

Livebearer News

Official Members Magazine of the
BRITISH LIVEBEARER ASSOCIATION



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Editorial by Paddy Davies

Well, I might as well start with a huge apologies for the delay in this magazine, for reasons within my control I have failed to get it out on time.

I hope you all enjoy this issue and I intend to get a series of shorter newsletters out in the next few months to make up for it.

I would really appreciate a bit of feedback though, if you can let me know which articles you enjoy most of all I would like it so we can include a bit more of that. So if you can let me know which of the following types of articles you would like to see more of:

- Care sheets
- Conservation updates
- Visits to fish houses
- Fish show and convention reviews
 - Collection trips
 - Re published articles
 - Articles on equipment
 - Scientific articles
 - website reviews

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

Finally, I hope to see you all at spring auction on March the 23rd in Yorkshire.

Paddyd99@gmail.com

Chairman's Message by Chris Cheswright

Time passes too fast these days and I thought work was supposed to get easier. Anyway enough of excuses. This year has seen two BLA events and it is intended that the same happens next year. If anyone is wanting to run an auction or event (may be in conjunction with another fish event) please let me know as it would be

good to have some other activities around the country to allow all out members to attend something.

The convention in Kettering was a blazing success with more wild fish entries than in previous years and from more members. The prices at the auction were good and the members fish in the show went well, some of the income will be used to donate to Fish Ark. One comment on the show fish was the huge fish entered by one member- *X. montezumae*, *P. salvatoris* and some magnificent *L. nigrofasciata*. I understand the fish are being kept in tanks with shallow water and a large surface area, I hope some more information will be forthcoming on how to grow such big fish.

This and the next magazine are just about done I understand and so members should get all four copies for 2013. Lets hope we can do better on this next year. Do not forget that membership is due from January 2014.

Chris

4th International meeting of the GWG by Nigel Hunter

Friday morning 5 am we set off for our weekend away in The Netherlands our destination was Hotel De Schildkamp in Asperen. The trip was pretty straight forward with a breakfast stop in Belgium and a leg stretch just as we entered The Netherlands.

Arriving early afternoon we were not the first of our group to arrive several tables with beer were in use in the sunshine a pleasant change from the UK

After a short trip to Leerdam to re-shoe one of our group we settled down to some International bonding, By Friday evening a group of about 30 headed off for our

meal at a nearby restaurant a short 1km away in the old munitions store of one of several water forts. A pleasant evening of food and chat followed including a history lesson from the chef of the fort.

Saturday the meeting officially started Saturday

7 September 2013:

09.00 – 17.30 Show open

09.30 – 10.20 lecture by Rit Forcier (USA): "Goodeid biotopes."

10.30 – 11.15 lecture by Ruud Wildekamp (NL): "Empetrichthys and Crenichthys."

11.30 – 12.30 lecture by Adan Fernando Mar Silva (MX): "Molecular systematic of *Xenotoca melanosoma*, an endemic species of central Mexico."

12.30 – 14.00 lunchbreak

This was an opportunity to visit the local market and try their local cuisine, very tasty it was but I tried to buy Leerdamer cheese in leerdam with no success? Apparently they export it all.

14.00 – 15.00 lecture by Rit Forcier (USA): "A complete review of the Goodeid family from a hobbyist's view."

15.00 – 16.00 lecture by Winfried Grell (NL): "Breeding of the species that have been collected on the last 2 Congo-trips: COFE2010 (Congo Fellmann & Eberl) and FCO2011 (Fellmann Congo)."

16.00 – 18.00 Auction of rare killis and livebearers.

Many rare fish were offered both Livebearers and killies a list of a few purchased fish will be put at the end of the article

19.30 – ... Diner & prize award ceremony for the best fish in the show. All groups were in attendance randomly mixed tables giving more chance to make friends

Sunday 8 September

09.00 – 10.30 Show open

11.00 – 14.00 Auction of the showfish

In all the weekend was very successful and many exchanges of information and fish were given and received

A meeting on the future of the Fish ark was the highlight for me as we discussed how best to continue our support.



