

# Livebearer News

Official Members Magazine of the  
BRITISH LIVEBEARER ASSOCIATION



## CONTENTS

**Page 1** : Front cover

**Page 2** : Contents, Data Protection Act, Committee

**Page 3** : Editorial

**Pages 4 - 8** : Experiences with *Neoheterandria elegans*, the “Tiger teddy”, by J. Sara Fulton

**Pages 9 - 12** : Species profile; *Neoheterandria elegans*, by Steve Oliver

**Pages 13 – 16** : The Northern Swordtails, *Cortezi* clade, by Steve Oliver

**Pages 17 – 22** : *Xiphophorus cortezi*, by Steve Oliver

**Pages 23 – 27** : Annual report of species kept, 2017

**Page 28** : Diary dates

### Data Protection Act

In order to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, we need to inform members that their name, address, email 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.

### Committee

**Chairman** : Paddy Davies email [paddyd99@googlemail.com](mailto:paddyd99@googlemail.com)

**Treasurer** : Don Kenwood; 154Kenn Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS15 6JY; email [donkenwood@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:donkenwood@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Editor** : Greg Roebuck, email [gjrstr12@gmail.com](mailto:gjrstr12@gmail.com)

**Events organiser** : Nigel Hunter; email [Nigel\\_w98@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Nigel_w98@yahoo.co.uk)

**Webmaster** : Alan Dunne

**Committee members** : Clive Walker; Carl Stewart,

## Editorial

### 1. Tiger teddies

A couple of months ago I called in at Aqualife Aquatics near Leyland, Lancashire (again!) and saw some very small livebearers with which I was completely unfamiliar. It turned out that they were "Tiger teddies", aka *Neoheterandria elegans*. They were very small but very active and obviously in good condition. I wanted some! Where to put them? I have nearly twenty tanks on the go but most of them contain either goodeids or cichlids and the tiger teddies would not last long in with either. In the end, I reluctantly left them in the shop. On a return visit I found that they had all sold. Rats!! Soon after that I received an email from BLA member Sara Fulton to say that she had bought some. Soon after, another email to say that they were breeding. Now Sara has written an article describing her experiences with this species [that I still covet]. Thanks Sara – much appreciated. If anyone else can send me their articles about any aspect of keeping livebearers that would also be much appreciated.

### 2. Two auctions

At the start of July I attended the SLAG show and auction in Basingstoke. The weather at the time was stinking hot – my car reckoned that the ambient was 34°C. Some of the fish I took died on the way there and two of the ones I bought died on the way home. No wonder that attendance was well down on last year. Still, there were some nice species on sale at very reasonable prices. A few weeks later I went to the Preston and District AS summer auction. There were lots of dry goods, tanks, heaters, stands, bogwood, pumps, plants fish food etc. Apart from the goodeids that I entered into the auction the livebearers entered were a bit limited; *Priapella*

*intermedia*, *Brachyraphis*, guppies, platies, and *Xiphophorus milleri*, *xiphidum*, *pygmaeus*, *nezahualcoyotl* and *Montezuma*. The next event clashes with a pre-arranged event for me but if any other BLA member goes along I would be interested to hear what they thought. It takes place on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September and they have a speaker from Portugal who is a livebearer expert.

### 3. PPS

A quick PPS to Nigel's article on keeping fish outside during the summer months. In spite of losing the majority of goodeids released into my pond last summer [probably to the larvae of the emperor dragonfly – voracious predators] I released sixteen fry of *Skiffia sayula* into the pond during June of this year. I'll let you know how well they did after I have cleared out the pond during October.

### 4. Autumn convention

Don't forget the Autumn Convention on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September. Details are at the end of this newsletter.

### 5. Species maintenance

Please will you send a list of the species that you are keeping to our Species Maintenance Officer, Steve Oliver, at [Steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk)

### ***Neoheterandria elegans* aka Tiger Teddy by J. Sara Fulton**

Well, what to say about this diminutive species, they certainly are a tiny fish, but all the more attractive for it, I think.

