

# Livebearer News

Official Members Magazine of the  
BRITISH LIVEBEARER ASSOCIATION



**ISSUE 38**  
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## **Editorial** by Paddy Davies

Spring is finally upon us, although it has been a slow start, I am waiting for it to warm up so I can put some of them outside for the summer. This issue we have some interesting articles, including a new one from Clive walker on keeping Chapalichthys and a three part one on the Black Beauty Sawfin, this is a stunning hybrid goodeid, in this article we cover James Langhammer's original work in creating the hybrid, through Derek Lambert's experiences with it in the uk, and finally we include an update of its current status within the UK hobby.

Unfortunately this issue is very heavy on goodeids, if anyone would like to write a small article on any other group of fish – please send it to me.

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

Paddyd99@gmail.com

## **B.L.A. Members Subs,**

This is a reminder that all Memberships are due for January 2013, please note if payment is not received from you, the March issue will not be sent and you will not receive any Magazines in 2013 until your payment is received Thank you.

Thank you to all those that have paid during the convention and online at the [www.brishlivebearersasscoation.co.uk](http://www.brishlivebearersasscoation.co.uk) website link, you can also post by snail mail to Chris Cheswright address below, Memberships is £12.00 by email, £16.00 by postal and £22.00 sterling by post outside UK (increased due to rising postal charges). please note any payments sent to Don Kenwood will be forwarded to

Mr C Cheswright

2, Cedar Avenue

Wickford

Essex

SS12 9DT

Email [cheswright@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:cheswright@blueyonder.co.uk)

We look forward to hearing from you soon

regards The Committee

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

First an apology for the change in date of the spring event which was beyond our control; I know it has made it difficult for some to attend. We have listened and tried to get an event in a more northerly locality and when there were problems with the hall it was either cancel or change the date. We hope to see many BLA members and hope that some local fish keepers will also attend. A £2 fee will be charged for non members to bid at the auction.

We hope to attract a lot of fish in the show and will be setting up the tanks on Saturday afternoon so do come along and help. The classes will be the same as at the convention- the fish are donated so please consider bringing some fish that are still young; a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to Fishark. Fish can be entered Sunday morning.

The classes are;

- Goodeas ( Pairs)
- Wild Xiphophorus (Pairs)
- Other Wild livebearers (Pairs)
- Cultivated Livebearers (excluding Guppies) (Pairs)
- Breeders Class (4 fish to be under 1 year- no date of birth required).

At the last committee meeting we were talking about the need to try and keep some tabs on certain species, as in some cases very few members are keeping them. It is also less likely we will continually receive new stock from wild collections. In light of this could you let me know if you are currently breeding any Xiphophorus or Brachyraphis sp? This is a request so that we have some idea as we think some species have already been lost in this country and others may be kept by only a handful of fishkeepers. Nigel Hunter is keeping an eye on the Goodea species along with one or two other members. I am now keeping fewer species but trying to have more than one or two tanks of each specie. It is so easy to lose a specie of fish . About 18 months ago I had a 2ft tank full of X.pygmaeus, it became very full of plant and on clearing this out it became apparent that many of the fish had gone and very few remained. There are now a lot of babies and the numbers are increasing- I could so easily have lost them. I have heard many similar stories and also of members with a tank full of fish only to find they are virtually all one sex. So do let us know if you are keeping any species in these Two groups.

# British Livebearer Association

## Mini Spring Convention & Auction

27 April 2013 – 28th April 2013

(Saturday – Sunday)



The Venue  
650 Manchester Road  
Stocksbridge  
Sheffield.  
S36 1DY

Fancy Guppies UK 2nd leg of 2013  
League will be taking place

Water is ph 6.8 at venue 7.2 available

Setting up Sat afternoon 3 till 7 followed by a meal  
if anyone is interested. Dinner Venue will be

[http://www.taybarns.com/content/taybarns/location-finder/  
barnsley.html](http://www.taybarns.com/content/taybarns/location-finder/barnsley.html) which is next to the hotel

