

Terralog

NEWS

The Magazine for Terrarists No 101



 **Keeping and breeding
the Red Mountain Racer**

 **Kaloula pulchra**



 **A pike for the
home aquarium**



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Preview:

TERRALOGnews No 102
will appear on KW 07/08 2012
Don't miss it!

Cover:

Tree snail, *Amphidromus atricallosus*
Photo: F. Schäfer

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 Thorsten Reuter
 Manuela Sauer
 Dipl.- Biol. Klaus Diehl
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Dear Reader,

Thanks to the generous co-operation of internationally renowned wholesalers in aquarium fishes and terrarium animals, AQUALOG News and TERRALOG News have always been able to provide you with an up to date review of the livestock and plants currently available in the trade – and all for free! And that will continue in future.

However, we also plan to offer you more content and an even greater variety of topics in future.



News Veranstaltungstipps

Heimtiermesse Hannover

5. The Art of the Planted Aquarium
4. NANO-Wettbewerb und
4. Internationales Garnelen-Championat
27.01. – 29.01.2012
10.00 – 18.00 Uhr
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Vorträge im

Tierfachmarkt Hoose und Stab in Hanau

Referent: Dieter Untergasser
20. Januar 2012, Inhalt: Gesunderhaltung der
Aquarienfische und Prof. Medikamente
30. März 2012, Inhalt: Der Gartenteich im
Wechsel der Jahreszeiten
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Weitere Informationen erhalten Sie unter
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Terraxotica-Germany (Terraristikbörse)

Am 17.12.2011
in der Rübekamphalle in Pinneberg
Am 25.03.2012
in Bremen, Messe Bremen, Halle 3
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im ETM Forum in Chemnitz
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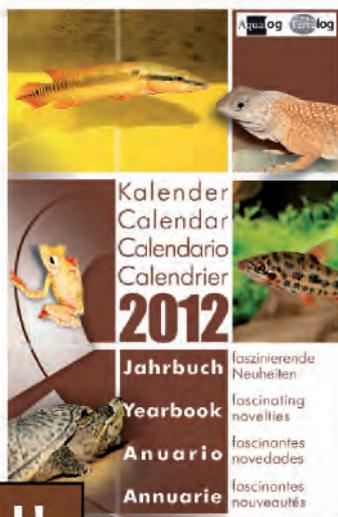
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And so from 2012 onwards your News will be expanded in size by a full 16 pages and you will then have 48 pages bursting with life at your fingertips.

However, we feel that it no longer makes sense to continue the division into AQUALOG (containing mainly fishes and the aquarium hobby) and TERRALOG (containing mainly terrarium animals), as in order to continue to bring you the News free of charge, we are reducing the number of issues from six to four per year. This would mean that the interval between issues covering the two main topics would be too long to maintain our requirement for up-to-date news. In the final analysis our aim continues to be the first to bring you information on animals and plants newly available in the hobby! So in future each issue will simply be called the News. From issue 102 onwards every issue of the News will contain something on every aspect of the hobby, be it freshwater or marine, wet, damp or dry.

Frank Schäfer, Editor in Chief



NEU!

Kalender-Jahrbuch 2012

Das *Aqualog* - Jahrbuch gewährt jährlich einen Einblick in das Import- und Zuchtgeschehen für Aquarien- und Terrarientiere des vergangenen Jahres.

Wie schon in den Jahrbüchern 2008-2011 haben uns namhafte Importeure, Exporteure und Züchter aus der Aquaristik und Terraristik großzügig mit wunderschönen Tieren versorgt. Süßwasser, Seewasser, Reptilien, Amphibien und Wirbellose - das Jahr 2011 war bunt und Sie können es mit dem Kalenderjahrbuch 2012, (Woche für Woche) Revue passieren lassen.

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Wirbellose

Porcelain tree snails

by Sebastian Zimmer

For around three years gorgeous yellow, light blue, and white snails have been imported to Europe from Thailand. With a shell height of around 5 cm and their splendid porcelain sheen, these are very impressive creatures. The soft parts of these snails are colored to match their shells. They belong to the taxon *Amphidromus atricallosus leucoxanthus*.

According to current wisdom, the genus *Amphidromus* contains 87 species that are divided into two subgenera.

Amphidromus atricallosus belongs to the nominate subgenus *Amphidromus*, and the second subgenus is *Syndromus*. The two subgenera are distinguished by anatomical details, but we will consider just one of them here.

Left- or right-handed?

This detail relates to the direction in which the shell of the snail winds. In the majority of snails this is genetically determined. If the shell is held with its apex pointing upwards and the opening towards the observer, then it is possible to determine whether it is left-handed or right-handed. For example, the Edible Snail or Escargot is normally right-handed and left-handed

specimens are extremely rare. It is said that only one in 20,000 specimens has the



The porcelain tree snail *Amphidromus atricallosus leucoxanthus*.

latter type of shell! But it is quite normal for the subgenus *Amphidromus* to have both left-handed and right-handed individuals in any given population. The technical term for this is amphidromine, meaning "winding in both directions". By contrast, in the subgenus *Syndromus* the direction in which the shell winds is largely genetically determined. All but two species of *Syndromus* – one right-handed, one amphidromine – are left-handed.



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direction of the shell be taken as an indication of sex. All *Amphidromus* species are hermaphrodites – in other words, each individual possesses both male and female gonads. Anyone who buys two *Amphidromus* will thus be buying a pair. The sex organs are so arranged that they share a common opening, the ductus hermaphroditicus, which is branched into a penis and a vagina. For this reason self-fertilization is impossible, and insemination must take place via a second snail. The microscopic details of the penis and vagina provide important indications regarding the specific and/or subspecific identity of these snails.

Known for a long time

The gorgeous shells of the porcelain tree snails came to the notice of natural history collectors centuries ago, and so it is no surprise that one of the species was described as long ago as 1758 by CARL VON LINNÉ, the father of modern zoological nomenclature. For a long time these snails were known only from their shells, and, depending on the extent of the available material, there were different interpretations regarding which snails were to be classified as species, which as subspecies, and which as simply color variants. And to some degree this remained a matter of debate until a very short time ago.

The species *Amphidromus atricallosus* was described by Gould in 1843. According to the most recent state of systematics it is divided into four subspecies. The nominate form *A. a. atricallosus* is widespread and occurs in Burma, Malaysia, and south and west Thailand. It is found in association with human civilization and is most easily differentiated from the following subspecies by having a black or dark brown parietal callus (see illustration at the end of this article).

A. a. leucoxanthus (von Martens, 1864) from eastern Thailand is very similar and distinguished mainly by having a white parietal callus.

The maintenance of snails is rarely boring and offers lots of opportunities for observation.

all photos: Frank Schäfer






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A. a. perakensis Fulton, 1901 comes from the south of the Malayan Peninsula (Malaysia, Singapore, and offshore islands), while *A. a. classarius* Sutcharit & Panha, 2006 is known only from the island of Koh Tachai (which belongs to Thailand) in the Andaman Sea. The parietal callus is white to transparent in *A. a. perakensis*, and brown or black in *A. a. classarius*.