I began my little breeding group with three males and four females in a tank of around 5 gallons. I planted it heavily with

mosses of various kinds, cryptocorynes and a personal favourite of mine guppy grass, hoping to provide plenty of hiding places and not to mention microscopic food for fry. Within a couple of weeks the smaller male had become aggressively dominant and the other two subsequently died. I did attempt to replace the males but found that success was only achieved with a single male in the tank – at this point you will probably be thinking ‘tank too small and that could be right. In my opinion (and it's a humble one) to appreciate these fish in all their splendour a nano type system is the best because you can actually see them and the fry can be spotted more easily.

Eventually a few fry did appear and I decided to let them remain with the adults, however it soon became apparent that one of my females was an extremely enthusiastic stalker of fry. As well fed with many different varieties of food as they were, she still continues to this day to patrol the tank like a miniature ‘Jaws on speed’! Anyway, after what I am certain were many casualties, one fry managed to grow large enough not to fit into her (considerable) mouth!

I moved my now 3 female, 1 male and 1 fry (this is a male) family into an 8 gallon aquarium, again heavily planted and populated by a few shrimp. I now have 8 fry of varying sizes- the females give birth over a period of days rather than all at once like many livebearers- living in a tank with shrimp.....one of the best ways of removing fry from their parent's tank is to use a turkey baster (Well at least I am getting pretty talented at creeping up behind the fry now!) My husband however, has taken to scrutinizing his Xmas dinner with great care!

5

Steve Oliver has kindly supplied me with several write-ups about Tiger Teddies (taken from the internet) and generally they are considered to be rather shy fish- I have found the opposite with mine, but do believe that if given a tank to themselves with plenty of plants and hiding places, they have little reason to be shy.

Whilst many people find that a smaller tank can be difficult to maintain ie. water parameters etc. I can only say from my own experience that I've found them relatively easy, but then again I do spend a lot of time with my tanks and rarely miss a water change. The water change, for me, is of paramount importance in the continued health of an aquarium, particularly for the Tiger Teddy. Approximately 15% every other day keeps my guys happy.

Finally, if you are interested in trying your hand with these little beauties please take a moment to read the following profile put together (again very kindly!) by our very own Mr Steve Oliver.

Happy Teddy keeping!

6



Photo : J. Sara Fulton 7



Photo : J. Sara Fulton



Photo : J. Sara Fulton

## *Neoheterandria elegans* by Steve Oliver

(HENN, 1916)

**Etymology:** *Neoheterandria*: from the Ancient Greek *Neo* meaning new, *heteros*, meaning ‘other, another, different’, and *andros*, meaning ‘male’.

*elegans*: from the Latin *elegans*, meaning fine, elegant, and handsome.

**First description:** Henn, A. W., 1916 - Annals of the Carnegie Museum 10(1-2): 93-142 on various South American poeciliid fishes.

**Common name** : Tiger Teddy

**Synonyms:** None

**Type Locality:** Río Truandó,

The Río Truandó is a tributary of the Lower Río Atrato, Colombia

**Distribution:** *Neoheterandria elegans* is only found in the type locality

**Habitat:** Found in shallow water with dense vegetation.

**Size:** Male 2.0 cm Female 2.5 cm 9

**Colour/Pattern:** The overall base colour is an olive green with a series of black stripes on the flanks from below the dorsal fin to the caudal fin. The amount of stripes is different for each fish and range from 6 to 9, the stripes themselves can vary in thickness depending on the individual but the stripe directly above the anal fin is notably darker and thicker than the others and highlighted by a surrounding golden colour. The belly below the lateral line is silver/white.

Unpaired fins start out similar to the base colour of the body and as they spread out the colour fades and becomes a pale grey colour with more pronounced grey/blue edge.

**Behaviour:** Tiger teddies are a shy species that appears to do better in a species only setup, given a well planted aquarium that is heavily planted will bring them out, can be kept with dwarf cories and ottocinclus type fish and also shrimp are good companions.

Larger females can have a tendency to be aggressive.

**Husbandry:** *Neoheterandria elegans* can be kept in a smaller aquarium with dense vegetation. They only require minimal water movement so a sponge filter or similar is required. Water

parameters are not too much of an issue with minimal hardness preferred with a ph. over 7 and a temperature of between 24 and 28 °C.