A few of the fish we got:
 Cyprinodon bobmilleri, dearborni, ve-
 ronicae
 Xiph birchmani ,
 andersi,milleri,guntheri
 Girardinichthys irenae ,multiradiatus
 Alloophorus robustus
 Skiffia bilineata
 Xenophorus captivus
 Gambusia holbrooki spotted
 Poeciliopsis baenschi



Keeping The San-Juanico Splitfin *Chapalichthys peraticus*

By Paddy Davies

Introduction:

This fish was originally described by Alvarez del Villar in 1963, it comes from one location only – the Presa de San Juanico, this is a chain of lakes about 15km North West of Tocumbo in the State of Michoacan . The conservation status of this species is not known, but there have been collections as recently as 2012, although before this it was thought to be extinct by several collectors, as this species is only present from this one habitat, so should always be considered at risk.

The big question is whether it is really a distinct species. It is very similar to *Chapalichthys pardalis*, to the extent that it is almost identical. Personally I feel the fish

I have look a bit different to populations of *C.pardalis* that I have seen and kept, however this could be just location differences, certainly there is nothing strikingly different.

Many people have synonymized *C.peraticus* with *C.pardalis* as the original descriptions of the two species are barely distinguishable. Future research using new techniques may put the matter to bed soon according to scientists who are looking in this issue.

However – it is vital that whatever the species, we keep this population separate from others and pass on the location details with this fish.

There are several fish in the hobby with the name *C.peraticus* but with uncertain pedigree – one is not even a *Chapalicthys*! So be careful when you obtain new stocks for your colony.

Description:

Both sexes are a silvery grey base colour, with a slight yellowish green shine to them. The body is then covered in many small dark dots. This is very similar to *C.pardalis*, but the dots are a bit smaller and denser than it that species. The females have clear fins. The Males have broad yellow bands in the caudal fin.

They grow to about 3” 7.5cm, females can get a bit larger.



female *chapalichthys peraticus*
photo copyright Paddy
.Davies

History:

This has been originally imported by Ivan Dibble in the 80's and may have appeared occasionally since then, it has never been a common species. This is probably due to its similarity to *C.pardalis*. It is now being kept by a number of people, so should hopefully become more widespread in time.

Keeping and Maintenance:

General set up:

Despite not being as common as *Chapalichthys pardalis* this is just as easy to keep and breed. This means that it is one of the easiest Goodeids to keep, maybe even one of the easiest fish to keep! All you need is a box to keep the water in and some kind of filter.

The advantage of this is that they are adaptable to a wide range of set ups. Being a medium sized fish this species should be given a tank of at least 80 litres,

Mine currently are in a set up measuring 60cmx30cmx 40cm (LxHxW). They seem perfectly happy although I am sure a little more swimming space would not go amiss.

Mine are kept with a strain of *Xenotoca eiseni*, so you can probably appreciate they are moderately punchy fish if they can hold their own.

My own experience of *C.peraticus* is that they are active and boisterous but not too aggressive. However I think they could be quite variable depending on tank mates and type of set up. I have previously found *C pardalis* to be extremely aggressive to the point of beating up 8" Vieja cichlids! While other people find them not too bad.

In general I would avoid mixing with very peaceful and shy species as they won't get any food and will hide in the corner all the time, but they should mix with small to medium barbs and some Central American cichlids.

Water conditions are quite easy to provide, ammonia 0 nitrite 0 and nitrate less than 50ppm (ideally less, but my tap water is 40ppm and I have had no problems with higher levels) the water should be cool, anywhere from 16-24 degrees is fine, I keep them without heat, using ambient room temperature – today the temperature is 20 degrees C, if concerned use a heater set to it's lowest setting.

Filtration options are many and varied, I use an old Rena 245 Internal sponge filter in the adult tank and a Fluval mini in the baby tank, but any suitable filtration will be fine, I know other hobbyists who use home made air powered box filters, I would say just don't fuss too much, good filtration and regular water changes is all that is required.