Varied coloration

As with the European snails *Cepaea*

hortensis and *C. nemoralis*, porcelain tree snails also occur in numerous color variants, though only the most attractive, usually yellow or whitish-blue, specimens are imported.

These shell colors are, however, species-typical to an only very limited extent, and there are also brown-patterned individuals. The dark stripes on the shells of many individuals are likewise not species-specific, but develop when the snail stops growing during a dry spell.

Tree snails

The common name says it all: *Amphidromus* live on trees in the wild. Unfortunately there is at present no information available on what they eat in the wild, although the radula, that is the

Lexicon

for the porcelain tree snail article

Amphidromus means "twisting in both directions", referring to the right-handed and left-handed shells.

atricallosus means "with a black callus"

leucoxanthus means "white-yellow".

equivalent of the teeth in snails, is very weakly developed in *Amphidromus*, so it is assumed that these snails feed on microscopic growths such as algae, fungi, and bacteria on the bark of the trees. The exporter in Thailand swears by melon as food for these snails, but those imported to date haven't shown any significant interest in this diet, so any relevant input by terrarium keepers would be welcome.

Pete Krull (Krull, 2006) has discovered that another genus of tree snails – namely *Liguus*, which lives in Florida – must have UV light for successful maintenance in the terrarium, and dies if deprived of this type of illumination. *Amphidromus* has not yet been investigated in this regard, but it certainly needs checking out!

Krull also gives a recipe for artificial food for tree snails, which works very well with *Liguus*: broccoli (contains lots of calcium), other types of fruit and vegetables, and dairy products, etc, are cooked in beer (snails love beer!), put through a blender,



Porcelain tree snails are hermaphrodites, so any two specimens are always a pair.

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and finally painted onto the terrarium glass with an artist's brush.

Breeding

Amphidromus atricallosus lay their eggs in nests made of leaves and suspended in the air. The nominate form has been seen to use the leaves of the Pomelo tree (*Citrus maximus*), while *A. a. leucoxanthus* has used Rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*). Both fruits are available in Europe and it is sometimes possible to grow small trees from their seeds. It is, however, rather unlikely that porcelain tree snails are particularly specialized in this respect.

The snail builds its nest by secreting a sticky substance from its foot and using this "glue" to stick the undersides of two leaves together to form a nest in which the eggs are laid. The eggs have a diameter of 2-3 mm and have numbered 100-150 in the cases recorded, although the snails in question were still relatively small. They were held together by a sticky mucus. Those on the outside of the ball of eggs shriveled up and didn't hatch. It is probable that they are sacrificed to protecting the rest of the clutch, in particular against dehydration.

Unfortunately no information is available about the length of the incubation period, but the young supposedly feed initially on their eggshells before dispersing. This clearly indicates that juveniles at least have a relatively robust radula and can exploit a comparatively large dietary spectrum. On hatching they are transparent, helicoid (ie normal snail shape), and 2-3 mm long with 1-2 coils.

References

Krull, P. (2006): Rearing tropical arboreal snails in the laboratory. *Tentacle* 14: 3-5
Sutcharid, C. & S. Panha (2006): Taxonomic review of the tree snail genus *Amphidromus* Albers, 1850 (Pulmonata: Camaenidae) in Thailand and adjacent areas: subgenus *Amphidromus*. *Journal of Molluscan Studies* (2006) 72: 1-30.

Web tip

The Genus *Amphidromus* @ <http://www.jaxshells.org/petek.htm>

Variations in *Amphidromus atricallosus*.

photo: Pete Krull



A. a. atricallosus

A. a. leucoxanthus

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A gentle giant: *Manouria emys*

by Thorsten Holtmann

The tortoise genus *Manouria* contains just two species, namely *M. impressa* from South-East Asia (Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Burma, Cambodia, and Malaysia) and the largest tortoise species in Asia, *Manouria emys*, which can grow up to 60 cm long.

Manouria emys has a wide distribution, from India across Burma, Thailand, and Malaysia to Indonesia.

Two subspecies are distinguished, and these differ very clearly in their anatomy – so clearly that they might be thought to



Portrait of an adult female *Manouria emys*.

Photo: Christoph Fritz, www.reptilia24.com

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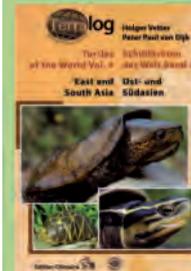
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actually be two different species. However, there is a large area in the south of Thailand and the north of Malaysia where intermediate forms, so-called intergrades, occur; these cannot be unequivocally assigned to either of the two forms, which must therefore be regarded as subspecies in the zoological sense. The northern subspecies, *M. emys phayrei*, grows to 50-60 cm in size. It is most easily recognized by the shoulder plates (pectoral scutes) meeting on the ventral armor. In the southern subspecies, *M. e. emys*, the pectoral scutes are small and widely separated. The latter subspecies remains significantly smaller at 40-50 cm in length. It is also more contrasting in its coloration, while *M. e. phayrei* is uniform dark brown. All the photos illustrating this article show *M. e. emys*.

The most ancient of all tortoises

Turtles and tortoises are an ancient order of animals that have survived since the time of the dinosaurs. They are a real evolutionary success story. And *Manouria* is thought to be the most ancient of all the turtles and tortoises still living on our planet today. In the geological epoch known as the Tertiary there were also *Manouria* in Europe; they were even larger than the *M. emys* that exist today, but otherwise practically identical.

Manouria live in evergreen tropical and



M. e. emys is fairly contrast-rich in its markings. Photo: Ch. Fritz, www.reptilia24.com

subtropical rainforests. Because of the inaccessibility of their habitat and also because of the difficult political situation, especially in the northern part of their distribution region, there is an extreme paucity of data on the natural habitats of these animals. Like practically all tortoises, however, *Manouria* are regarded as endangered, as they are hunted for food and their habitat, the rainforest, is being increasingly destroyed. The comparatively small numbers of specimens that arrive in the trade can be regarded as insignificant in proportion to these threats. *Manouria emys* is protected internationally under the Washington Convention on Species Conservation (Appendix II) and hence cannot be sold without the relevant permit.

Six-legged tortoises **Schidkröte**

The numerous peculiarities of *Manouria*



M. emys is also known as the Six-legged Tortoise because of its powerful spurs.

Photo: Christoph Fritz, www.reptilia24.com

emys include the powerful spurs on the upper thigh, two on each side of the back legs in both sexes. Because of these spurs these animals have been given the name

"Six-legged Tortoise" in their native lands. Their English name is Asian Forest Tortoise or Asian Brown Tortoise.

