

# Livebearer News

Official Members Magazine of the  
BRITISH LIVEBEARER ASSOCIATION



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## **Editorial** by Paddy Davies

Welcome to the Issue 33 of Livebearer News, I am sure it has not escaped your attention that it is a little bit late. There have been many reasons for this and the recent convention was a chance to get your views as members on what you want from the committee. From these discussions, a plan to get the association back on its feet has been formulated and this issue of the Newsletter is the first step. This edition includes a message from our new chairman, explaining the changes.

I do have rather big boots to fill as I am aware of the fantastic newsletters published in recent years by Duncan Hughes-Phillips who did a brilliant job producing an incredibly varied and interesting read. I hope I can continue this tradition. ' We will be publishing 4 newsletters each year, in March, June, September and December.'

We do have rather a conservation theme this time with articles from Nigel Hunter on the *Ameca splendens* and one on a reintroduction project for the endangered Spanish killifish *Aphanius iberus*, although it is not a livebearer, it is reporting on pioneering conservation work in a closely family.

There are a few reviews as well, a report on the BLA 2011 convention, one on the 2011 Festival of Fishkeeping from a livebearer perspective and a report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> international Meeting of the Goodeid Working Group, as well as an article on an endlers display aquarium.

I hope you all enjoy reading this edition and have great Christmas holidays, please do email your comments, suggestions and offers of articles (?) to me.

[Paddyd99@gmail.com](mailto:Paddyd99@gmail.com)

## **Chairman's Report** by Chris Cheswright

It is with pleasure that I am able to address the members of the British Livebearer Association. It has not been a great year for several reasons that I do not intend to go into. We mean to move on and a few of us are determined to get the Association back in working order. There will be some changes to make it work and all the people who have agreed to form a committee have also agreed to put the graft in. We do not intend to exclude any other interested members from taking on a role or indeed offering to take on one of the posts. If anyone out there objects to the way we have got things going again please get in touch but do be prepared to take on the job!

One change has happened and that is the Guppy section has now formed a separate Association, **Fancy Guppies UK**. This was a natural progression and is in no way a rival association. Please belong to both and get the best of both worlds. We will be negotiating some 'severance' deals and may well work in partnership in the future.

We have decided that due to the rum deal everyone had last year that those who joined for the 2011 year will receive free membership for 2012. If you had not rejoined that year but were previously a member you will have to pay the full membership fee (postal or email). Membership payments will resume from January 2013 for all members. You will receive 4 quarterly newsletters (I hope the publication months will appear in this newsletter) plus (if you let us know your email) periodic updates by email. Regarding the newsletter we have sourced a printer and will provide a publication that is high quality and of a size that is sensible to post! We have been grateful to our previous editors for providing the printing for free but always knew that this was not a sustainable model and that we would one day need to move on. We intend to hold regular committee meetings and keep to publication dates:

It is intended to hold a spring and autumn meeting. One will be a convention. To make it fair we intend to hold one in the north and one in the South. Any offers would be gratefully received.

### **So onto who's offered to do what;**

**Chairman:** Chris Cheswright, will try to keep tabs on our performance to ensure things get done. Email [cheswright@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:cheswright@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Treasurer:** Don Kenwood will also deal with membership. Telephone: 01275 343949, Email [donkenwood@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:donkenwood@blueyonder.co.uk)

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**Publisher:** Kim Jones Email [birdmaid@uwclub.net](mailto:birdmaid@uwclub.net)

**Webmaster:** Alan Dunne

**Committee members:** Clive Walker and Steve Elliott

We decided to trim the committee down and ensure that everyone has a role; some are yet to be decided.. We will be looking for everyone's support and hope that we can get

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things back in working order and provide the service and information we previously have. We do need your help- particularly with articles on anything remotely livebearer (preferably fishy) related.

## **Hope – Conservation in Action** by Nigel Hunter

'Photos copyright Matt Ford - Seriouslyfish.com

We all hear about habitat loss and the destruction of rain forests in far off lands, unfortunately it is all too often a problem nearer home as well.

In Nov 2010 I was invited to attend the 1st International meeting of the Goodeid Working Group in Barcelona. As you might guess, the GWG is an international group involved in the conservation of Goodeids with attendees from several countries at the meeting.

