

# Livebearer News

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BRITISH LIVEBEARER ASSOCIATION



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### **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** : Steve Oliver; email [steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk)

**Vice Chairman** : John Fish; email [fish0116@live.com](mailto:fish0116@live.com)

**Treasurer** : Kamil Gradzewicz; email [kamilgradzewicz@gmail.com](mailto:kamilgradzewicz@gmail.com)

**Editor** : Greg Roebuck, email [gjrsrr12@gmail.com](mailto:gjrsrr12@gmail.com)

**Events organisers** : Steve Oliver; email [steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:steven.oliver63@yahoo.co.uk); John Fish; email [fish0116@live.com](mailto:fish0116@live.com) and Clive Walker; email [Clive Walker 076@gmail.com](mailto:Clive.Walker.076@gmail.com)

**Webmaster** : Alan Dunne

**Species maintenance** : Paddy Davies; email [paddyd@googlemail.com](mailto:paddyd@googlemail.com) and Holly Walford

**Committee members** : Clive Walker; Bill Galbally; Peter Ellis and Holly Walford

## **Words of thanks from our new Chairman**

### **Outgoing Chairman**

Paddy Davis has stepped down as chairman after 5 years. Paddy took on the Chairman's role when the BLA was at a very low point and nearly folded. Paddy has held the BLA together during this difficult period, and not only has the club held together during Paddy's chairmanship, it has grown and expanded to the point where we now can boast over 100 members.

Paddy is to stay on the committee to offer support to myself and has now taken over responsibility for the difficult role of species maintenance.

On a personal note, I would like thank Paddy for all the work put in to maintain this association and keep us afloat.

**Thank you very much Paddy on behalf not only the committee, but the whole of the BLA**

### **Outgoing Treasurer**

Don Kenwood is stepping down from the role of treasurer after 18 years. Don is one of the original BLA members when the association formed in 2002. Don is passing the reins to Kamil in the very near future. I hope Don can remain with the committee to help and advise us as we move through to the next stage in the BLA's history, His knowledge of fish, collecting and habitats will be useful particularly to Paddy in his new role and to help us populate the website and bring it up to date.

**Thank you, Don, for all the hard work you have put in keeping the Association's finances in check during the last 18 years, and particularly during the last 5 years when we went through some difficult times.**

### **Incoming Treasurer**

I would like to congratulate and thank Kamil for stepping up and taking on the Treasurer's role. This is a key role within the committee hierarchy and I know Kamil is enthusiastic to start and already has some ideas to move us forward and I look forward to his input and wish him well as he moves us forward.

### **New committee members**

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new committee members Holly Walford and Peter Ellis. It may take a little time for you to find your feet and carve out your roles going forward. I am really looking forward to your participation on the committee and greatly appreciate your help.

**Thank you for joining the committee.**

### **Vice Chairman**

John has accepted the role of Vice Chairman; I would like to thank John for taking on this role, his support and guidance will be invaluable and make my role, in particular, a lot easier. I look forward to his contributions and help as we move forward. I would also like to congratulate him on his additional role as Events Manager.

**Thank you, your support in both these roles is critical to the club moving forward.**

## **New Chairman**

Right, where do we go from here? Thanks to Paddy the club is in a good position to move forward. The committee has now expanded to 11 active members with Holly and Peter joining us, and we also have support from Nigel Hunter of the GWG-UK (Nigel is also an original BLA member and also served for a long time on the BLA committee).

I have a few avenues I would like to follow, firstly with Paddy in his new role as species maintenance officer, I think the Association can now move to a more active conservation role. I know Paddy has some good ideas and the contacts to make this a great success.

The website needs to be improved, this is a key point for our membership to see what's happening and interact with other members and the club. I hope we can push this forward during the next year.

The cultured fish side of our hobby has not been looked at seriously for many years and needs at some time to be pushed forward to cater for this side of our hobby. This is unfortunately a discussion for later in the year though I believe, as we will need to learn to walk a little before we start to run.