Breeding:

When I first got my 2 pairs, I brought them back and 3 days later both 3" females had dropped – I had about 40 fry all about 10mm. The parents did not seem very interested in them and probably will colony breed successfully in time, the usual trick is to introduce some slightly grown on juveniles to the adult fish first, and then when the adults drop again they do not eat the new born fry.

In this occasion I have separated them to ensure maximum survival.

Broods seem to be about 20 fry for young females, but I am fairly certain they will be like *C.pardalis* and may well have much larger broods when fully grown.

Gestation period I would expect to be the same – about

Summary:

This is a rarley seen but easy to keep species, that is actually a bit of a stunner and would look amazing in a big display tank.

Currently the population is healthy in the Europe, however complacency is our biggest risk, as it is very easy to forget how rare it is and that we must do everything to preserve stocks, even if it appears common in the hobby as it is

irreplaceable. Eventually captive bred stocks may be used in re-introduction programmes.

If you would like to obtain stocks of this species, please contact either myself or Nigel Hunter.

I would like to thank the Goodeid Working Group for their help in supplying extra information for this article.



Chapalichthys peraticus male
Photo Paddy.Davies

Ultimate Livebearer number 1: Bull Shark **By Paddy Davies**

This section is about livebearer species I would love to keep...one day perhaps.

Probably the most exciting species of freshwater livebearer to keep I would imagine, the bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*) is a true marine species, however several populations are found in freshwater rivers and it can occur very far from the sea, specimens are known from the River Amazon at Iquitos in Peru 4000 Kilometres from the sea!

The can even live on land! Sort of...

In fact one was reported swimming in the streets of Brisbane Australia when it was flooded in 2011

Living in a lake:

There is also a population living in Lake Nicaragua, where several of more moderately sized live bearers also live. According to recent research these shark migrate up the SanJuan river, so do not actually live all the time in the lake.

The lowdown:

Size: 175-300cm

Temperment: One of the top three species of sharks in terms of unprovoked attacks on humans resulting in fatalities. Freshwater attacks have been reported but only rarely

Tank Size: 400,000 Gallons apparently (source internet forums!) **Size at birth:** 24”

Other Comments:

While it would be wonderful to have a biotope aquarium with *Gambusia nicuraguensis* and Bull Sharks, the practical part of me admits it might be beyond the scope of the average hobbyist...

***Myth over Reality* By Derek J Lambert**

Editors note: This article originally appeared in *Viviparous* issue 36 1996, so some of the taxonomic information may not be accurate, although the husbandry information is as good as it ever was.

Mollies are one of the most popular groups of livebearers kept in the aquarium hobby, with representatives found in almost every aquarium shop the world over. However, they are often the most misunderstood of all aquarium fish. Many myths about mollies have become so widespread in both the trade and hobby literature that they have been taken as gospel truth. In this article I hope to clarify just what the true needs of this fish are.

Scientifically, Mollies belong to the family Poeciliidae, Garman 1895. This family contains approximately 200 species, of which about 194 are contained in the livebearing subfamily Poeciliinae. At the present time some doubt exists about the validity of the subgenus *Molliensis*.

At the Species level even more confusion exists, with a number of species and subspecies contained in the *Poecilia sphenops* complex which may or may not be valid. The reason for this confusion is the tremendous variation of size colour and finnage found in this complex of species.

For example *Poecilia butleri* which occurs on the pacific coasts of Mexico, has populations that reach only attain a size of 2" AND have very little colour. Other populations however, attain a size of nearly 4" and have bright orange and black fins.

Asimilar situation occurs in other species contained in this complex. These differences may be in part due to genetic differences among the populations, or the effect of the environment on the animals concerned. This was classically illustrated to hobbyists in the uk some years ago.

Poecilia chica had been imported from Germany in the early 1980s these fish were quite small. About 1.5 inches and had small finnage. Some of the aquarists who obtained these fish soon started producing larger fish, including males whose dorsal fins were larger. Darker coloured fish also appeared.