I was there as a delegate from the Fish Ark project concerned with the conservation of Mexican freshwater fish, including Goodeids, which was founded by the late Ivan Dibble.

Whilst there I met several Spanish and expat fishkeepers belonging to the organisation Sociedad de Estudios Ictiológico (SEI), they are working to preserve the last relic populations of the Spanish Killifish *Aphanius Iberus*

**Male *A.iberus*:**



**Female *A.iberus*:**



Due to land drainage, building and the introduction of alien species *A. iberus* has already been lost from much of it's former habitats, the *Aphanius iberus* conservation project have had to lobby and work for several years to get permission to breed and re-introduce them. We were invited to see the work they are doing and were overwhelmed by their dedication and passion.

Three breeding pools were established, each pond with three pairs of fish, The fish were not fed whilst in the pools, instead they ate naturally occurring gammarus shrimp and insects, although regular water changes were performed. In the first pond, the fish disappeared and could not be found when it was subsequently netted.

### **Diet:**



### **First Pool:**



In the 2 remaining pools a nice surprise was awaiting them:  
104 females 109 males in the second pool and 298 males and 379 females in  
the third pool, not bad from 3 females!

### **Second Pool:**

### **Third Pool:**



After this success, new pools had to be dug and other habitats found that might give them a fighting chance



### **Release Site:**



You will notice how close it is to the sea on the right of the picture, 620 fish were released into this lagoon.

Work is still on going and they receive no funding for this project it has been a hard slog but it is good to see that someone actually cares and is doing something





Here is the some of the team

surveying areas that could be used

for potential release sites



Matt Ford releasing the fish

### **Latest update:**

Early 2011 the group was were given use of a disused camp site containing several swimming pools. The local dignitaries were there for the occasion, with the local Mayor and Manuel Zapater, president of the SEI doing the signing.





Then there was the release into the pools of the fish, 50 of each sex were released to do their thing for conservation.



These pools were used as breeding pools for the *Aphanius iberus* through the Summer.

This was somewhat successful in Mid October the pools were netted, several thousand fish were found, 3500 fish were collected to be the breeding stock for the reintroduction site.

The release date was set for the weekend of the 15/16 October 2011. Many people turned up, which is great, as the word of this important work is spreading and getting a bit of local interest, young people especially seem to be interested which in turn should help in the longer term, as they are the future.



This work is ongoing but shows that even a few individuals can achieve great things. Although these are not livebearers, I hope we can show our interest as this is the way forward and many lessons can be learnt from this project that may help in other re-introduction projects involving livebearers. This is a great opportunity to see conservation in action.

For more information, and to stay updated, go to the Seriously Fish website

I would like to thank the members of Sociedad de Estudios Ictiológico for allowing us to see what they are trying to do and Matt Ford of [seriouslyfish.com](http://seriouslyfish.com) for letting us use his images and for the information freely given'.

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All views expressed herein are the opinions of the contributor and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the BLA.

The print date for the next issue is 31st March 2012, could all contributors please ensure that articles are provided to the Editor by the end of Feb 2012.

# Data Protection Act

In order to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, we need to inform members that their name, address, e-mail address and telephone number are being maintained on a database, the purpose of which is for the distribution of the Association's magazine and to inform members of forthcoming events. This information will not be provided to any other organisation for any purpose whatsoever without prior consultation.

The Association agrees to remove any details at a member's request.

## Members sales and wanted:

### Clive Walker:

I have a male Chapalichthys Encaustus that needs a mate or I may part with him. I also have Illyodon Xantusi for sale from 50p each to £4.00 a pair.

clivewalker341@hotmail.com **London**

### Zoo:

We have also had a request from Alex Cliff at London Zoo for certain species that they are interested in. If you have any, please contact Nigel Hunter in the first case on 07887517988 or email nigelhunter@tiscali.co.uk