Water changes should be done regularly with 25% to 50% being changed weekly.

*Neoheterandria elegans* is a micro predator and will need small live or frozen foods to thrive, microworms, grindall worms and artemia nauplii. Will take crushed flake. They do have small superior mouths (opens upward) which means they will struggle to feed from the substrate.

### **Breeding Notes:**

This species use the same method of reproduction as *Heterandria formosa* known as 'superfoetation' (superfetation in some literature) this is where the female can have multiple pregnancies at different stages of development running at the same time. The female appears to be constantly pregnant and will drop up to two fry every couple of days or so.

A mature sponge filter is a good idea to provide gentle circulation and infusoria supply. A good supply of infusoria supplemented with regular feeds of brine shrimp nauplii or small worms such as Walter worms will aid the growth of the fry.

### **References:**

The fry will grow fairly quickly and reach sexual maturity in as little as three months.

**Henn, A. W., 1916** - Annals of the Carnegie Museum 10(1-2): 93-142 on various South American poeciliid fishes.

**Wischnath, L., 1993** - Atlas of livebearers of the world.

### **Seriously fish**

[www.seriouslyfish.com](http://www.seriouslyfish.com)

### **Badmans**

[badmanstropicalfish.com](http://badmanstropicalfish.com)

### **Chicago Livebearer society**

[www.chicagolivebearer.com](http://www.chicagolivebearer.com)

### **Breeding Tiger Teddies–Petcha**

[www.petcha.com](http://www.petcha.com)



Photograph taken from the Old British livebearers website with the permission of Tim Addis

Photograph courtesy of Håvard Støre Andresen

## **The Northern Swordtails**

### **The Cortezi clade**

The Cortezi clade consists of three species *X. cortezi*, *X. birchmanni* and *X. malinche* and are regarded by many as some of the most beautiful fish within the Xiphophorus genus. The swordtails themselves are medium sized swordtails and grow about

50 – 60 mm in length. They are not too difficult to maintain and they lend themselves to planted community aquariums as well as species-only set ups.

### ***X. cortezi***

The Cortes swordtail has many populations with some of them having males that have striking bright yellow dorsal and caudal fins with a body sporting a series of thin vertical stripes. The Cortes sword has the largest distribution of the clade which ranges from just south of the Rio Tampaon – Santa Maria axis to parts of the Rio Claro and tributaries of the Rio Calabozo. Within this range they can be found at altitudes of between 100 metres to 1200 metres although they are reportedly more prevalent at the lower altitudes. The habitat they are found in is generally free of vegetation and fast flowing.

### ***X. birchmanni***

The *birchmanni* swordtail is also known by the common name of the ‘sheepshead’ swordtail. This reason for this common name is due to the large prominent bump that forms at the back of the head of mature males giving a similar profile to that of a sheep’s head! The dorsal and caudal fins are a beautiful yellow colour which are scattered with a covering of small black spots. The caudal fin is most unusual as it doesn’t grow a sword or if it does it remains very small, but the dorsal fin (seemingly trying to compensate for the failing of the caudal fin) grows quite large in contrast and becomes almost sail like in appearance. The body shape is generally deeper than that of the others members of the clade and the flanks also show a series of vertical stripes similar to those of the Cortes sword apart from being distinctly much broader.

The distribution of the *birchmanni* swordtail is also fairly extensive, ranging from the Rio Sans Pedro down to the Rio Tuxpan drainage incorporating the Rio Vinazco and the Rio Beltran. This species of swordtail is generally found at higher altitudes than the Cortes sword and has been found between the altitudes of 500 and 1000 metres. This species is generally found in a habitat of fast flowing water over a rocky / sandy substrate with dense vegetation.

### ***X. malinche***

The *malinche* swordtail also grows a lump behind the head in the same fashion as the *birchmanni* swordtail, but this is not anywhere near as prominent. The colouring is similar to that of the *birchmanni* swordtail with a distinctive yellow caudal with a medium sized sword and yellow dorsal fin showing black spots. The body colour is also similar but does seem to have purple hue. Unlike the previous clade members the stripes on the flanks of the *malinche* swordtail are far more irregular, often at different angles to each other and sometimes broken in appearance.