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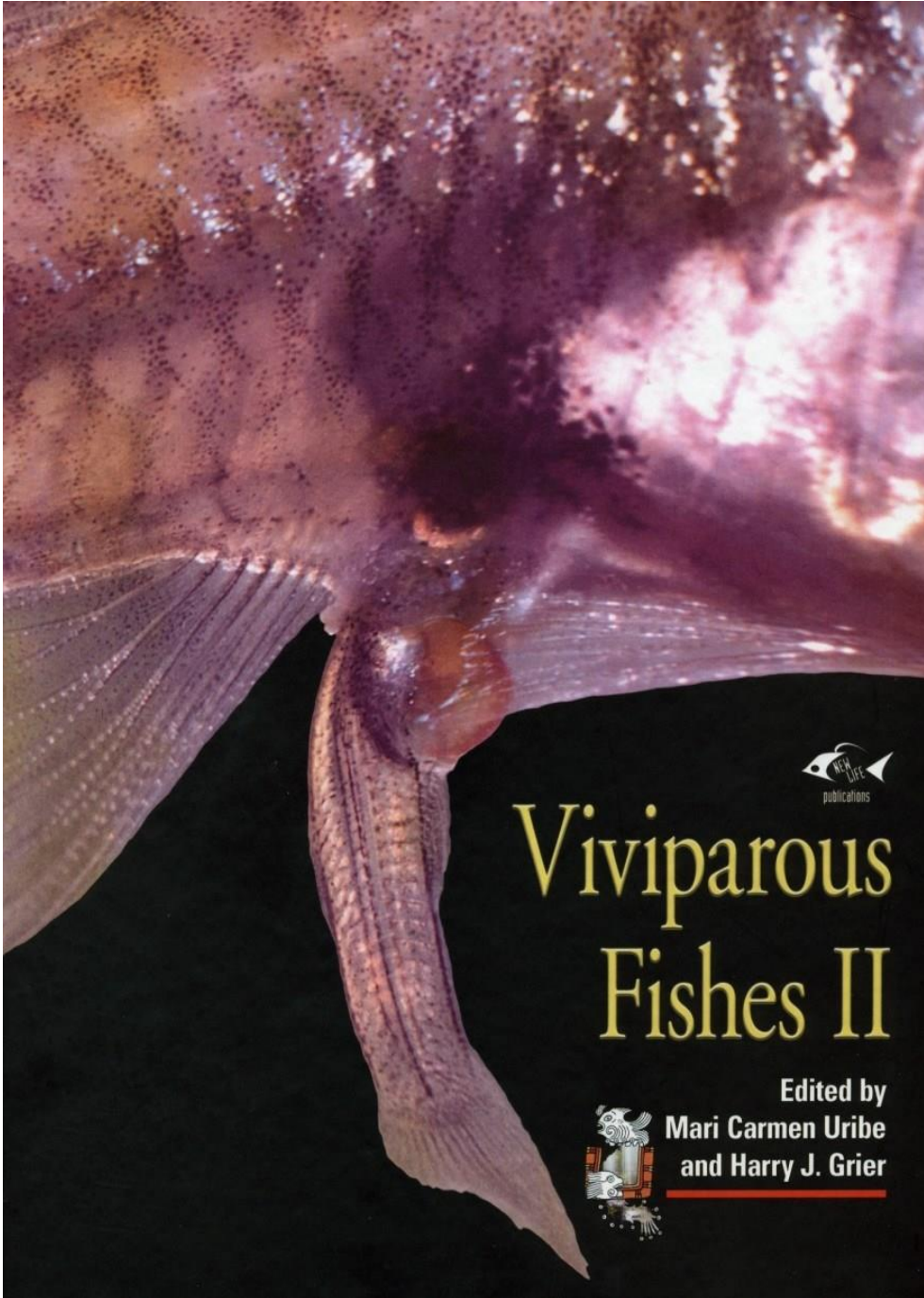
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[www.aqua-hub.org.uk](http://www.aqua-hub.org.uk)

Sunday morning talk by Shaun Stevens  
from <http://www.tropiquaria.co.uk/attended> by the  
Auction,

Fishphilosophy will have a stand, Sales table for misc  
fish and other items.