### Livebearers:

*Allotoca diazi*

*Allotoca maculata*

*Hubsina turneri*

*Illyodon whitei*

*Gambusia eurystoma*

*Poecilia latipunctata*

*Poecilia sulphuraria*

*Xiphoporus couchianus*

*Astrolebias cinereus*

*Aphanius splendens*

*Aplocheilichthys sp. Baringo*

*Astrolebias cinereus*

*Cyprinodon labiosus*

*Cyprinodon meeki*

*Cyprinodon pachycephalus*

*Cyprinodon pecosensis*

*Cyprinodon verecundus*

*Epiplatys coccinatus*

*Lucania interioris*

*Epiplatys ruhkopfi*

## Killies:

*Aphanius almeriensis*

*Aphanius richardsoni*

*Aphanius soourensis*

*Aphanius sirhani*

*Fundulopanchax powelli*

*Megupsilon aporus*

*Pantodon* sp. 'Manombo'

*Scriptaphyosemion cauveti*

*Scriptaphyosemion etzeli*

*Valencia hispanica*

# Members Aquariums: 20 Litre Endlers Aquarium

by Paddy Davies

I am hoping to cover at least one livebearer aquarium in each issue, so please send through any photos of your tanks and a run down of what makes it just a little bit different

To start off procedures is my 20 Litre Cube Aquarium, a tank I am really enjoying at the moment, I bought it because I wanted to try a planted display aquarium but keep it fairly low maintenance. The tank itself is a curved edge one that looks modern, measuring just 25cmx25x30cm high.

Filtration has been a bit of a problem, I started with a Dennerle internal filter, this did a fine job, however it packed up a few weeks in, so I left the tank unfiltered for a month or so, with a low biomass, plants, regular water changes and careful feeding this was ok for a while, However it never looked as good as when it had a filter, which I put down to lack of water flow as much as anything as water parameters were ok. So I have added a Fluval Mini filter (a re-badged Fluval 1 plus) I love these filters they are fairly cheap to buy and run, are robust and simple.



The lighting is an Arcadia Arc Pond, clip on light with a normal 11w PLS Bulb, Although I am not growing any plants that need really high levels of light, I thought I would go with a light I have used successfully before, I like the Arcadia Original Tropical bulb as it a fairly pink bulb, reminiscent of Gro-lux, as the tank is only 30cm deep it will provide plenty of light.

The Substrate consists of a fine black quartz gravel on top of some plant substrate, to provide nutrients to the plant roots. I also used some red pebbles.

I am not using a heater as the temp stays at 21 degrees C, which seems to be fine for the fish. Speaking of which, I am not known for my love of guppies, but I thought this strain was really pretty and as I wanted a display fish that visitors might like, these fit the bill very well. They are active and interesting, always on the go and displaying to each other. The males of this form can sometimes be solid scarlet, although my males do have some black markings on them. They have also started breeding and a few fry have been spotted!

I do sometimes think about replacing them as I have now got hold of some Gold Mosquito fish (*Heterandria formosa*) which would look cracking in this tank, so watch this space.

I have added a golden apple snail to help with algae and because they look nice, I will probably replace it with a couple of the red form of apple snails when I next see them, as would match the black and red theme that is developing. I also added some cherry fire shrimp (*Caridina heteropoda* var. Fire) The Shrimps were added, just because they are interesting and look good on the black gravel of the tank, and will help with mopping up algae and any waste food.

The plants were added, *Cryptocoryne mioya* is a new wendtii type discovered by Tropica. A nice species, it seem to have settled in well and is growing nice and slowly at the moment. I also have *Anubias nana*, which is looking ok. The *Barclaya longifolia* var red is a new species to me, but has grown very well and has a really rich red colour, stunning! I also have duckweed (*Lemna minor*), which I dont mind too much, but it can cut down on light and of course competes with other plants for nutrients, so I scoop it out about once a week. There is also a bit of my favourite plant *Najas guadalupensis*.



Feeding regime is as follows – fish get a flake mix once a day and frozen *Daphnia* once a week approximately, the inverts also get a pleco wafer a couple of times a week.

The plants get a daily dose of Seachem Flourish, a complete plant food, as well as Flourish Excel, a liquid carbon treatment. Occasionally I add an iron supplement for the *Barclaya* as well.