Peaceful giants

Practically without exception, all tortoises are solitary and have little idea of how to get on with conspecifics except at mating time. Because males are very aggressive towards members of their own sex most of the time and their constant urge to mate can also lead to them terrorizing females, experienced keepers of chelonians maintain tortoises separately where space permits and put them together only to breed. But once again *Manouria emys* is an exception in this regard. It is usually not only extremely peaceful towards conspecifics, but even appears to develop a sort of social structure, at least in captivity!

Brood care

There is even more that is unique about

The pectoral scutes of the ventral armor do not meet in *M. e. emys*.

Photos: F. Schäfer





Manouria emys: the females practice brood care! Inseminated females construct a nest mound of dead plant material. The eggs are laid in this nest, which is then guarded for 2-6 weeks. The benefits of this aren't exactly clear, but it has been speculated that the main purpose of this brood care is to maintain the nest in good order and thus protect the eggs against high-water events. Even the boldest tortoise has no chance against monitor lizards, the worst egg robbers in their habitat.

Soft-shelled eggs

The clutch of *Manouria emys* numbers up to 40 (*M. e. emys*) or 70 (*M. e. phayrei*) soft-shelled eggs. This too is very unusual, as tortoise eggs usually have calcareous-shelled eggs like those of birds. The large number of eggs indicates that juveniles have only a small chance of survival in the wild. But the longevity of the parents and the large clutches compensate for the huge losses that occur in unspoiled habitats.

Terrarium care

The main problem in the maintenance of *Manouria emys* is its size. A group of one male and two to three females require an area of around 10 square meters. The temperature shouldn't drop below 18 °C for *M. e. emys*, or below 14-16 °C for *M. e. phayrei* (depending on origin). In summer they can be kept outside, at least during the day, but at night they should have a cold frame or greenhouse available.

Beware, these tortoises can climb exceptionally well! Tortoises have a high water requirement and should have an easily-cleaned bath, containing water at the right temperature, available. This should be cleaned and refilled once or several times per day. The humidity shouldn't drop below 70%. Being forest-dwellers, these tortoises only rarely sunbathe, but there are, of course, individual exceptions.

These tortoises are almost exclusively vegetarian, and unlike many other tortoises they are often not interested in carrion and



Manouria emys needs to be kept very moist and relatively warm.

small prey. For various reasons (danger of arthritis and obesity, or possible disruption of the delicate intestinal flora), meaty foods should be fed only as an exception. Fruit is also better avoided or given as a rare (!) treat. As long as they are available, wild plants can be given (these tortoises prefer large-leaved plants), otherwise salad leaves such as endive, rocket, chicory, etc. Some specimens also like to eat fungi.

At present no wild-collected individuals are available in the wholesale trade, but there are delightful captive-bred specimens, for example at Tropenparadies in Oberhausen, Germany, Fax +49 0208-665997.

Lexicon

Manouria emys

Manouria: not explained in the original description, but perhaps a dedication in honor of a man or woman called Manour.

emys: referring to the similarity of the juveniles to pond turtles (*Emys*).
phayrei: dedication in honor of Sir Arthur Purves Phayre (1812-1885), British army officer and Governor of Burma.

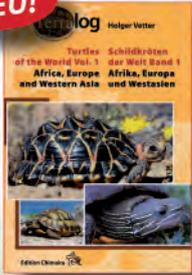


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Frösche

Focus on Kaloula pulchra

by John Dawes

It bellows like an ox, it's shaped like a bubble, it's got a wide...or a narrow...mouth, it can inflate and deflate its body at will, and is native to Singapore...or not! This remarkable creature is the banded, ox, rice, piebald digging, chubby, bubble, Asian painted, Malaysian narrow-mouthed frog or toad, or painted or Asian bullfrog, *Kaloula pulchra*.

When an animal has as many common names as this, the chances are that it is a widespread

species. *Kaloula pulchra* is certainly such a species. Its broad natural distribution is given as Southeast Asia, South Asia and



Male of a population of *Kaloula pulchra* imported from China.

All photos: F. Schäfer

Lexicon

Kaloula pulchra

Kaloula: not explained in the original description, but probably a name that Reeves, the collector, communicated to Gray, the describer, as the name used for the species in China.

pulchra: Latin, meaning "beautiful".

China, a vast area by any standards. In addition, it is reported as having been introduced into Taiwan and Guam, and (possibly) into New Zealand, Australia and Borneo. Some references suggest that it has also been introduced into Singapore. However, the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) entry for the species states that it is actually native to Singapore.

Along with nearly 415 species in some 69 genera, *Kaloula pulchra* belongs to the family Microhylidae (the so-called narrow-mouthed frogs), subfamily Microhyliinae. As the family name implies, microhylid frogs are small (hence the 'micro'), with some species only attaining 1.5cm in length. *K. pulchra* is one of the larger species, but, even so, only grows to around 7.5cm.

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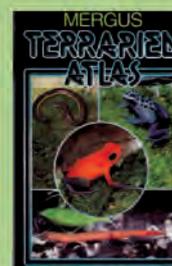
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Although one of the stated characteristics of these frogs is their narrow mouth, some references say that *K. pulchra* has a wide mouth! This apparent discrepancy may be explained by the fact that there are two main body shapes within the family: species with narrow mouths (these tend to feed on small insects, such as ants and termites) and more 'normally-shaped' species which enjoy a more substantial diet. In several respects, *K. pulchra* falls into this second group (although it is also reported as eating ants in the wild), offering a possible explanation for the above-mentioned wide mouth.

Despite its small size, this species is the fourth most popular species harvested for human consumption in Cambodia, and is also consumed in some other countries within its range. The other 'consumer' of *K. pulchra* is the pet trade, although the exact numbers collected are not documented. Nonetheless, despite these two forms of harvesting, the species is so abundant in the wild that the World

Conservation Union lists it as being of 'Least Concern' and states that levels of harvesting "do not currently constitute a major threat". In fact, it also goes as far as saying "it meets several criteria to be considered a vertebrate pest".

In captivity, this species (which can live for around 10 years) will exhibit its natural habit of tending to remain hidden during the day. Therefore, shelters, plus a substrate that allows it to burrow should be provided. Leaf litter, potting compost (minus non-organic additives such as

Female of the Chinese population.





This specimen of *Kaloula pulchra* was exported from Indonesia.

vermiculite), coconut husk and similar 'safe' substrates are suitable, as long as a deep-enough layer of, at least, 5cm is provided. The enclosure itself need not be particularly large, with a 60cm aquarium/terrarium with a tight-fitting lid being suitable for a pair. No special lighting is required, owing to the daytime burrowing habits of the species. However, a UVB source is recommended for health reasons, in addition to a 'moonlight' or night light for observation during the hours of darkness when these frogs are most active.

The temperature can fluctuate between approximately 27-28°C during the day, and around 20°C at night. Humidity should be maintained relatively high by misting the tank on a regular basis. It has

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also been noted that the level of activity rises with humidity; such conditions are usually associated with the onset of the breeding season in the wild.