## **Editorial**

The disadvantage of doing the Editor's job is that you are always short of articles to include in the next newsletter. The flipside of this is that you can include what you like; whatever you find interesting. So the content of this newsletter reflects this and is a collection of articles that I thought were interesting. I have also included a piece that seems to be about cichlids, but that I believe has relevance to all fish-keepers, including those interested in livebearers. I hope that they will be of interest to you too. If not, well why not send me something that you find interesting! It doesn't matter whether it is short or long, contains pictures or not – just send it to me and I will include it in the next newsletter. Don't worry about things like spelling – that is what the Editor is for! My email address is in the section about the make-up of the committee.

Speaking of the committee; we have a new one. Our new Chairman, Steve Oliver, has written his thanks at the start of the issue and I would like to add my thanks, especially to the outgoing Chairman, Paddy and Treasurer, Don. Between them, Don and Paddy rescued the BLA from a point where it could easily have gone out of existence and we should all be grateful for their efforts. I would like to wish the new committee members all the best and thank them for the efforts they have already put in on behalf of all BLA members.

I would also like to express my thanks to Kees de Jong for giving me permission to include his article about the courtship of *Girardinus metallicus*.

This is a bit odd. I'm writing this bit in early November and it doesn't feel at all like Christmas. However, by the time you receive this we will be in the run-up to Christmas and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope to see you all at the Leicester event in April.

### **I have a problem !**

*From Greg Roebuck*

What do you do with the waste water when you do a water change? And why have I included the section below that seems to be about cichlids when we are the *British LIVEBEARER Association*? Wellll !! We all keep livebearers, don't we? Most of the people I know keep mostly wild-type livebearers. Some of these fish are wild-caught or F1 or F2 from wild-caught. They may be carrying parasites, bacteria or viruses that are not found in nature in Britain. If you just pour your waste water down the drain then heavy rain can wash these foreign pathogens into local water-courses where they may affect the local fish-fauna which have no immunity. As an example, read on :-

Email from me to Dr Peter Burgess, a member of the BLA since it first started and who answers questions on fish diseases for "*Practical Fishkeeping*" magazine.

Hi Peter,

Can you give me some advice? I have been struggling with problems with three of my tanks. In each of the cases the fish affected are/ were cichlids. The problem started with a tank containing five adult and about a dozen juvenile *Cryptoheros altoflavus*. The fish hung at the surface, clearly unhappy, tail fins clamped, with an increased rate of respiration. They frequently flicked against rocks or the gravel. Over time, they slowly lost weight and condition. I could not see any parasites and definitely no whitespot. The pH was the usual 6.7 and when I tested for ammonia it came out as almost zero. The fish did seem to improve a little with a water change but then quickly deteriorated afterwards.

I tried a couple of courses of NT Labs "Anti-fluke and Wormer" which didn't seem to have an effect. After a couple of 50% plus water changes I tried "Protozin" anti-whitespot treatment - again a couple of courses. At about this time I started to lose fish and after about another three weeks the last one died.

The same problem now seems to have got into two tanks containing West African cichlids. The worst are the *Pelvicachromis roloffi*. Again, no visible parasites or whitespot. Again the fish have their fins clamped and are flicking against the sand and plants. Again, they have an increased rate of respiration. I haven't tried the "Anti-fluke and wormer" this time but I am on the second course of "Protozin". It does not seem to have done any good and I have lost three of the fish in the last two days. Again, I have been doing lots of water changes using rain water or distilled water. The peculiar thing is that the *Otocinclus* and the Rosy tetras in the same tank seem to be unaffected. The *Paranochromis caudofasciatis* in a separate tank are not as badly affected yet but they are hanging with their tail fins clamped.

If you have any suggestions as to the cause of the problem or what I could do to treat it I would be very grateful.  
Wishing you all the best,

Greg

I sent the above email after 10.00pm. The following email arrived from Dr Burgess during the following morning:-

Hi Greg

Sorry to hear about the cichlid problems. You've tried pretty much all the things that I would have suggested. From what you say, it does sound like an infectious disease problem rather than anything to do with the water quality/chemistry.