The range of distribution for the *malinche* swordtail is at present relatively small due to the fact it has not yet been fully explored. Their current range includes the Rio Claro down to the tributaries of the Rio Calabozo.

The common name for the *malinche* swordtail is the Highland swordtail. This name derives from the altitude of the rivers and streams they inhabit. They are found at altitudes which range from 650 to 1300 metres. The habitat they can generally be found in is one of fast flowing water over a sandy substrate with dense vegetation.

The three species overlap within their respective ranges and hybrid populations do exist. Where the Cortes swordtail overlaps with either the *birchmanni* swordtail or the *malinche* swordtail it is at the higher end of the Cortes swordtail range and lower end of either the *birchmanni* or *malinche* swordtail range. Similarly, when the *birchmanni* swordtail and the *malinche* swordtail ranges overlap it is at the higher end of the *birchmanni* swordtail range and lower end of the *malinche* swordtail range.

It is unfortunate that in recent times, the members of this clade, apart from *X. cortezi*, have been absent from the UK side of the hobby. Happily I am pleased to say that at recent events *birchmanni* swordtails have started to make a comeback and are already becoming more sought after. This is a trend that I hope will continue, and with luck (fingers crossed), *malinche* swordtails will also make a welcome return to the UK.

Kind Regards

Steve Oliver

[Steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk)



## *Xiphophorus cortezi*

(Rosen 1960)

### Etymology

*Xiphophorus*: Greek, xiphos = sword + Greek, pherein = to carry

*cortezi* after Hernando Cortes (1485 - 1547) the Spanish conquistador who conquered most of the Aztec Empire between 1519 - 1524.

### First description

**Donn E. Rosen 1960.**

Middle-American poeciliid fishes of the genus *Xiphophorus*.  
Bull. Fla. St. Mus. Biol. Sci 5 (4): p 57-242.

### Synonyms

*Xiphophorus montezumae cortezi* Rosen, 1960

### Common name

Cortes Swordtail

### Group

*Xiphophorus cortezi* is one of nine northern swordtails and belongs to the Cortezi clade consisting of consisting of *X. cortezi*, *X. birchmanni* and *X. malinche*.

### History:

Collected by Myron. Gordon, S. Coronad and H. F. Gandy on 14-15th April 1939.

Described by Donn E. Rosen 1960 as a subspecies of *X. montezumae*.

### Type Locality

Arroyo Matlapa at Comoca, 3.2 km north of Axtla in the Rio Panuco Basin, state of San Luis Potosi, Mexico.

### Distribution

Distributed south of the Rio Tampoan. This species has been collected in the Rio Choy, Moctezuma, Axtla, San Pedro and Candelaria.

### Populations

Rio Axtla Vinasco

### Habitat

Streams with good current flowing over rocky bases. Hides under these rocks.

Derek Lambert reported that in the headwaters of the Rio Tancuilin at Rio Verdito (state of Queretaro) the sp. was found in water with a temperature of 13°C.

## **Size**

Male 50mm Female 50mm.

## **Distinguishing characteristics:**

All members of the *cortezii* clade have a single zigzag horizontal/lateral stripe which runs from the eye to the caudal peduncle.

Unlike *X.birchmanni* and *X. malinche*, the males do not develop a hump on their foreheads.

## **Colour/Pattern Variability**

### **Males**

The colouration of the body above the lateral line is a pale golden brown with the edges of the scales edged in dark brown to black to give a mesh appearance, below the lateral line the colour is much paler. A series of narrow vertical bars are often visible on their flanks and black melanistic blotches can form to any part of the body to form random patterns.

The dorsal fin is yellow with black spotting, however the dorsal fin does not have distinct mid dorsal rows of spots found with the other members of the clade

The caudal fin can vary from a pale yellow to bright yellow caudal fin without spotting and generally have a caudal blotch which can vary in shape. The sword is yellow with a black edge and is

distinctly upturned. The sword although relatively short for a swordtail is the longest within the clade.