A bowl of water must also be included in the setup to allow the frogs to immerse themselves entirely. Rainwater or bottled water is more suitable for this purpose than chlorine/chloramine-containing tap water.

With respect to the diet, live insects, including mainstays such as crickets, will be eagerly consumed; so will a range of worms. All food should be sprinkled with appropriate mineral and vitamin supplements, though. Two or three feedings per week will be perfectly adequate for adults.

Despite their ease of maintenance, chubby frogs do not appear to have been bred in captivity. They are known to breed when the humidity and the moisture

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content of the substrate increase in the wild. However, despite this being replicated in captivity, we are still awaiting detailed documented records of captive breeding successes.

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Schlangen

inordinately quick, mind-blowingly beautiful: the Red Mountain Racer

by Roman Neunkirchen

The Red Mountain Racer or Bamboo Ratsnake, *Oreocryptophis* (formerly *Elaphe*) *porphyraceus* is one of the most beautiful Asian climbing snakes. This little energy-saving snake – it comes from mountainous regions and doesn't require any heating (18-25 °C) – is being bred increasingly frequently.



The Bamboo Ratsnake is very variable in coloration, and there are also longitudinally-banded specimens.

It is less than 30 years since this jewel of a snake was regarded as practically impossible to keep. Although the species is very widespread, occurring in six subspecies from India across China and the Malayan Peninsula to Indonesia, it was

hardly ever imported and then quickly died. The secret of successful maintenance lies in the correct treatment of the animals by the exporter. These mountain snakes

need to be kept cool and damp. A prolonged stay in a lowland export station – this snake is never found below 800 m altitude in the wild – causes permanent damage to the animal's system. The immune system breaks down, normally harmless parasites proliferate massively, and the snake dies.

The breakthrough in the maintenance of these splendid snakes came only when terrarium keepers in South-East Asia seriously adopted animal maintenance western style – ie unsentimental, non-anthropomorphic, but technically correct maintenance. They built cool houses the way we erect greenhouses in cooler climes, in order to be able to provide the correct climatic requirements for these snakes and other creatures of the mountain forests. And lo and behold, it worked!

The snakes portrayed here belong to the subspecies *O. p. laticinctus*, which occurs on the Malayan Peninsula. Like all the other subspecies it is a creature of permanently moist woodland. These snakes, which grow up to 100 cm long and are very quick and sometimes prone to bite (though, like all *Elaphe* in the wide sense they are non-venomous), are easy to feed as they readily

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take mice. If several specimens are kept together – which is feasible, as they are not cannibalistic – it is a good idea to separate them at feeding time; on the one hand so that several snakes don't fall upon the same mouse, and on the other because it is generally beneficial if they regard their terrarium as mating and living habitat rather than feeding territory. Moreover their owner can be far more relaxed about handling these greedy snakes if they don't all immediately leap into action when the cover is opened. Unfortunately these gorgeously colored snakes are very prone to hide, so their home should be arranged to allow them to do so, while ensuring that the hiding-places can be easily monitored



Got it! A captive-bred juvenile Bamboo Ratsnake with its first self-caught baby mouse.

at any time.

Bamboo Ratsnakes produce eggs once a year in summer, after a cool phase (at around 15 – 20 °C) in winter. The eggs hatch after around 60 days at 26 °C. The newly-hatched young are around 25 cm long and in my experience will feed on baby mice without problem right from the start, so rearing them presents no difficulties.

Lecikon

Bamboo Ratsnake

Oreocryptophis: Greek meaning "secret-living mountain snake".
porphyraceus: Latinized Greek meaning "resembling porphyry", a type of red stone.
laticinctus: Latin meaning "with broad bands".

The middle egg is just hatching.



Technik

LUW von JBL: The new sun for the terrarium

by JBL

The new L-U-W lamp from JBL provides the terrarium enthusiast with three products in one: light, UV, and heat!

This JBL metal halide lamp constitutes a new generation of lighting that actually replaces three pieces of equipment. Its full sunlight-like spectrum includes a high component of UV-A and -B as well as heat radiation.

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The new JBL L-U-W lamp comes in two models: the JBL ReptilJungle L-U-W, whose rating of 4000°K is designed for rainforest animals with a somewhat lower UV requirement, and the JBL ReptilDesert L-U-W, whose rating of 6000°K is intended for sun-hungry desert-dwellers. Both models are available at 35 and 70 watts.

halide lamps, as they work with extremely high initial voltage as well as high temperatures. There are new products from JBL here as well: the JBL TempSet L-U-W is available in 35- and 70-watt models. As an interesting aside: the fittings of the JBL TempSet L-U-W are actually manufactured from material used in the American Space



The entire product range for the new L-U-W lamp from JBL.

Special ballast units, cables, and high-temperature fittings are necessary for metal-

Shuttle and proven to tolerate high temperatures!



Tierschutz

Demand for a ban on keeping pets ignores the benefits of the human-animal relationship

by Zentralverband Zoologischer Fachbetriebe Deutschlands e.V. (ZZF)

German animal protection organization wishes to ban pets / All pets are demanding and the vast majority are non-native / ZZF speaks out on the animal welfare aspect of keeping pets

In a press release on World Animal Welfare Day in 2011 the Deutsche Tierschutzbund (DTB, German Animal Welfare Federation) demanded a new animal protection law and criticized inappropriate maintenance in living-rooms and front gardens. The Zentralverband Zoologischer Fachbetriebe e.V. (ZZF, National Association of Zoological Businesses) likewise advocates responsible treatment of domestic animals, but ZZF President Norbert Holthenrich criticized the demand by the DTB for a ban on pets:

For the DTB to state in its press release that the keeping of ornamental birds, ornamental fishes, and reptiles is reason for Draconian animal protection legislation, fails to take into account either the significance of such a law or the reality of millions of successful human-animal relationships. It is unreasonable and an insult to the millions of animal lovers in Germany who treat their pets responsibly, as well as to members of the DTB itself. In essence, the DTB's demand for a ban on exotic and demanding pets would mean a ban on almost all domestic pets.

Overall, pets are kept by something more than a third of all German households. There are around 520 types of domestic pets, almost without exception exotic. The exotic species include Guinea pigs, cats, and budgerigars, all three of which are non-native. Nowadays practically all domestic pet species are being bred successfully, and many species are being saved from extinction thereby. Moreover all pets are demanding, above all dogs and cats. A ban on keeping pets would cause huge damage to society. The keeping of various types of pets demonstrably contributes to people

becoming conscious of their responsibilities towards animals as fellow-creatures. Involvement with animals teaches children social responsibility and concern for other needs than their own, and adults too cease to be self-centered and become aware of the need for responsible treatment of Nature.