Given the problem appears restricted to your cichlids, then this could be due to one of two things:

(1) Your other (non-cichlid) fishes have ACQUIRED immunity, or partial immunity, to the disease. Acquired immunity arises when the fish have been exposed to the same disease pathogen in the past, survived, and built up immunity to subsequent outbreaks of the same disease.

(2) Your non-cichlid fishes have a NATURAL (= INNATE) immunity to the disease in question. We know that many disease pathogens (including some viruses, bacteria, parasites etc) can affect only certain species or types of fishes (= those that are NATURALLY susceptible) and not others (= those that are NATURALLY immune). Extreme examples are those pathogens that affect only one or a few species of fish (e.g. many monogenetic flukes have a very limited host range, some capable of affecting only a single host fish species) whereas other pathogens can affect virtually any type of fish (such as the whitespot parasite which seems capable of infecting just about any species of freshwater fish).

My best-guess is that we are dealing with option (2), namely a pathogen than can only affect certain types of fish. Maybe just cichlids...?

As you will know, the symptoms you describe, notably the respiratory stress and flicking behaviour, point to gill- and skin-dwelling parasites (as opposed to viruses or bacteria - though we can't be 100% certain that bacteria or viruses are not to blame). That tends to narrow down the culprits to surface dwelling single-celled protozoan parasites (such as whitespot, trichodina, velvet etc), or larger multi-celled parasites such as the monogenetic skin and gill flukes (comprising mostly the gyrodactylid and dactylogyrid fluke species, of which there are many).

As mentioned, many of the common protozoan parasites of fish (such as whitespot, velvet) affect a wide range of fishes, and not just cichlids, in which case we'd expect your otos and characins to also be affected. Given they seem unaffected then the problem could be due either to some less common species of protozoa or maybe monogenetic flukes. Regarding the latter, we know that many species of monogenetic flukes have a limited host range, so it could be that we are dealing with a fluke problem.

You've already tried the fluke/wormer drug without success. But bear in mind that some flukes (the dactylogyrids) lay eggs, and these eggs are resilient to chemical treatments until such time that the eggs hatch. So it could take several doses to eradicate egg-laying flukes.

I could easily be barking up the wrong tree, but my suspicion is a fluke problem. Ideally, we could confirm this by taking a sample of gill mucus from one of the affected cichlids and look at the mucus under low- and medium- powers of a microscope. But in the absence of any microscopy, my suggestion would be to try again using the fluke/wormer drug and maybe try three or possibly four doses - given at intervals suggested by the manufacturer.

That's about all I can suggest for now, other than to maintain good aeration in the affected tanks to help support the cichlid's respiratory stress.

Do keep me posted.

Good luck!

Peter.

My reply to Dr Burgess :-  
Hi again Peter,

Thank you very much for taking the time and trouble over your very detailed answer. I have to admit that I don't know the difference between gyrodactylid flukes and dactylogyrid flukes. My degree was in chemistry not biology. If I was still teaching then I would be very tempted to sacrifice one of the affected fish and take it into school to use one of their microscopes to check out the gills and skin for parasites.

I am going to take your advice. First I will need to do a few very large water changes to get rid of all the copper from the Protozin and it might take me a day or two to get enough very soft water to do this [the *P. roloffi* are in a rainwater with 10% tap water mix to give a hardness of just 1dH]. I will also need to visit my local aquarium store to get some more of the anti-fluke and wormer solution. By the way, the active ingredient in that solution is called "Flubendazole", which is not a strictly scientific name and so I cannot work out what sort of structure it has.

A couple of points spring to mind :-

1. The *P. roloffi* are F2 from a wild pair that I bought a couple of years ago. I wonder if they brought flukes in with them that have since built up in numbers. However, it was the *Cryptoheros altotlavus* which were first affected so I don't think it will have been the wild fish that brought in the parasites.