Soon other aquarists started calling these larger better coloured fish hybrids. In 1987 some new stock of these species was collected so we could be sure they were pure. Within a short time larger and better coloured fish were turning up and once again some aquarists were saying these were hybrids. In 1989 an additional collection was made, and yet again bigger, more colourful fish appeared within a couple of generations. It therefore became quite clear that environment plays an important role in the adult appearance of this species.

Some genetic variation among the various populations does occur. The *Poecillia mexicana* population found in Media Luna, Mexico, has males of almost jet black with bright orange edges to the fins. Normally, such intense colouration is only found in wild caught fish and fades in captivity. The Media Luna population however, breeds true for this colouration and ranks as one of the most beautiful of the wild shortfin mollies.

Mollies are generally restricted to middle America with a few species being found in the southern United States, the west Indies and northern South America. They are found in a wide variety of habitats ranging from marine to freshwater and from stagnant ponds to clear flowing rivers. Indeed some of these habitats are so extreme that very few other fish can live in them.

An example of this is the sulphur molly *Poecillia sulphularia* which is found in sulphur springs and outflows of Banos del Azufre. The water there is so polluted with noxious gasses that only the sulphur gambusia (*Gambusia eurystoma*) can survive with the Molly. All other species that live in this area are limited to those parts of the watercourse where freshwater from inflowing streams dilutes the pollutants down to safer levels.

Mollies are tremendously popular in the trade. Almost every shop offers at least one strain for sale, and most offer at least 2, the sailfin and short tail types. Despite

their popularity, they are some of the most misunderstood of all the livebearers commonly available. I have already mentioned the wide diversity of habitats these fish come from in the wild, and yet to read some of the hobby literature, the aquarist could easily come to the conclusion that mollies are brackish water fish that will fade away in freshwater. This is not true.

All the molly species I have found in the wild have lived in fresh water, although some have also lived in brackish environments and one in marine. In terms of the aquarium environment I have worked with every molly species available and never used salt in any of my tanks. Dr Joanne Norton who is a leading expert on cultivated forms of this group and has worked extensively with the wild forms does not use salt in her tanks.

The only time I would use salt to a molly tank is if my tap water was acidic. Acid water conditions can cause problems for some mollies and salt will raise the pH levels. Other products can be used to do this.

Good water quality is essential for the well being of all mollies. Good filtration combined with weekly partial water changes prevent many of the problems associated with mollies.

If the tank conditions start to go off then the mollies will clamp their fins and start to shimmy (this is the slow side to side motion that provides little forward movement). A large partial water change usually solves the problem within a few hours and increasing the filtration or reducing the number of fish in the tank will prevent it from occurring again.

Another myth about the misunderstood molly concerns their dietary requirements. Time and time again I read about the importance of algae and vegetable matter in a molly's diet, and yet in many locations in the wild I have found little or no vegetable matter available to the fish.

In the aquarium my fish have always done best on a mixed diet of live and flaked food. Mollies are hungry all the time and will pick from the sides and bottom of the aquarium in search of a morsel they can find. My own fish will pick away at a lettuce leaf or other vegetable matter if nothing better is available, but given a choice they always go for something with a bit more substance to it.

In general; mollies prefer a temperature in the range of 75-80 degrees F. They will survive if it goes higher than this for short periods but long exposure to high

temperatures tends to shorten the lifespan of any fish and will encourage youngsters to achieve sexual maturity rather early and stay at a small size.

Low temperatures, particularly below 70 degrees F can cause problems. The Fish Sulk and may clamp their fins and start to shimmy. White spot and fungus will often set in and the fish will stop feeding and die within a short time.

Sexing mollies as adults is easy because the males have the modified anal fin that is used to transfer sperm from the male to the female. This sperm can live in the female for many months and will be used to fertilise each batch of eggs as needed.

These eggs take about 28 days to develop although the period will be extended at lower temperatures. In the wild many species stop breeding during the winter months.

When close to giving birth the female will develop a more squared off appearance and she will seek a quiet place away from other fish. Usually this will be among the plant cover at the surface of the aquarium. The female may also become somewhat aggressive at this time driving away other fish from her birthing territory.

