described as *Nannostomus mortenthaleri* and is firmly established in the aquarium trade. It has been found that the species deviates markedly from all other pencilfishes in its behavior. Specifically, they are not shoaling fishes but tend to live solitary. The males can be very aggressive among themselves, particularly at spawning time. Hence relatively large aquaria are required for breeding – these fishes spawn on plants and do not practice any brood care.

Photo: Dieter Bork

"A small (literally) sensation arrived at Aquarium Glaser a few days ago, in the form of two specimens of a dwarf suckermouth catfish species of the genus *Otocinclus*, exported from Peru. It is as yet unclear precisely where these fantastic creatures originated. One thing is certain, though – if it proves possible to import this species in larger numbers, then it is destined to be the fish species of the year 2000!"

*This announcement comes from News 34 (2000). The little catfish was scientifically described as *Otocinclus cocama* in 2004, and remains one of the most popular dwarf suckermouth catfishes. Maintenance and breeding are as for other *Otocinclus* species – not at all difficult, in other words.*

Photos: Frank Schäfer

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Retro: Vermischtes

A two-headed turtle

by Roman Neunkirchen

This photo is no montage, the animal really existed. It cropped up in a breeding farm for slider turtles. Both the creature's heads were able to move and feed independently of one another.

The photo was taken in August 2002 and



was published in News 48, when the turtle (a Yellow-Bellied Slider, *Trachemys scripta scripta*) was six months old. It was sold at a reptile show. We won't reveal the price here.....

Photo: Frank Schäfer



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