Numerous studies have shown that pet-owners lead healthier lives, that involvement with animal friends can alleviate sleep disturbances, depression, and headaches, as well as heart and circulatory diseases. Pedagogues, human doctors, and psychologists use pets as aids in, inter alia, prisons, homes for the elderly, and psychiatric units. The fact that unfortunately humans are occasionally caught mistreating animals doesn't in any way justify the loss of the numerous positive effects of the cohabitation of animals and humans through too stringent legislation.

More successful than new legislation would be the education of pet owners regarding the correct care of their animals, undertaken by the pet trade, breeder organizations, and

veterinarians. Thus, for example, the ZZF operates an online veterinary practice, formulates standards of quality for its members, and provides information on suitable types of pets and inappropriate pet products.

In addition the ZZF fears that a ban on pets would simply drive the pet trade and the keeping of pets underground, where they could no longer be regulated.

The current animal welfare legislation, which dates from 18th May 2006 and was last amended on 9th December 2010, prescribes that a pet should be fed, cared for, and housed in line with its species, requirements, and behavior, that its opportunity for the movement natural to the species should not be so limited as to cause it pain or avoidable suffering or harm, and that the owner must have the knowledge and ability required to provide suitable food, care, and appropriate accommodation. Pet owners are already liable to punishment if they break this law. In addition, the Ministry for Food, Agriculture, and Consumer Protection has a remit to regulate what requirements pet owners are obliged to fulfill in the case of individual species, and veterinary officials can refer to these when enforcing animal welfare law.





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Bücher

TV hostess Enie van de Meiklokjes is now also an author

by Eckhard Grell-Herrmann

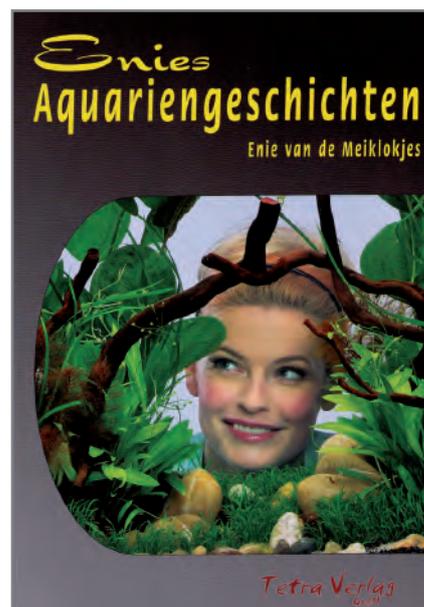
Book Enies Aquariengeschichten published on 01.10.2011

Efforts are being made everywhere to attract newcomers to the hobby. Tetra Verlag GmbH has chosen a quite different alternative to children's aquaria or magazines – the prominent TV hostess Enie van de Meiklokjes. An amusing and not over-technical approach is needed. Perhaps people can be attracted to the aquarium hobby by entertaining them with the amusing stories that Enie relates in her book Enies Aquariengeschichten.

Because not every word is meant seriously as in a textbook, it also includes bizarre creatures, which may bear well-known fish names (for example the Buttermolly or the

Transvestite Cichlid), but which take on human characteristics in Enie's stories.

Enie has been a passionate aquarist for many years and in the course of this time has had some strange experiences with her pets. Enie van de Meiklokjes has now written up the funniest and most bizarre stories in a humorous and chatty fashion for her first book, Enies Aquariengeschichten. The author promises a book full of hilarious stories with lots of pictures (including her own), aimed at all fishkeepers like herself as well as unqualified beginners – and all without a load of technical jargon.



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Lizards

A suitable skink for all eventualities

by Volker Ennenbach

The skinks are a very species-rich and successful group of lizards. Their scales lie very tight to the body, giving them a smooth appearance. In addition many species gleam like freshly polished porcelain.

The first two species of skinks to be discussed here are specialized tree-dwellers. They were both formerly assigned to the genus *Dasia*, but nowadays the first of them, the Emerald Tree Skink, is assigned to the genus *Lamprolepis* and hence has the scientific name *L. smaragdina*. The second species, the Olive Tree Skink, which is more of a brown color, is the type species of the genus *Dasia* and named *D. olivacea*. Both species are at present being occasionally imported from

Lamprolepis smaragdina, half-brown variant





Indonesia for the hobby. They grow to a total of around 25 cm long, with somewhat more than half the total length being represented by the tail.

High, higher, highest

The skinks of the *Dasia* group are common in the wild and are very attractive in appearance. *L. smaragdina* in particular is a real classic among terrarium occupants, as its brilliant green is unrivalled. The color form



Dasia olivacea.

All photos: Frank Schäfer

shown here exhibits a particularly brilliant green. This form, in which the posterior third of the body is brown in color, is usually assigned to the subspecies *Lamprolepis smaragdina philippinica*. The nominate form is uniform green and likewise very beautiful. But *Dasia olivacea* is also a real eyecatcher, and as long as it is properly acclimatized the belly is brilliant green-yellow in color.

Because they are so common and so attractive, these lizards can often be obtained at low prices in the trade. But these lovely skinks will give you real pleasure only if you can house them in a very tall terrarium.





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the worst-case scenario these lizards may even die when maintained in a terrarium of the incorrect dimensions, as their long-term panic can lead to collapse of the immune system, with consequent damage to the kidneys and the digestive system.

On the other hand, if these gorgeous tree skinks are maintained in a suitably decorated terrarium around 1.2 meters high, they will give their owner a lot of pleasure. They require a tropical terrarium with a high humidity (around 70% by day, almost 100%

Experienced keepers of these reptiles are fond of saying that a *Dasia* terrarium can never be tall enough! A terrarium up to 2 meters (standard room height) is sometimes recommended.

Now, it doesn't need to be quite so tall, especially if the terrarium is suspended so that its upper rim is flush with the ceiling. Such a terrarium will also provide the skinks with the sensation of great height that they require. But if the latter is lacking you won't get much pleasure from your tree skinks. They will remain panicky, rush around the terrarium "like crazy", and hide all the time. In

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Back arched like a cat and tail curled in: this juvenile *Emoia cyanura* feels threatened.

at night). Bark should be glued to all the walls of the terrarium so that the skinks can climb up and down them. By day the temperature gradient in the terrarium should range from around 23 °C (at the bottom) to about 30 °C (below the cover). A spot-lamp should provide a localized temperature of approximately 35 °C.

Problem-free feeding

Tree skinks have no special requirements when it comes to feeding. All the usual food insects are accepted happily. They should always be dusted with a calcium- vitamin mix. In addition it is highly advisable to fit a UV lamp in the terrarium.

Sexual dimorphism

As with very many lizards, male tree skinks can readily be identified by their thickened hemipenis sacs. In the Emerald Tree Skink there is a further reliable difference between the sexes: males have a large, strikingly colored (yellow or orange) scale on the underside of the thigh, as well as yellow scales on the heels. These egg-laying lizards are fairly tolerant of one another, including the males – something that cannot be taken for granted in skinks!