### **Females**

The colouration of the body is similar in females to males. The flanks can but rarely show the same narrow vertical barring that appear on males but is not so distinct. Black melanistic blotches can form to any part of the body to form random patterns.

The fins are generally clear but may show a very pale yellow tint.

## **Behaviour**

This species shows typical behaviour for swordtails of the *montezumae* or *cortezii* groups. The males of these species are generally found darting among and underneath large rocks.

In the aquarium the *cortezii* sword is a peaceful fish and will happily live within a community set up.

## **Husbandry**

A Biotope would be a good setting for this fish with a strong current and a rocky substrate, will do well in a planted aquarium in a species set up or community set up. This species is tolerant of a wide range of temperatures, the optimum temperature specified is 22 degrees C.

## **Breeding Notes**

In Derek Lambert's 'platies and Swordtails' Derek states that brood intervals vary, with warmer temperature coupled to longer periods of daylight shortening the gestation period.

Brood sizes also can also vary with the size and age of the female as well as available food supply, generally expect brood sizes to be around 30.

### **Remarks**

Two size morphs have been identified according to Lambert in 'Platies & Swordtails' which apparently only becomes evident when raising in a mass culture. Under these conditions the smaller morph is 10 mm smaller than the larger morph.

The three species of the *cortezii* clade were thought to be 'allopatric' this means that these species although closely related evolved in geographically separate areas and therefore could not hybridize.

There are reports that now show areas where the species overlap and in some cases have produced natural hybrid populations.

### **References:**

**Middle-American poeciliid fishes of the genus *Xiphophorus*.**

Bull. Fla. St. Mus. Biol. Sci 5 (4): p 57-242. **Donn E. Rosen**

**American Museum Novitates Number 2975, June 27, 1990.**

Monophyly and Geography of the Rio Panuco Basin Swordtails (Genus *Xiphophorus*) with Descriptions of Four New Species  
**Rauchenberger, Kallman and Morizot**

**Zebrafish. Volume 3, Number 3, 2006**

21

The Genus *Xiphophorus* in Mexico and Central America  
**Kallman and Kazianis**

Platies and swordtails  
**Derek and Pat Lambert**

Fishbase Wikipedia

Photographs courtesy of Ivan Dibble



22

## **BLA Annual report of kept species 2017**

2017 saw the start of a new species maintenance program where we asked you, the membership, to let us know what species you are currently keeping. I am very pleased to say that there has been a good response to our appeal and I would like to thank the members who were able to send me their lists.

2018 is a new year with hopefully an even better response for our request. Members who didn't send their lists last year, I ask that you send a list of your maintained species if possible. I would also ask those members who were able to send in their lists last year to send an updated version so I can keep up with any changes.

It is of course an obvious fact that the more people who participate, the more accurate the records become. With better records the chances of being able to help each other out with information and replacement livestock are greatly improved.

It is interesting to note that of the five main families of livebearers, I have only been contacted by members who maintain species from the *Poecilia* and *Goodeid* groups. I haven't at present been contacted by anybody who maintains *Anableps*, halfbeaks or stingrays, so if anybody is keeping these please let me know.

My first thoughts this year were to present a list of all the fish species we keep, but having seen the amount I think it is best that I divide the results through subsequent newsletters. This edition I will concentrate on *Goodeids*.

The Goodeid group are being represented by the following species, however I feel there are many more that have not been reported.

Species	No. of keepers
Allotoca dugesii	1
Allotoca zacapuensis	1
Ameca splendens	1
Ataeniobius toweri	1
Chapalichthys pardalis	1
Chapalichthys peraticus	3
Characodon audax	6
Characodon lateralis	3
Girardinichthys viviparous	1
Ilyodon cortesae	2
Ilyodon furcidens - Xantusi	4
Ilyodon whitei	3
Neotoca bilineata	1
Skiffia sp. (V188)	3
Skiffia multipunctata	5
Xenoporus captivus	3
Xenotaenia resolanae	1
Xenotoca variata	4
"Xenotoca" doadrioi	1
"Xenotoca" lyonsi	1
"Xenotoca" melanosoma	1
Zoogoneticus purhepechus	3
Zoogoneticus tequila	8

Regards Steve Oliver

[Steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk)

### **BLA report of kept species March 2018**

In the previous newsletter I presented a list of the Goodeids currently being maintained with our association, I will continue in this newsletter with a presentation of the *Xiphophorus* species that are currently maintaining within our hobby. In total 17 of the 26 known species are represented, all known locations and data have been included.