2. I don't feed live food since a bag of daphnia wiped out four tanks of pygmy sunfish, *Elassoma evergladei*, a couple of years ago. However, I do feed frozen food. I suppose it is possible that the organism responsible for my problems managed to survive freezing and then started breeding once in my tank water. I would be interested to hear your opinion.

For now, at least, thank you very much again for your help; it is very kind of you and very much appreciated.

Best wishes,

Greg

And Dr Burgess' response :-

Hi Greg

Gyrodactylid flukes (*Gyrodactylus* species) are mostly found on the body surfaces of the fish, and are livebearers - so all stages are susceptible to chemical treatments. Dactylogyrids occur mostly on the gills and they lay eggs.

I'm almost certain that these flukes would be killed by freezing.

Cheers

Peter.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Burgess again for his help and advice.

So what do I do with the waste water from fish tanks? I used to just pour it down the drain. The possible consequences were made clear to me in a conversation with Pete Liptrot, of Bolton Museum Aquarium and our own Nigel Hunter. Nigel has even built a soak-away to take his waste water so that it will be naturally filtered by the chalk rock underlying his home. Me, I pour all my waste water onto the lawn. I am fortunate enough that the soil here drains well. And you? How are you going to make sure that your waste water has no unfortunate effects?

PS In conversation with Pete Liptrot recently, he asked me if I wash my hands between putting them in one tank and another. I don't, as I haven't got a sink in my fish room. I do dry my hands on a towel to try to stop organisms spreading from one tank to another. What do you think? Do you wash your hands between putting them in one tank and the next? I would be very interested to hear your opinions on the topics raised here. Many thanks to Pete for his help and advice.

PPS The anti-fluke treatment seems to have done the job. I am keeping my fingers crossed!



**The courtship of the Black-chinned livebearer** [From : *Poecilia Nieuws* 2021 – 4]

*By Kees de Jong*

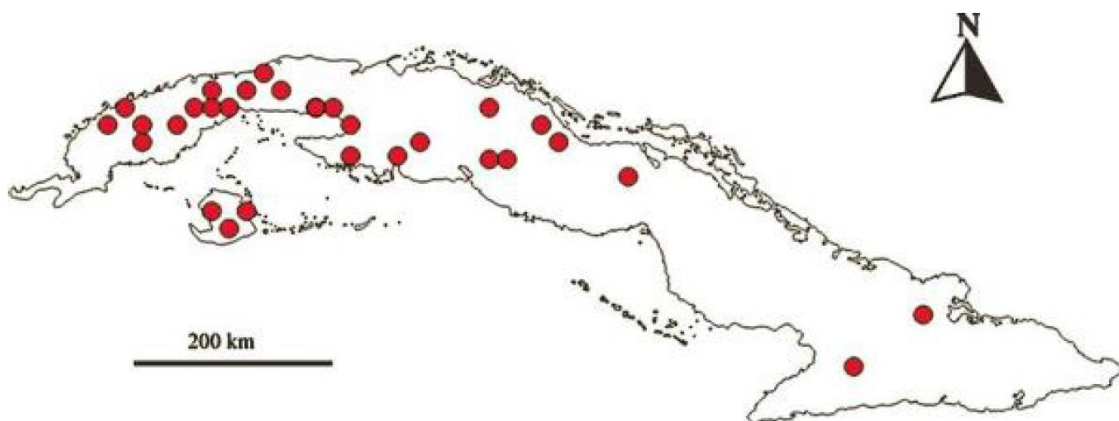
*Translated by “Google Translate” [With a little help from Greg Roebuck]*







Some time ago, when I went to the pet store Exotica in Amsterdam with Fokko Padmos to buy *Gambusia hurtadoi*, I also noticed a container with a number of Black-chinned livebearers (*Girardinus metallicus* POEY 1854). When I showed my enthusiasm for this fish, owner Ron indicated that he had nicer specimens in another aquarium. That turned out to be true. Small, healthy-looking fish whose males had a black belly and head. These were fish bred in the Czech Republic and they were not really cheap with a price of € 12,95 per pair. I couldn't resist the temptation and bought two pairs.