At birth most molly species produce quite large babies approximately 5-8mm long and will take baby brine shrimp and other small foods within hours.

To raise small fish to large adults size. Plenty of food needs to be available and the rearing tank should be as large as possible. Regular large water changes will also need to be made.

The huge sailfin mollies you see available in aquarium shops have usually been raised in large outdoor ponds and despite the best of care most tank raised fish remain smaller. The shortfin forms usually sex out at about 4 months of age, whereas the sailfin forms can well be over a year before the gonopodium develops.

One fascinating species of molly that occurs naturally in south-eastern Texas and north-eastern Mexico is the Amazon molly (*Poecilia formosa*) This fish is a unisexual species of hybrid origin and is a sexual parasite that lives with both its parent species, *Poecilia latipinna* in coastal rivers and *P.mexicana* in inland rivers.

The amazon molly is basically all female and uses males of any closely related species to fertilise its eggs. Usually the males genetic material is excluded, producing a brood of clones of the mother. Very rarely the males genetic material will be included and a triploid hybrid will be produced, once again these are all females.

Mollies are a lovely group of fish that deserve a place in any community aquarium. From the point of difficulty the range from the very easy to the very trying.



.Poecilia sp. copyright Alan Dunne



Members sales and wanted:

Greg Roebuck:

Wanted Fish:

Ataniobius toweri Rio Verde females wanted

Allotoca zacapuensis – Males wanted

Email; gjrsrr12@googlemail.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 *Brachyrhaphis 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, *I.Whitei*, *Chapalichthys pardalis*, *Xenotoca Vairiata* (Marie San Loiss Potosi) *Xiphohorus cortezi*, Wild type Guppies

Collection, Brighton area or fish shows only

Email: clivewalker076@gmail.com or call 07780 996557.

Alan Dunne:

Available fish:

:

Skiffia sp Sayula £5 sexed pair's or 6 fry

Xenotoca variata £8 sexed pair's

Email: alan@livingfish.co.uk

07966581811

Collection from Bournemouth (BH10)

Delivery £14 (upto 2kg)

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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 15th February 2014, could all contributors please ensure that articles are provided to the Editor by the Editor by the 10th of February 2014

.British Livebearer Association



**Mini Spring Auction
Sunday 23th March 2014**

@

D J A Y 3RD OPEN SHOW

Rockingham Centre, Hoyland, South Yorkshire.
Address Sheffield Road, Hoyland, Barnsley, South Yorkshire
S74,0PY

URL <http://www.therockinghamcentre.co.uk/>

classes;

Nearest Accommodation if required,

please self book

Ramada Encore Barnsley Value Deal

Whinby Road, Barnsley, S75 3LF.

(The Ramada Encore Barnsley, Junction 37 on M1, currently advanced room booking is £29 for a double for the Saturday. This is one junction from the venue and breakfast and dinner would be in the Toby Carvery next door)

Please bring your own water and bag fish responsibly and in insulated containers for travelling and storage before show and Auction please bring spare bags incase needed.

Please note some livebearer sp need individual bagging particular goodieds any problems noted will be at the auctioneers decision and final.

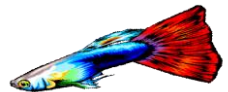
some

Goodeas

Breeders (4 fish)

Cultivated livebearers

Any other species Live-bearer



Message to Members

A reminder of what your membership pays for:

Free entry to our convention free entry to
Auctions Free newsletters as paid up
Fish finder service
Supporting livebearer conservation projects



Please note that free auction entry only applies to member this doesn't apply to your friends or anyone accompanying you to bid in the Auction, if you have not paid for 2014, you will need to pay at the venue or pay the day fee of £3.00.

This also applies to the committee Members as well, who graciously give their time free to produce the magazine and provide other services as needed by the B.L.A.

So please make sure you have clarified your status when you collect your bidding card, if you have any concerns or queries, please bring them to the attention of Kim Jones or Chris Cheswright as they will have a current membership list.

Thank you all for your continued support, we appreciate it hugely!

The Committee



Photo copyright Dai Jones