Maintenance of the tank is fairly simple, with a 40 percent waterchange twice a week and the filter sponge rinsed out in mature water once a week, and the glass is just cleaned weekly, although it does not really get much algae on it. This is lots more work than I would normally do on a display tank, however it is easy to do on a small tank only taking 5 to 10 mins at a time. and the results are starting to show.

All in all, this type of set up is interesting and lends itself to the keeping of smaller livebearer species even as a small colony.

## **Review of the 2011 Festival of Fishkeeping**

Text by Clive Walker

Photos copyright Dai Jones

The Festival of Fishkeeping 2011 returned to Weston-Super-Mare this year. Its a much smaller holiday camp-site than Hayling Island, this made transporting fish from chalet to the marquees much easier.

The chalets were warm comfortable and with plenty of hot water. The food was good although it was eat at 6pm, all over by 6.45.

There were all the usual trade stands spread over the large collection of marquees. There was also a stand from a local shop which was selling some very nice *Skiffia multipunctata*, location details: Czech Republic!

I think a question arises over whether or not to breed from commercially produced species, or is that a too 'purist' view. Something for discussion later perhaps. I bought a pair, they were only £ 3.00 each.

A few years ago the FBAS introduced a sales area for " tank bred & surplus stock" sales. I've sold a lot of fish there since then. This year I sold a lot of *Illyodon xantusi*, ten of them to the shop with the *Skiffia*.

There were several livebearer species on sale, *Goodea attripinnis*, *Skiffia cf francasae* (V188), *Xiphophorus cortezi*, *Xenotoca eiseni* and vast numbers of Guppies, There was also a *Xiphophorus* Species, the parents of which had been bought as *X. multilineatus*. The general opinion was that they were not this species, there was a breeders team of *X. nezahualcoyotl* on the show bench which looked the same but were not as deep bodied. I bought a pair of them and have looked them up in the Aqualog. The fish are identical to photo S86235-4 on page 208, I will try and get more details from the breeder.

A good number of Sheaf Valley A S members were there, they are breeding all sorts of fish, mainly egglayers, including *Scleromystax barbatus* that were selling at only £5.00.



Viviparus.org.uk had a stand there with a good range of different livebearers. They also had a vast amount of worm cultures, Micro, Banana, Grindle, etc. for sale.

I only get to meet some of the fishkeepers I know at this annual event. Its good to catch up and talk about what we love, fish. I would say to anyone that its worth making the effort to visit for the day even if its a long journey.





## Summary of our 2nd International Meeting of The Goodeid Working Group

Text by Michael Koeck of the GWG

Photos copyright Dai Jones

Editors Note: I would like to thank the GWG for allowing us to reprint this summary from their website. Please go to the website to find out more about this group, <http://www.goodeidworkinggroup.com/>.

This year, the GWG has been invited by the French regional group, L' Association France Vivipares and L' Aquaclub Trouville to come to Pont L' Eveque, a small town in the Normandy, famous for its cheese, its cidre and of course its Calvados. Together with a green landscape with beautiful creeks and lakes and mediievally seeming houses, the place for our 2nd International Meeting seemed to be more than great, and it was indeed!

The participants arrival has been fixed with Friday, the 7th of October, unfortunately, the employees of the railway company started a strike spontaneously and it had been a bit difficult to get to Pont L' Eveque for the guests coming by train or plane. But thanks to the efforts of Alain Grioche, who took all the people several times by car from the nearby-town Lisieux, we arrived all well in the province of Calvados.

The first stop was to the Poissonerie, a former fish-market, where the local Aquarium club organized an exhibition, and where the GWG had been invited to be part of and to organize the biggest Goodeid exhibition ever held. So, before going to our hotel, or to the Mongolian yurts, where some of the guests had really funny nights, we released our fish into the exhibition tanks. Rather soon, we had filled more than 50 tanks with Goodeids and no end in sight... Meanwhile, while waiting for the last guests to arrive, some of us had been taken to a local producer of Calvados, which had been a very "spiritual" event. By the way, Calavdos has been a very, very tasty companion for our next days. In the later afternoon, most of us had the honour to visit the Aquaclub in Trouville, a club, which conferred a very deep impression to us. There were a high number of very good tanks (many of them showing Goodeids), that showed in an impressive manner the knowledge and ability of the members, but also the unusual tanks made of wood(!) made it absolutely worth going there.