# Viviparous Fishes II

Edited by  
**Mari Carmen Uribe  
and Harry J. Grier**





# Dedication of the III International Symposium on Viviparous Fishes to Ivan Dibble



Arcadio Valdés  
Gonzalez

Years ago, in the late eighties, I met Ivan Dibble at my first meeting of the American Livebearer Association (ALA) where my presentation was about a program called Centro de Resguardo para Peces en Peligro or the Refuge for Endangered Fish Species. My involvement in the program at that time focused on killifish. Needless to say, Ivan was impressed by my maintaining endangered species of fish, some of which were almost extinct. I pretended that this was part of a program to promote public education, conservational consciousness and environmental awareness. I did not want those fish species and their habitats to be lost forever. Ivan and I started a friendship of no ends since our ideals and ways of thinking and looking at the world environment coincided. Our favorite issue was, of course, viviparous fishes. Ivan immediately came up with the idea of starting a similar "refuge" program for his goodeids, a group of fish that almost nobody else was thinking of at the time. Then, in 1998, the First International Symposium on Viviparous Fishes, was held in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where Ivan presented his ideas and met a young, motivated researcher, Omar Domínguez-Domínguez from the Laboratorio de Biología Acuática, Facultad de Biología, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, Morelia, Mexico. This meeting turned out to become Ivan's fulfillment of an objective. Soon thereafter, the Fish Conservation Laboratory, popularly known as the Fish Ark, was established where extant species of goodeids are maintained, including *Skiffia francesae* (Figs. 1, 2), now extinct in its native Mexican habitat. Ivan was so happy!

Now, nothing could be sadder than Ivan's departure at the end of 2009! We will miss not just a friend, but also the leader of the Goodeids Fish Conservation Movement.

At the II International Symposium on Viviparous Fishes, I was asked to present Ivan for his talk and introduced him as a person of stout and harshly driven personality, always in command, always right, always stubborn, always concerned for the future of livebearing fishes by aquarium hobbyists and always worried about his goodeids. Because of this, Ivan was very hard and difficult to understand and deal with, but, at the same time, he was a very warm and caring person. All of these qualities were needed to lead and convince people about the conservation of those then unknown fish. At the moment of the introduction, it came to me as both a personal pun and also jokingly between seriousness and humor, to present Ivan to the audience as "Ivan Dibble, the Lord of Goodeids." He laughed! We all laughed and enjoyed the moment! Then, Ivan proceeded with his presentation.

Ivan's main concerns soon turned to the species of *Gambusia*, fish that most people relate with the common name of "mosquito fish," which is very unfortunate. The introduction of the mosquito fish, *Gambusia affinis*, all over the world for the mosquito control is now considered to be wrong! This species has become an environmental nuisance and habitats have become altered as a result of its global introductions. However, there are many species of *Gambusia*, but most people think of them all as being the same problem, and

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• Viviparous Fishes II





unwanted. Ivan was thinking about the habitat problems and conservation of these *Gambusia* species, including the killies and the livebearers that have been ignored by Mexican authorities until very recently.

In this moment, I could not be any more realistic on the issue since no one else has ever been more seriously concerned regarding the ideal of Mexican fish conservation, and Ivan's contribution is quite significant. At least on my mind, he really shall and will always be remembered as what he became: the Lord of Goodeids.

Rest in peace Ivan. Enjoy the glory of the companionship of your beloved wife, relatives and friends who have been earlier to go. The fish conservation awareness and programs that you started here are in the good hands of your friends at the British Livebearer Association, the American Livebearer Association, the Fish Ark, and many others who will take good care to continue your work with enthusiasm.



**Figure 1.**  
Female *Skiffia francesae*, total length 46 mm. (Photo: Harry J. Grier)



**Figure 2.**  
Male *Skiffia francesae*, total length 40 mm. (Photo: Harry J. Grier)



# Chapalichthys Meek 1902.

By Clive Walker

There seems to be three species: *Chapalichthys encaustus* Meek 1902, *Chapalichthys peraticus* & *Chapalichthys pardalis* Alvarez 1963.

*Chapalichthys pardalis* was originally described by Alvarez in "Ictiologica Michoacana. 3. Los Peces de San Juanico y de Tucombo, Ann. Esc Nac. Cienc. Biol., 12 {14} pp. 111-138.

Their location is Tocumbo, Presa de San Juanico, Lago de la Magdalena, Michoacan. *Pardalis* is from the Greek and means panther referring to the spots.