The black-chinned livebearer is found in many places in Cuba and the island of Isla de Juventud (PONCE DE LEON & RODRIGUEZ). It has been kept in the aquarium for many years and is an easy to keep and breed fish (eg VENTE 1986). They were sometimes offered in the regular aquarium trade in the 1970s, but after that they were kept only by specialised enthusiasts for years. VENTE therefore wondered where the black-chinned livebearer had gone in 1986. It is interesting to read that his question is identical to LEVER's question in 1955. He wondered why this little

fish was so popular before the war at the time of his article being discontinued. He hoped that the younger generation would take an interest in this viviparous tooth-carp again.

The species was usually present within specialised associations such as Poecilia Nederland. In recent years, however, the species has also been offered on the market again. Apparently, it is commercially interesting again at this moment. Would a younger generation become interested in a viviparous toothcarp in 2021?

There are three colour forms of the black-chinned livebearer, of which the males clearly differ from each other: the normal form, a golden-bellied form and a form with a black belly and gonopodium. The black-bellied form, whose gold-coloured body forms a nice contrast with the belly, is the one most often kept. All three forms occur together in nature. However, the ratio is very different. The normal form is the most common, the black-bellied less common and the golden-bellied is very rare. Although it has been claimed that there are three species, this is not endorsed by researchers.

The normal form and the black-bellied form differ in size. The males of the black-bellied form grow to a maximum of 4cm and the females 6cm. The normal form can be half as big again.

The first *Girardinus metallicus* were imported in 1903 but soon disappeared from aquaria. A second import dates from 1930. This also turned out to have disappeared from aquaria at some point. Then new imports followed that managed to be maintained in aquaria. Only the normal form was introduced and that was then written about (eg J. LEVER, 1955; DE BEURS, 1958).

In 1965 a group of *G. metallicus* were imported from Cuba in to the then GDR as a result of an international fair. This group contained both the already known normal form and the black-bellied form. From the zoo in Leipzig, these fish also ended up with aquarists in that country (VENTE, 1986; PEDERZANI, 1966).

Live-bearing toothcarps have two different reproductive strategies. On the one hand, there are short gonopodium males who are courting. With this courtship they try to get the females into a mating mood and thus enable them to come near and fertilise them. In most of these species, the males have secondary sexual characteristics, such as sword, colours, a high dorsal fin, etc, with which they hope to positively influence the choice of the females.

On the other hand, there are the males with a long gonopodium . They try to approach the female from behind and turn their gonopodium that far forward. They don't have to get very close to fertilise the female.

The purchase of the black-chinned livebearer was a good time for me to read some literature about this species. KOLLURU *et al* (2014) seemed an interesting start to me. They examined the mating behaviour of the normal form and the black-bellied form.



The males of the black-chinned livebearer have a long gonopodium. The expectation is that they have no courtship. KOLLURU *et al* (2014) indicate that the black-bellied males show courtship and thus form a special feature. In the title of their article they proudly indicate that this had not been described before. But that is not the case. I immediately remembered STALLKNECHT's book from 1989. It contains clear drawings of the way in which the normal form secretly approaches the females from behind and tries to fertilise them and of the courtship of the black-bellied males, who proudly shows his black markings. When I searched a bit further I found a short text by STALLKNECHT from 1969 in which he already mentions this difference. He bases this partly on PEDERZANI, who wrote about courtship two years after the introduction of the black-chinned livebearer. HIERONIMUS (1998) goes further into courtship and also indicates that the different forms do not always simply cross. A possible cause for this is that the different forms in the aquarium have been kept separate from each other for a long time. KEMPKE (2000) also mentions the differences between the courtship and also discusses the differences in size between the two forms. In the normal form, two types of males would be present. An early pubescent that reaches the size of the black-bellied form and a later-pubescent form that becomes half the size. Possibly, there is a relationship between the sexual cut and stop growing and the characteristic for a black underside. The combination between becoming sexually mature and another trait is more common (e.g. in the black males of *Xiphophorus milleri*.)