This is a good showing of species and highlights the wellbeing of the association in a positive light. There is, as always, a good chance that there are species and/or locations that have not made to me up to now. That being said, if you haven't already updated your records this year, and you are in a position to send me an up to date list but haven't had the chance to do so, I would appreciate any information you can send me. Please include any relevant facts that you know about your species, such as location and/or collection dates. You can either contact me by email or pass it on personally to myself or any of the committee in attendance at any of the club auctions or conventions.

Xiphophorus		
Species	Location / Strain / Comments	No of Keepers
Xiphophorus alverazi	Red form	1
Xiphophorus birchmanni	No data	3
Xiphophorus clemenciae	Rio Sarabia, Veracruz, Mexico	2

Xiphophorus continens	DamainComona, San luis Potosi, Mexico	1
Xiphophorus continens	Rio Ojo Frio, San Luis Potosí, Mexico	2
Xiphophorus cortezi	(Derek Lambert)	1
Xiphophorus cortezi	No data	1
Xiphophorus cortezi	Rio Axtla	1
Xiphophorus couchianus	No data	1
Xiphophorus evelynea	Rio Nexcaxa,Szczendzina Puebla 1994	2
Xiphophorus helleri	Hacienda Lencero, Xalapa, Mexico	1
Xiphophorus helleri	Rio Otapa	1
Xiphophorus helleri	Yucatan Pernisula	3
Xiphophorus kallmanni		1
Xiphophorus meyeri	No data	2
Xiphophorus milleri		6
Xiphophorus montezumae	Rio Frio - El Quince	3
Xiphophorus montezumae	Rio Tamasopo	1
Xiphophorus montezumae		2
Xiphophorus multilineatus	Rio Coy, San Luis Potosl, Mexico	1
Xiphophorus multilineatus	No Data	2

Xiphophorus multilineatus	Rio Tambaque	1
Xiphophorus nezahualcoyotl	Striped – No data	1
Xiphophorus nezahualcoyotl	Spotted – No data	2
Xiphophorus nigrensis	No data	1
Xiphophorus nigrensis	Rio Choy	1
Xiphophorus pygmaeus	Berlin zoo - gold	1
Xiphophorus pygmaeus	Río Huichihuayan	1
Xiphophorus pygmaeus	Gold form	3
Xiphophorus signum		1
Xiphophorus variatus	Rio Nautla	1
Xiphophorus Variatus	La Laguna (Mcallister 2000)	2
Xiphophorus Xiphidium	2 spot	1
Xiphophorus xiphidium	No data	3
Xiphophorus Helleri	Bought as wild from Southend show	1

27

## Diary dates

### Autumn Convention

This year the Autumn convention takes place, as usual in conjunction with Fancy Guppy UK, on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September.

We have a new venue :- The IBM offices at Warwick thanks to Bill Galbally for securing us a meeting space at no cost.

The IBM offices are on the A46 at CV34 5AH, just a short drive from the M40 and just a five minute walk from Warwick town centre and the Railway Station [Warwick Parkway].

Parking is free – campervans to the side car park please.

The Fancy Guppy UK are having their show – well worth seeing the fancy guppies.

The speaker is Fred Poeser, an expert on livebearers who has collected extensively in the Caribbean and Central America.

The Fancy Guppy group have their auction first on the Sunday as several of their attendees have travelled from abroad and have planes or trains to catch. The BLA auction started last year at about 12.00 hr.

There is a Premier Inn opposite the convention site but prices have been going up as the convention gets nearer.

There are two more hotels close to the junction of the M40 and the A46 :\_

Holiday Inn Express, [www.expresswarwick.co.uk](http://www.expresswarwick.co.uk)

£57 per night including breakfast

Regards Steve Oliver

[Steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk)

Hilton, £64 per night.