In the evening, all members of the GWG had been taken to dinner. We were sitting and talking in different languages, and looking around us at 40 or 50 people, there could be counted 14 nations, being all part of one family. This

feeling of being at home and being part of a family, has been a warm company for these cool days in France.

After a warm night in the hotel room, or a cool one in a Mongolian tent, the exhibition was opened on Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup> of October. In the end, there had been more than 300 tanks, a lot filled with Guppies and other Poeciliids, with Killifish, Cichlids, and finally nearly 70 with Goodeids, presenting even so rare species as *Allodontichthys polylepis*, *Allotoca goslinei* and *meekei*, *Allophorus robustus*, *Skiffia lermæ* and *francesæ*, and nearly all known populations of *Characodon audax* and *lateralis*.

At 9.30, we started our meeting with the welcome speeches of Jacques Sabatier, president of L' Asociacion France Vivipares and head of L' Aquaclub Trouville and Michael Koeck from the GWG. The time before lunch has been reserved for the speeches of Kees de Jong, former president of Poecilia Nederland and one of the best breeders of Goodeids in the world with his speech: Goodeids, an overview. He has been followed by the head of the Aqualab in Morelia, Omar Domínguez Domínguez. He talked about the History of the Fish Ark Project and about new results of the scientific work in the university. After lunch, Michael Tobler, born in Switzerland but living in Oklahoma shocked us with his speech about the Vanishing of *Characodon*. Finally, Michael Koeck from the Haus des Meeres, Vienna, talked about the possibility of keeping Goodeids outdoors in summer.

After the very unexpected exchanges of the brought along Goodeids (There had been really a lot!), and a short break, we started the Roundtable discussions for GWG members. After the Roundtable, we had an excellent dinner in the exhibition hall, giving us the whole taste of the Normandy, including mussels, duck, Calvados, apple cake and cheese. The night brought us some very interesting meetings with a white rabbit, and some of us will never forget about a certain "Macho Latino" - please forgive me to keep these things as a secret...

Sunday brought us the auction of the exhibited fish, and gave us the possibility to get some of them. Then there came the saddest time of the Meeting, when we had to say Good bye to each other and finish for leaving, but not without promising to meet each other again next year, either in Diemelsee-Adorf (Germany) or Vienna (Austria). But for everybody participating, it was clear, that it would be nearly impossible to surpass this Meeting.

## **Ameca splendens, Fish Ark Project Mexico**

By Nigel Hunter

Photos copyright John and Susy Pint



Ameca splendens may well have been the first Goodeid that you came into contact with, unfortunately it seems to have gone out of favour at the moment and many newcomers to the hobby will not be aware of it.



Also known as the butterfly Goodeid, *A.splendens* is a wonderful fish with much to commend it, it is an undemanding species, only needing clean, well filtered cooler water with a diet containing some vegetable matter, add a bit of cover for security and to provide the fry with a sanctuary and you are on your way to success.

It is a shame that this fish is not more popular, especially given that it is listed as extinct in the wild by the international Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN, this is one of many fish that deserve our attention as hobbyists.

### **Extinct?**

In early 2008 Ivan Dibble, founder of the Fish Ark Mexico project heard a rumour that Ameca splendens may not be extinct, and might be living in the Teuchitlan River in Mexico. A few specimens had been found at restaurants on the shore of the polluted lake La Vega

So Ivan contacted a couple of American teachers who live in Mexico to find out more. John and Susy Pint have a passion for the country and soon took up Ivan's suggestion to visit the river.





At one end is a recreational park Balnerio El Rincon,. At the other end of it's of 1 kilometre length is the highly polluted lake La Vega which is covered in water hyacinth, an invasive exotic species. Between the two, you have effluent from several farms and a sugar refinery.



No fish have been found for many years in this main channel, and it looked like a wasted visit, but after walking from the lake towards the park a small inlet within sight of the park was discovered with a thriving population of *Ameca splendens*. This is apparently spring fed and therefore not exposed to the pollution problems of the main river, fortunately it seems to be stable **for now**.