After these historical insights and some side paths, let's go back to the aforementioned research by KOLLURU *et al*. They were not the first to show the courtship of males with a long gonopodium in their article, but they do give some research results that are worth mentioning.

The females of the black form are aggressive towards their approaching males. Larger females are therefore less often approached than the smaller ones. This is at odds with the fact that males of the livebearing toothcarps have a preference for the more fertile large females. With the black-bellied form the males try to mate more often with smaller females.

Males with a longer gonopodium mate most often. As with other livebearing toothcarps, the females prefer large males with a long gonopodium.

The more black the males have, the more dominant they are. They also mate more often. It seems that the amount of black determines the position of the males in the ranking hierarchy. It turned out that larger males are not more dominant than smaller ones.

Kempkes' idea that there is a relationship between body size and other characteristics is endorsed.

The yellow form has not been extensively researched, these have no courtship and use the raiding technique (secret mating) that is also present in the colourless form.

If the above information is not enough for you, you can also read the article by KOLLUR *et al* from 2015. It examines the mate choice of the females in more detail. WOTAN *et al* (2018) continues to investigate mate choice and the difference between the behaviour of the three forms.

Apart from all the scientific research, the black-chinned livebearer is an attractive fish that is worth keeping. It is also a suitable resident for the community aquarium. The form that I have called normal here for the sake of convenience, I do not do well with that designation. The Dutch name translates as metal-head tooth-carp and it is not called that for nothing. They have beautiful blue glowing scales and a subtle black mesh pattern on a golden brown body. That doesn't sound spectacular. But they are certainly beautiful fish in the right light. Although it is stated throughout the literature that this is not difficult fish to keep, it has yet to be proven with this strain. It is not always easy everywhere, I know from experience.

#### Literature

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*Many thanks to Kees de Jong for sending me the edition of Poecilia Nieuws and for giving permission for me to use it here.*

#### **Editor's note**

I have seen the "normal form" and the "Black-bellied" form of *G. metallicus* but never the golden form. Is anyone out there keeping them? Are the three different forms with different courtship strategies sub-species? Are we seeing the evolution of new species here? I would welcome the opinions of anyone reading this article.

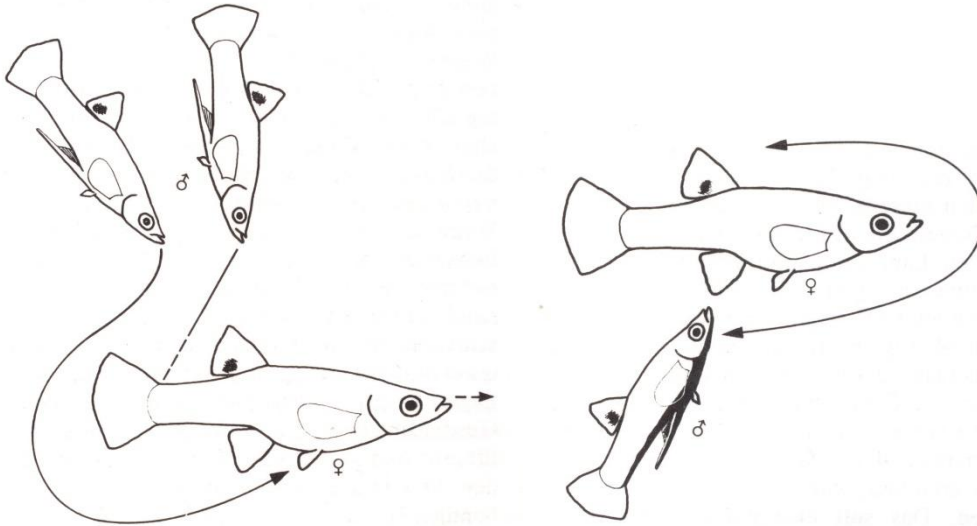


The golden form - <https://aqzeno.de/en/freshwater-fish-animals/guppy-platy-swordtail/7241/girardinus-metallicus-metal-carpel-gold>



[https://www.reddit.com/r/Livebearers/comments/dfg4a6/girardinus\\_metallicus\\_yellow\\_belly\\_a\\_livebearer/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Livebearers/comments/dfg4a6/girardinus_metallicus_yellow_belly_a_livebearer/)





Left :- Courtship of unspotted males. Right :- courtship of black-chinned form.