Island-hopping dwarf skinks

The dainty blue-tailed dwarf skinks of the genus *Emoia* are a quite different kettle of fish. There are two sibling species that cannot be told apart on the basis of appearance alone, specifically *E. cyanura* and *E. impar*. They

also occur in the same geographical areas, so that in this case the source of the lizards is unfortunately no help. It is, however, very important to distinguish between them, as *E. cyanura* is an inhabitant of open terrain and *E.*



Adult male and female (small photo above) of *Emoia cyanura*.

impar lives in woodland. This means that *E. cyanura* has a higher temperature requirement than *E. impar*. The best solution is to initially house these little reptiles (the head-body length measures 4-6 cm, plus the tail, which is much longer than the body) in a relatively large terrarium and provide various "sunny" spots. Once you know what temperature range the lizards prefer to seek out in order to achieve their "working temperature," these conditions can be reproduced in a smaller terrarium, if desired.

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Emoia cyanura is one of the commonest lizards of the Pacific islands and is found on practically every island as long as it has an area of more than around a hectare. It is thus a true island-hopper, as it can be found everywhere from the Bismarck Islands in the west to Polynesia in the east.

Reproduction takes place via two eggs, which can be laid at any time of the year. These little lizards aren't tied to any particular biotope, but





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Mabuya multifasciata can be very attractively colored.

are not found in woodland. They are not territorial, but run around everywhere. The "working temperature" of *Emoia cyanura* begins at around 24.5 °C, and when sunbathing they warm up to more than 30 °C.

Another globetrotter

The final skink to be briefly presented here is another globetrotter, and is found practically everywhere in South-East Asia, even in the center of metropolises like Hanoi.

The name of this attractive skink is *Mabuya multifasciata*, and it can attain a total length of some 30 cm, with the tail being only slightly longer than the body. But nevertheless its maintenance isn't exactly easy, something that those who keep animals frequently discover when they try to keep extremely common species. Often species that are rare in the wild present far fewer problems. The most important point to bear in mind in the case of *Mabuya multifasciata* is that it needs to be kept moist and not too warm. The fundamental requirements for enjoying *Mabuya multifasciata* are a large container of water (this can occupy up to 50% of the bottom area of the terrarium), a spotlamp heating only a very localized area to around 35 °C, and otherwise a temperature between 20 and 25 °C.

This skink is a livebearer (ovoviviparous), i.e. the young hatch at the moment the eggs are laid. In addition to the usual insects, this skink also enjoys feeding on sweet, mushy fruit.

Pair of Mabuya multifasciata, male behind.



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Naturschutz

Batrachian of the Year 2012– the Common Toad

by der DGHT

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Herpetologie und Terrarienkunde (German Association of Herpetologists and Terrarium-Keepers, DGHT) has declared the Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) Batrachian of the Year 2012.

The Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) is way ahead of all other amphibians in standing for nature conservation on the roads of Germany. In our automobile-dominated cultural landscape, the Batrachian of the Year 2012 is a fitting symbol of the conflict between road traffic and our native wildlife. Hundreds of thousands of Common Toads die on the roads in spring every year as they migrate to their spawning waters – not to mention the countless millions of tiny juveniles that in summer leave the water where they were born and often meet a miserable end beneath tire treads after only a few meters. All the more astonishing that the Common Toad nevertheless remains our commonest amphibian species and is found almost everywhere.

Nevertheless there is a noticeable downward trend in the population of this overall little endangered species. For this reason, year after year unpaid conservationists maintain and monitor toad fences and bucket traps, while in some places roads are closed or permanent conduits and toad tunnels are created. Other native animals also benefit from such conservation measures.

The Common Toad is 8–12 cm long with a brownish-gray, warty, dry skin and large, paired

parotoid glands. Some people see its beauty only when they look into its bright, golden eyes. Common Toads are inhabitants mainly of deciduous and mixed woodlands, but are also found in parkland and gardens, where they overwinter in holes in the ground, tree-stumps, and compost heaps. After their winter rest (from October to March), toads migrate, often together in large numbers, to their spawning

The action by the DGHT and its AG Feldherpetologie und Artenschutz is supported by the Austrian and Swiss professional organizations ÖGH and KARCH as well as by NABU. Further information can be found on the Internet at <http://www.dght.de>.

waters in the early spring, during rainy weather when the temperature is 5–10°C. In the space of a few days pairs deposit their long strings of 2,000–4,000 eggs in (fish) ponds and lakes, then shortly thereafter they migrate to their summer habitats. Thousands of black tadpoles often form huge swarms in the water before going ashore as young toads in June and July. Common Toads feed on earthworms, millipedes, beetles, spiders, snails, and slugs, and hence are useful for controlling pests in the garden.



Pair of Common Toads from the Aalborg area in Denmark. The female belongs to a very rare golden color variant.
Photo: Frank Schäfer



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Dekoration

Artificial rock

by Henrik Weitkamp

Rocks are indispensable as decor material for the aquarium and terrarium. They not only look good but also play an important functional role.

They provide the livestock with hiding-places and visible aids to orientation and to defining a territory. Moreover rocks are also an important aid to molting in snakes.

Rocks have just one major disadvantage: their weight. They can total many many kilograms, particularly if you construct extensive rockwork, for example when simulating a dry-stone wall. On the one hand this can lead to problems of stability, and on the other there may be danger to the livestock if they undermine the



Rockwork constructed from Gallura artificial rocks looks very natural and is well accepted by the livestock – in this case a spiny-tailed lizard of the species *Uromastix ocellata*.

rockwork so that it collapses, trapping or even killing the terrarium occupants.

There are no such problems if the innovative Gallura artificial rock (also

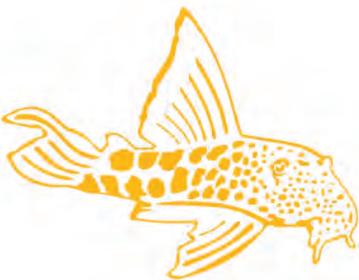
called Polyresin) is used. These rocks are manufactured from a plastic that is guaranteed non-toxic and can be used in both the aquarium and the terrarium. Because they are hollow, these artificial



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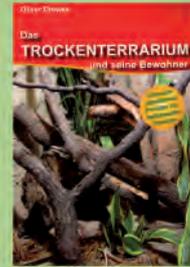
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rocks are very light despite their compact, robust form. They provide ideal hiding-places for small animals, as they are designed to include integrated "caves". Hence these artificial rocks are ideally

suitable for the nano terrarium housing small species or youngstock.

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flowers in the moist or jungle terrarium, with dead wood and succulent plants as well as various colors of sand in the dry terrarium, and with the delicate green or brown algae growth that develops when these rocks are used in and under water. Even corals in marine aquaria will grow well on these artificial rocks.