At the 2011 BLA Convention Alex Cliffe of London Zoo informed us that they were on the 'Critically Endangered List'. This isn't because they are hard to breed though! My experience is that they don't eat their own young, although they 'spar fight' at all sizes a lot of the time no injury is caused. They do not like other species of fish in their territory and need to be kept in a species tank. Mine took a liking to the dorsal fins of the Cory Sterbai that briefly shared their tank.

I bought four young fish at the 2010 convention, ended up with two pairs that were housed in a 24x15x12. I had to separate them after a couple of months as the larger male was constantly chasing the smaller male and female, neither of which was damaged. After a couple of broods that had only one or two survivors a got a batch of fifteen. I usually 'flock' breed my fish and left the fry with the parents.

I later moved the parents to a 32"x15"x12" tank leaving the young in the two foot tank. The fry are 10-12mm long at birth and have fine black spots on a tan/silver background. In Lothar Wischnath's 'Atlas' it states that broods rarely exceed 20, the largest brood I counted had 54. They are sexable quite young like a lot of Goodeids, I sold a few pairs of my first brood at shows, this left me with seven males and one female all around 25mm. The males sparred almost non stop with the female joining in occasionally.

I moved this group in with the parents who had produced more fry by this time. The eight to two ratio is out of kilter with most advice on male/ female groupings but works well with this species.

They are a very attractive fish, the males are deep bodied with a large dorsal fin that often hangs down the side of the fish. They have a lot of large gold scales scattered over the whole body and a bright yellow edge to the tail. The females are heavily spotted, have a pale yellow edge to the tail and larger ones often have a black dorsal. They are not as deep bodied as males except when heavily gravid. The males reach 60mm and the females 70mm. They are easy to feed as they eat anything- flake, pellets, freeze dried, frozen, duckweed and any live food. They are happy with a temperature range of 18-24c. I suspect they'd take lower temperatures for short periods. Mine are now housed in a 43"x15"x12", { Brian didn't have any 45"glass}, the tank contains several flower pots, Hornwort, Cryptocorene, Java Fern & Java Moss. The another inhabitants are Apple , Malayan livebearing and Ramshorn snails. There are also some planeria worms, some of my tanks have loads of these harmless worms in them and some hardly any. I assume that the Pardalis eat them, many fish don't.

There are two Fluval one size mini power filters and one large box filter. I change 20-30 litres of water per week. Brighton tap water is hard, not sure of dh, with a Ph 7.8-8.0. I store water in plastic bins on the floor. I use the water untreated after it has been stored for at least one week. It goes in colder than the tank temperature via a water butt pump.

These are an attractive and entertaining fish give them a try.

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**Committee member:** Steve Elliott

**Committee member:** Carl Stewart

## **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.

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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 10th June 2013, could all contributors please ensure that articles are provided to the Editor by the 28th of May 2013.

## **Members sales and wanted:**

**Trevor Williams:**

Available fish:

Limia tridens, Limia nigrofasciata, Limia melonagaster, Limia zonata, Limia sp,tiger, Girardinus falcatus, Phalecerous caudomaculatus, Xiphophorus multilneatus, Xiphophorus milleri, Poecilia salvatori(liberty) , and Poecilia butteri

Please note I currently have very limited numbers available.

Please email: trevsfish@fishthw.plus.com

**Clive Hawkins, Bristol:**

Available fish:

Poeciliopsis gracilis media luna,  
Xiphophorus helleri 'Golden Stream, Belize'  
Ameca splendens  
Wild Guppies

Wanted:

Pair or Trio Phallichthys amates amates  
male Brachyraphis terrabensis Pair or  
Trio Belesonox belizianus Pair or Trio  
Xiphophorus nezyhuacotyl pair or trio  
Xiphophorus variatus  
pair or trio Xiphophorus maculatus

Email: clivehawkins52@yahoo.co.uk or mobile 07900218170 home  
01179638478

**Clive Walker:**

Available fish:

Illyodon xantusi & Chapalichthys pardalis both at £4.00 a pair or less.