**Photos sent in by BLA members**



*Limia perugiae*. Sorry but I've forgotten who sent me this photo. Please get in touch so that I can credit you!



*Limia zonata* , female. And this one too.



*Limia zonata* , male. And again this one. Very embarrassing! Please let me know who sent these photos to me.





*Poecilia gillii* (Furness et al 2020)



*Xiphohorus helleri*, Rio Lancetilla, Honduras, Juan Carlos Merino

## Snippets

I keep *Xiphophorus nezahualcoyotl*. I have never done that well with them; the numbers born have just about matched the numbers dying – until this year that is. Over the last twelve months or so the females have dropped plenty of young but not a single one of them has sexed out as male! Is this normal – does anyone know? Is it just a case of waiting until next year and some will sex out? For now I have only females.

In the January 2002 issue of “*Today’s Fishkeeper*” magazine someone called Maurice asked about the possibility of fish changing sex. He quoted from a book called “The language of the genes”, by Professor Steve Jones, professor of genetics and head of the Gaxton Laboratory, University College, London. Derek Lambert answered and I have copied out his words below :-

“With sex reversal you need to be sure which species the author is actually discussing. A number of marine fish go through sex reversal in just the way Dr Jones says in his book. This is well documented and an example of functional sex reversal: i.e. a female that produces viable eggs becoming a male which can produce sperm and fertilise eggs or a male which has sired offspring becoming a female able to produce viable eggs. The question I have been asked many times is “Can members of the *Poeciliidae* change sex?” and as you say I have consistently replied no. All the scientific research shows these fish are born either male or female and remain that sex throughout their lives. These sexes are determined by their genetic make-up that has been studied for some species of *Poeciliid*. Most have the classic XY (male) and XX (female) make-up. A few, such as *Xiphophorus maculatus*, have WY, WX and XX females and XY or YY males. However, even these are born one sex or the other and are not believed to undergo functional sex reversal.

What we do see in many *poeciliids* is females past reproductive age may occasionally develop male characteristics, however, they can not produce sperm and are not able to sire offspring. Likewise young males look like females up until they become sexually mature. These fish, however, are not able to produce eggs and do not give birth to fry. Some of these fish may take years to sex out and become functioning males, but throughout that time they never produce babies, although they are often courted by adult males that attempt to mate with them. Hence it would be easy for a hobbyist to think a female had changed sex into a male.

For more information on this subject you should obtain a copy of “*Ecology and Evolution of Livebearing Fishes (Poeciliidae)*”, published by Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.07632, USA. ISBN 0-13-222720-7. This book is edited by Gary K. Meffe and Franklin F. Snelson, Jr and gathers together work by many of the world’s foremost authorities on *Poeciliid* Fish. It includes information on unisexual *poeciliids* as well as those that reproduce by true clonal inheritance, and how P factors control at what size and age a male will mature. Fascinating reading for aquarists who want to understand their fish in greater depth.”

*My thanks to Pat Lambert for her permission to use Derek’s work in “Livebearer News”.*

OK, so will any of my *nezzies* turn out to be males? I still don’t know – does anyone out there know? And has anyone got a spare male nezzy to sell so that I can possibly get some fry again? My email address is on page 2.