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This African Common Toad (*Bufo regularis*) has made its home in a beige artificial rock. Photos: Frank Schäfer





Fisch

Hepsetus odoe – a pike for the aquarium

by Frank Schäfer

Predatory fishes hold a particular fascination for the observer. In particular, the pike-shape, which is widespread in the realm of the fishes and transcends family boundaries, gives an impression of unbounded power combined with unmatched elegance.

high degree of ecological tolerance, but nevertheless inhabits mainly swamps and areas of still water. It is absent from the desert regions of the north and the entire

The European Pike (*Esox lucius*) can be maintained without problem in the aquarium, but has the disadvantage that it will grow independent of aquarium size - and at a rapid rate. The Pike Characin (*Hepsetus odoe*), which is widespread in Africa, offers an alternative for fans of predatory fishes.

An ancient fish

The Pike Characin is the only representative of the family Hepsetidae. It exhibits numerous special features that distinguish it from other characins. These include a simple form of auxiliary respiration using the swimbladder as a lung, which allows these fishes to survive in oxygen-poor swamps. Assorted anatomical peculiarities demonstrate that nowadays the closest relatives of the Pike Characin live in South America, specifically the species of the family Ctenoluciidae, which are likewise sometimes maintained and bred in the aquarium. This means that the ancestors of the two groups lived at a time when Africa and South America still formed parts of a single land mass.

Various features of the cranial structure



An approximately 10 cm long specimen of *Hepsetus odoe*, the African Pike Characin.

clearly demonstrate that *Hepsetus* is the most ancient of all the characins that still exist today.

Distribution

Hepsetus odoe is found in practically all tropical and subtropical bodies of water in western Africa, from Senegal to the Okavango Delta. The species thus exhibits a

Nile basin, and the African Rift Valley is the boundary of its distribution to the east.

The perfect predator

Its dentition and its body form identify the Pike Characin as a predatory fish. The dentition consists of sharp, pointed, canine teeth (the technical term is caniniform teeth), the comparatively large caudal fin

Sexually mature pair of *Hepsetus odoe*, male in front.



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permits a lightning-fast attacking lunge, and the coloration – brownish or olive bars on a light background – provides excellent camouflage. The adipose fin is a striking orange and lacquer black; this fin is characteristic of almost all characins as well as the salmonids (trout, salmon, char, etc) and is thought to serve for intraspecific communication.

In the wild *Hepsetus* feeds practically exclusively on fish. Juveniles in the upper Zambezi (Zambia) utilize upside-down catfishes (*Synodontis*) as their staple diet, while later on cichlids (*Haplochromis*,



Portrait of an adult Pike Characin with the lappets of skin on the mouth unfolded.



Tilapia) and mormyrids constitute the main foods.

How large does *Hepsetus* grow?

The Pike Characin grows to 30 cm long on average. But size details for fishes are always

a bit of a moot point. Firstly, all fishes keep on growing throughout their lives, albeit considerably less when adult than in their youth. Secondly, the size a fish can attain depends not only on its genetic make-up, but also to a large extent on environmental conditions. The largest recorded Pike Characin was probably (only its skull is known) about 50 cm long and weighed around 2 kg.

Because the Pike Characin forms an important part of the catch of local fishermen in Africa, however, we have a good idea of how large they normally grow, and individuals of 30 cm are regarded as prize specimens. They usually grow to only 20 cm long and then weigh about 50 grams.

Sexually maturity is attained at a considerably smaller size. For example, in the Okavango Delta males are sexually mature at 14 cm long, females (which generally grow larger) at 16 cm. All these size data relate to standard length, that is, not including the caudal fin.

Under aquarium conditions, where the fishes may live considerably longer than in the wild and never experience any shortage of food, you should reckon on old specimens even exceeding the 30-cm mark.

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Sexual dimorphism

Leaving aside size – as already mentioned, females are larger than males – the sexes can be readily distinguished by the size of the dorsal and anal fins. Both fins are considerably more developed in males. The dorsal fin of males in particular is very impressive and extends almost to the end of the caudal fin, but never does so in females.

Reproduction

The Pike Characin is once again an exception among the characins when it comes to its reproductive behavior. This predator is the only characin to construct a bubble nest, not dissimilar to those familiar from the labyrinthfishes. In the wild reproduction is dependent not so much on the season of the year as on the water temperature. Spawning takes place at low water and comparatively high temperatures. This means that some populations, for example those in the Okavango Delta, spawn mainly between August and January, others from August to May, depending on when the annual Okavango flood reaches the habitat in question. It appears that both sexes are involved in the construction and defense of the bubble nest. It is thought that the strange flaps of skin on the jaws are employed in bubble nest construction. However, the fishes also deploy these flaps of skin when water conditions deteriorate. It is probable that when the fishes swim close to the surface these flaps help to improve the oxygen supply.

The bubble nest is dome-shaped (around 17 x 16 cm and about 9 cm deep) and is constructed among reed stems near the bank. As the eggs, which number 2,600 on average – develop they ascend to the surface of the nest, which is also where the larvae hatch. They are better protected from predators there, and the oxygen supply is optimal. The ascent of the eggs is caused by the parents producing more air bubbles beneath the nest after spawning. The larvae sink to the bottom of the nest and attach themselves to it via adhesive glands on their heads. The nest now becomes significantly shallower with a depth of only around 2 cm, and broader (around 40 x 30 cm). The parents guard the nest, but there is no indication of any direct brood care, for example collecting up the youngsters.

Pike Characins in the aquarium

Hepsetus odoe are wonderful and interesting study objects in the aquarium. They are peaceful among themselves and towards other fishes that don't represent potential food. Only if they have too little space are Pike Characins likely to indulge in quarrelsome disputes among themselves. All in all, *Hepsetus* can be classified as fairly shy, and are liable to be intimidated by cichlids half their size. Ideal tankmates include peaceful bushfishes (*Ctenopoma*), bichirs (*Polypterus*), and/or lungfishes (*Protopterus*).

Fortunately feeding is easy, as these fishes will accept deep-frozen fish as food without problem. Whole, deep-frozen Stint are the ideal staple food for Pike Characins of upwards of 12 cm in length. If necessary these fishes will also take strips of fish fillet, but this food should be the exception rather than the rule.

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The chemical composition of the water plays no role, and the water temperature can lie between 18 and 30 °C. The aquarium doesn't need to be all that large, as *Hepsetus* are quiet fishes that don't swim around a lot. The minimum dimensions suggested are around 4 x the actual body length of the fish for the long side and 2-3 x the body length of the fish for the short side of the aquarium. The depth of the tank



is of lesser importance. Plants are ignored by *Hepsetus*, but the aquarium should not be too brightly illuminated as otherwise the Pike Characins will be shy. There is much still to be learned about these fantastic fishes, and for this reason it would



be a good thing if more aquarists were to undertake the maintenance of the Pike Characin. Were this fish to be bred successfully in the aquarium – there have been no reports of this to date – then, as in the case of so many fish species, this might help to clarify important details regarding the life history of *Hepsetus odoe*.