Email: clivewalker076@gmail.com or call 07780 996557

# The Black Beauty Sawfin

(A Hybrid Shiffia). by Derek Lambert

Editors Note: this article originally appeared in viviparous 23. The following is an extract from American Livebearer Association Bulletin 82. in which the creator of the Black Beauty James K Langhammer describes its creation. This was written in 1985 when *Skiffia multipunctata* was proving impossible to breed. The collection at that time was from Lake Camecura (the crystal clear lake described by Andreas.) The current collection made in January 1990 from the sewage ditch has been disseminated through the livebearer world and has proved easy to keep and breed. The fish collected were strong robust and incredibly beautiful it was a case of survival of the fittest. These fish readily adapted to aquarium conditions

## Extract By James K Langhammer

I've Considered myself a purist for many years on the subject of hybridisation between species. So many livebearers are rare in the hobby or worse yet, rare and endangered in the wild that the maintenance of stocks has been one of my highest priorities. Nevertheless I cannot deny that many of the commercial platies, swordtails and mollies are hybrid derived and are the basis for much of the popularity for the Aquarium Hobby

Following the frustration of several failures to establish an aquarium strain of the speckled sawfin *Skiffia multipunctata* I found myself with a single male two years ago. This species of skiffia is a remarkable fish with large body size, handsome finnage, and with males that frequently exhibit naturally occurring marbled patterns. Yet the species has resisted the efforts of everyone to date to domesticate it.

Deviating from my usual philosophy I decided to use the single male *S.multipunctata* to establish a hybrid strain with a female *S.francesae*.



The Golden sawfin (*S.francesae*) is a plainly marked smaller version of the speckled sawfin but is itself a remarkably vigorous species in captivity. My goal was to create a hybrid strain incorporating the golden sawfins captive vigour with the speckled sawfins highly desirable colour and size.

The Male speckled sawfin lived long enough to give be a number of litters from several females golden sawfins and then was subsequently bred back to his daughters. This male was not exceptionally coloured himself; he had several intense blotches golden orange and a few dusky grey blotches on his sides. Nonetheless he was the only speckled sawfin available and there was the possibility he was carrying the genes for intense black blotching. Interestingly enough, it was the original F2 (= Second generation of hybrids) that gave me the patterns with which I am still working. I eventually discarded the lines resulting from the male speckled sawfins crossed to his daughters since they showed very little body pattern.

Among the first F2 offspring was one male with a blotchy pattern so I set him up with several sisters while I was also setting up the father with other daughters. Among the resultant offspring from the blotchy male (=Black Beauty F1 or BB F1) were several

strongly patterned males, one of which was exceptional. This BB/F1 Male I crossed back to his mother and here sisters after removing the F2 male that was his father and allowing the females to drop their current litters. Since then the generations are getting better and better pattern wise and I now get some males that are 50 percent or more velvety black over the body and fins; such a pure black is rarely seen in fishes except in black mollies and healthy red tail black sharks.

It is interesting that this black pattern in the hybrid strain starts as tiny black flecks in juvenile males which expands into large black areas which gradually merge with each other, in individual fish the pattern is always expanding through its life. Females have been a problem to evaluate since the pattern seemed to be sex-linked to males. By feeding warleys spectra III to juveniles, I find that some females temporally develop intense spotting which I am using as an indicator of preferred brood stock to be mated to the best males. This technique has vastly improved the quality of

the next generation males. Never be afraid to inbreed your fishes, considerable mythology exists about the problems of inbreeding. The truth is that in most instances you can inbreed indefinitely without problems. I have a strain of award winning lyretail swordtails that have been bred brother to sister and son to mother for more than thirty generations.

## **Keeping the Black Beauty – by Derek Lambert**

Family: Goodeidae – JORDAN, 1923  
Synonyms: Since this is a hybrid between *Skiffia francesae* and *Skiffia multipunctata*, no scientific name applies to this fish  
Range: Present only in aquarists tanks  
Size: Males 4.5cm, females 5cm

Introduction to UK: This fish was first introduced to the UK by Derek Lambert who obtained his stock from James K Langhammer. Several other imports have been made including a number of fish distributed at the first Viviparous Convention.

In Body form and finnage the black beauty still closely resembles its foundation species of *Skiffia francesae* and *S. multipunctata*. The body depth tends to be a little deeper and robust than either of its forbears. The males dorsal fin still has the classic “sawfin” appearance with the first few rays being shorter than the rest of the fin and somewhat separated. Females of this fish do not have this notch in the dorsal fin.