A plan was in the pipeline to protect them then Ivan passed away and things were put on hold. It was hoped that the park at least would be a refuge for the *Ameca*, but the directors are having internal disputes and as yet no decisions can be made, so we will have to wait and see.



Meanwhile *Ameca* hang on in the wild, fortunately the Fish Ark and it's allies around the world keep the *Ameca* safe albeit in captivity





The Fish Ark Project, helps to protect and conserve the Goodeids and other fresh water fish of Mexico, however all this costs money so if you feel inclined to give a little to help keep the Ark running please feel free to

I would like to thank John and Susy Pint for their permission to use their images

If you would like to assist or donate to the Ameca Project, you can contact them via their website, <http://www.saudicaves.com/mx/> . To donate to Fish Ark Mexico, contact Don Kenwood (donkenwood@blueyonder.co.uk) .

# British Livebearer Convention 2012

by Chris Cheswright

Photo P.Davies

Everyone who attended this year's convention will have a different view but here goes with mine. I need to be honest and thank all of those who were involved in the set up and getting things to look professional for the show. Also to those who were getting things together and sorting out bookings, judges and speakers. My efforts in this respect were minimal but we thank everyone who attended and all of you who helped out during the event in some way.

I arrived on Friday, a little earlier than previous years as the traffic on the way up was a little more considerate and kept moving. I was then treated to a drive around Nottingham in Paddy's car navigated by Howard and Don who had some vague recollection that they drove to an Indian restaurant the previous year. Well one was found, not the expected one, after some miles. How they got round in Cuba and Jamaica I will never know.



Anyway after some rum, care of Howard, the next morning came a little too soon. The Guppies and livebearers made a good show, although a few Guppies did not like the water conditions. Brian Chittenden was doing a fair trade in tanks et al and Tim Addis with his variety of fish food and equipment. JBL were selling goods this year with the profit going to the BLA- many thanks. Peter Burgess was there on behalf of Mars with 'Aquarian' products on display (all of which were donated for the raffles- many thanks).

There were many talks during the day and I have to say I did not manage them all. So here is a scenario of the ones I did see;

Steve Elliott gave a tour of a Singapore Guppy farm that was run in a sustainable way, with rainwater and (I think) no electricity? Very interesting and a pity we do not have the weather for it.

'Leendert van den Berg's talk' was on keeping good records on guppy keeping. This was very specialist but of interest to some of the Guppy breeders to keep track of relationships and blood lines.

Christian Salogni gave an interesting talk on diseases of ornamental fish.

Alex Cliff from London Zoo gave a good talk on the Zoo aquarium and in particular on the conservation efforts. The main groups being maintained are Goodeas and killies ( Cyprinodons and Aphanis). A few surprising things are that the temperatures are between 10 and 20<sup>0</sup>C and that they are experimenting with UVC lights (for reptiles) to prevent outbreaks of 'Fish TB'. Research has suggested that the bacteria responsible do not cause the symptoms when fish are outdoors. They seem to be having some success in preventing outbreaks in some goodeids. Alex also went through the plans being put forward to increase the conservation area into a public viewed research centre with temperature controlled rooms to mimic the natural habitats. I did visit the zoo a week or so later and although the surroundings are a little aged the displays did look good.

Dave Hulse gave a talk on stress in fish and how the symptoms seen are a result of the environment being stressful in some way. Be it other fish, noise, size of tank etc. We must treat the environment as treating the fish is not a cure.

I missed Don's talk on Jamaica but he will be writing an article on this trip soon (he will know that once he has read this!). After a lay down after all that information the evening meal was well attended and saw the presentation of the awards.

The main event on Sunday is the auction, with less wild livebearer lots than recently it went without incident and most lots were sold.

Well that was just a quick rundown of what went on in Nottingham on the weekend of 14th to 16th October 2011. What needs to be thought about now is how we run the convention next year. Any ideas would be good to hear and any offers of help appreciated.



*Characodon audax* (Smith & Miller, 1986) From El Toboso, Durango Mexico  
photo D.Jones

In April 2011 Juan Miguel Artigas-Azas went to El Toboso to search for this species, unfortunately the pool where the fish were collected was dry and no fish were found.

If you have these fish please do your best to breed and distribute these as they may now be extinct in the wild.'