Afterword: A revision of the genus *Hepsetus* has just been published, in which a new species is described, namely *Hepsetus akawo*, and *H. cuvieri* is confirmed as a valid species. According to the authors, the distribution of *H. odoe* is bounded by the Senegal River (in Senegal) in the west and the Cavally River (Ivory Coast) in the east, while the new species is distributed from the Sassandra River (Ivory Coast) in the

Lexicon

Hepsetus odoe

Hepsetus: Meaning unknown; "hepset" is the French common name for an atherinid (*Atherina hepsetus*).

odoe: from the name of this fish in Guinea.

west to the Cross River (Cameroon) in the east. The two species are allopatric, in other words their distributions do not overlap.

References:

Decru, E., Vreven, E. and J. Snoeks (2012): A revision of the West African *Hepsetus* (Characiformes: Hepsetidae) with a description of *Hepsetus akawo* sp. nov. and a redescription of *Hepsetus odoe* (Bloch, 1794). *Journal of Natural History* 46 (1-2): 1-23 (printed 10th. Nov. 2011).

Almost through....

A new Caecilian worm

by Max Leber

In November 2011 Aquarium Glaser was able to import just two specimens of a Caecilian worm from Peru that doesn't resemble any of the species imported previously.

These caecilians were offered by the exporter under the fine-sounding name of "Atinga Trapo Negra Blue Eyes", and that describes very clearly the most obvious difference between this new caecilian and the otherwise very similar species *Typhlonectes natans* from Colombia: the comparatively large eyes that reflect blue in the light of the camera flash. Not without reason is *Typhlonectes natans* popularly known as the "blind eel" in the wholesale trade, although neither part of the name is correct: these animals are neither blind nor are they in any way related to the eels. But *T. natans* has only very small eyes, overgrown with skin.

The third group of amphibians

Every child knows that the amphibians are

divided into those with tails - newts, salamanders, etc - and those without – the batrachians, ie frogs, toads, etc. But hardly anyone is aware of the third group of amphibians, the caecilians. This is undoubtedly because there are no

The new caecilian worm from Peru.

All photos: Frank Schäfer





The relatively large eye of the new caecilian worm from Peru is clearly visible.



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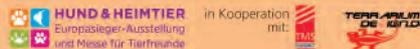
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representatives of this group in Europe and in addition there is little to recommend their maintenance in the terrarium, as the majority live almost exclusively underground, like earthworms. There are undoubtedly people who like to look with rapture at an empty, earth-filled terrarium and whisper quietly, "Those are my caecilians in there!" But such folk are very thin on the ground.

Caecilian worms

The aquatic members of the family, ie those that live in water, are somewhat more attractive to keep. They are not at all as secretive and produce live young, which makes them easier to breed. The main problems with maintaining these creatures are their constant molting and mucus production. This pollutes the water and can sometimes lead to fatal fungal infections of the skin of the caecilian. But powerful filtration isn't an option, as the caecilians can be easily sucked in and suffer serious injuries in the process. Hence the best method of filtration is with filter matting and a lot of air.

The identity of the new caecilian worm is at present unknown. However, there are various indications that it may be *Typhlonectes compressicauda*, a species not previously imported.



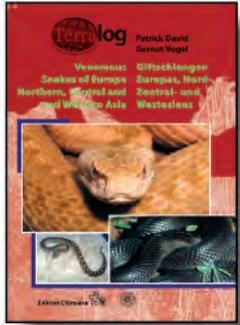
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[Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1832]

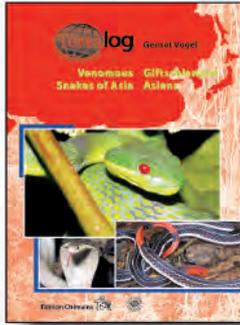
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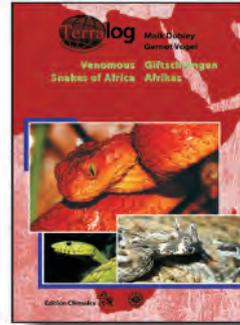
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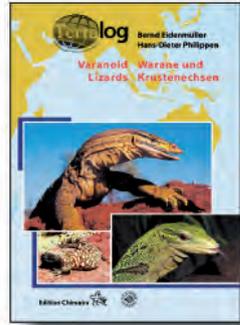
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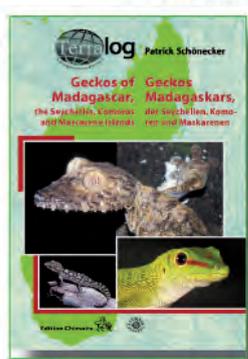
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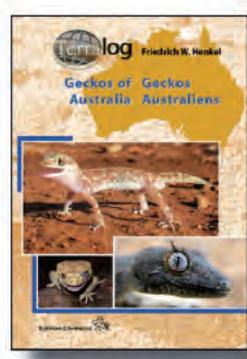
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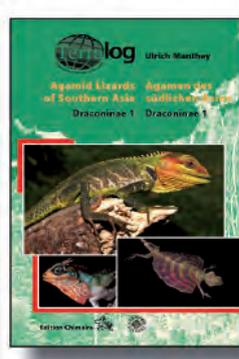
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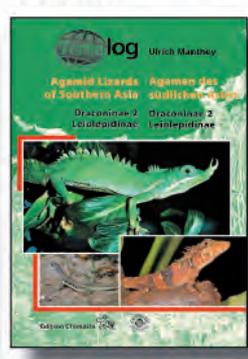
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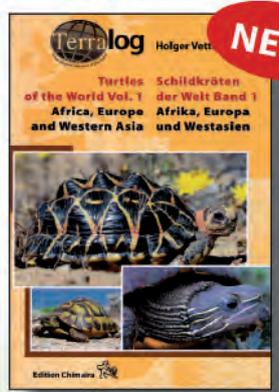
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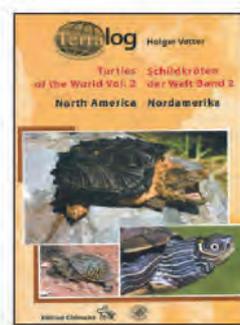
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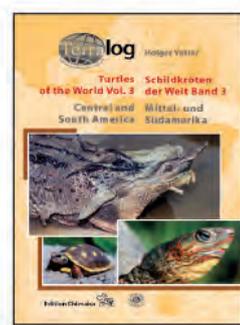
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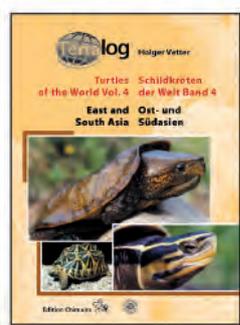
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