Males should, as the name implies, be a velvety black over as much of the fins and body as possible. As with black guppies the head shows normal body colour of light grey. At present the black extends almost but not quite, to the edge of the fins, which are otherwise clear.

Females at present show some black speckles over the middle of the body and fins and in the best specimens they join up to cover large parts of the body. Juveniles will reach full colour in a bout 6-8 months.

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The black beauty has a similar temperament to its foundation species being relatively peaceful with other fish but can suffer if placed with fast moving robust species such as barbs etc... Ideally they should be housed in their own tank with some plant cover and maintained in a colony situation, the tank temperature should be fairly cool with about 70-74 degrees F producing good results. Lower temperature during the winter will stop the fish.

breeding and allow the females a resting period, so increasing the life expectancy. Which can be over 3 years.

Since this is a cultivated fish there can be some variation between individuals. Only the best coloured fish should be selected as breeding stock. Since they are happiest in a group it is wise to select the best male and place him in a group of well coloured females that have been isolated from any other male since their last broods were born, The fry born to these females should have been fathered by the selected male and will hopefully develop into well coloured individuals.

Their diet should consist of a mix of foods with some flake foods and plenty of live foods. They are typical Goodeids in that they have good appetites and need to be fed quite heavily to do well. Gravid females in particular need to be well fed as they are providing nutrients to the developing babies.

Despite close inbreeding since its creation, the Black Beauty has never shown any signs of so called Inbreeding depression or deterioration. Deformities and sterile fish have only appeared at a frequency similar to a true species.

## Black Beauty – Current status 2013 by Nigel Hunter

There is a bit of a discussion going on about this fish, because it is a hybrid and certain quarters believe we should only keep pure strains. I am more concerned by the fish coming through the trade with no location data as we have no idea of their purity

There are strains of line bred *Skiffia multipunctata* that are equally as black as the Black beauty so is it worth keeping, As long as it is kept as a cultivar and passed on as such I can't see a problem it has been in the hobby longer than some pure strains. It is however only kept by a few aquarists so not widely available



Pic 1 line bred *multipunctata*



Pic 2 Black beauty

In recent years there has been concerted effort by the GWG to promote the conservation of Goodeids so many new and lost Goodeids have been made available to the UK hobby Black beauty is one of them

There is a small group of Black beauty in the UK but it will be a while before they are widely available

## **Xenoophorus in trouble**

This report is from the Goodeid Working Group:

Bad news - I am forwarding herein a letter from Juan Miguel Artigas Azas, who visited San Luis Potosí recently:

I am a little depressed because there has been 3 weekends in a row that I go to the field to look for *Xenoophorus captivus* to write an article about them and I haven't yet been able to find a single specimen. Most localities where I used to find them are now dry. I travelled along Rio Santa Maria from the Type locality at Santa Maria del Rio up to Jesus María and there is no water anymore, all the beautiful springs I knew and even the small dams along it are dry.... Just some pools Near Rodrigo (near the place where Andreas and me found them 20 years ago) but I wasn't able to collect any fish there. I also went to Río Tierra Quemada, where last May Rusty and I tried hard to collect any without luck, and I couldn't get anything but *Goodea gracilis* again. Omar told me he had collected many six months ago but as some of those *Goodea* have black markings and blue shines I suspect his students may have confused them. I will keep looking for them. But the situation is dramatic for all this fish.

Regards, Juan Miguel Artigas Azas

So: whoever is breeding *Xenoophorus*: keep an eye on them, and please, save fish with location Moctezuma, Venados, Agua de Enmedio, as nobody in Europe is breeding them, I fear...madness goes on..

## **May 3rd-5th 2013 Poecilia Scandinavia - 5<sup>th</sup> international livebearer weekend**

Scandinavia's biggest auction of livebearing fishes Internationally known speakers

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Stavanger

For more information:

See the website or contact Thue: [formand@poecilia.org](mailto:formand@poecilia.org)

## British Livebearer Association livebearer Show and Auction 2013

BLA Convention 2013 - 12th-13th October 2013 - Naseby Hotel Kettering

More details to follow



Pictures courtesy of Kees De Jong's





*skiffia multipunctata* la luz mexico