## Snippets 2

Ethics! The ethics of fish-keeping have been crossing my mind recently. Is it OK to keep fish in captivity? I would obviously say yes! After all, keeping fish in captivity is what I do. How do I justify this? Several of the species that I keep are rare and endangered and if I can get them to breed then I am increasing the total number of those species in existence. This is particularly true for me in the case of *Skiffia* sp “Sayula”. This species is extinct in the wild as predatory large-mouthed bass and other non-native species have been introduced into the one pond where it was found. However, we were warned at the autumn convention that there are people in the Animal Rights groups who do not agree. Apparently, these people would rather species went extinct than be kept in captivity. We were also warned that these people have recently started to target fish-keepers and fish-keeping. If we have to justify our hobby [passion/ obsession?] then we need to make sure that we are keeping our charges in the best possible conditions and breeding them wherever possible.

Ethics again. If we sell fish at auction, we should ensure that we label the fish bags with accurate species data, including site data, wherever possible. Referring once again to the example above, I have recently seen fish that I was nearly certain were *Skiffia* sp “Sayula” labelled as “*Skiffia francesae*”. There is a whole debate to be had about labelling here.

Ethics a third time. Are we responsible for making sure that fish that we move on at auction go to people who will look after them properly? At the autumn convention we had some rare killifish on the BLA sales table which were donated to us to sell for BLA funds. I was approached by one young man who wanted to buy some of these bags of fish. During our conversation it emerged that he possessed two large tanks only and they already contained fish species and water conditions wholly unsuited to the killifish that the young man wanted to buy. I refused to sell them to him. Later, the same lad attended the killifish auction. He bought bag after bag of killifish which were just not going to survive long when he got them home. Should I have said something? Should I have approached the British Killifish people and told them that the lad was not going to be able to keep alive the fish he was buying? I’m afraid that I kept quiet but my conscience does not rest easy on the matter.

What is your opinion? I would love to hear your thoughts on the points that I have raised here.

## Events

1. The “Fishkeepers’ Extravaganza”, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2021.

Ever since the success of the Leicester event in July, I had been looking forward to the “Fishkeepers’ Extravaganza” with equal parts anticipation and trepidation. How would we get on with the killifish people and the cichlid people? How many people would turn up? Could we attract enough visitors to justify the cost of the venue? As it turned out, after lots of planning and zoom meetings, I really enjoyed the whole weekend and spent a large part of it with a daft smile on my face. The atmosphere was brilliant; I didn’t hear a cross word spoken all weekend and everyone I spoke to said how much they had enjoyed themselves.

Not that it started well for me personally – after taking far too long bagging up fish and then hitting an horrific traffic jam I arrived about five hours later than planned. I missed a lot of the hard work of setting up show tanks [Sorry guys!] and Steve Oliver was still connecting up all the wiring for the lights.

Saturday started bright and early and the first visitors were arriving by 9.00am. I missed several of the talks as I was manning the BLA sales table but I thoroughly enjoyed the ones that I managed to get to. Chris Englezou's description of how he had become involved in the conservation of *Aphanius fasciatus* in Cyprus and discovered a new population of the species there had me wishing that he had brought some along so that I could have a go at keeping and breeding them for conservation purposes. The discussions about location data and breeding for conservation also had me wishing that I could do more for the conservation of fish species.

I keep cichlids as well as livebearers and so I found Tom Williams' talk on Madagascan cichlids on the Sunday fascinating. The auctions went well on the Sunday. There were a couple of species of killifish that I had wondered about bidding for but their prices went too high very quickly. Our own auction went well and notable prices included £32 for a pair of *Zoogoneticus tequila*, £30 for a pair of *Xiphophorus alvarezi*, £30 for a pair of *Heterandria Formosa*, £59 for a bag with three pairs of *Xiphophorus cortezi* and two pairs of *X. montezumae* which went for £56 and £61.

The cichlid auction, however, started quite late and we need to think about timings for future events. The venue, the Holiday Inn at South Normanton, was excellent. The food there was good and the staff went out of their way to be helpful. The amount of room that we had for all the different activities worked really well and the only downside was that it was rather expensive.

I must express my thanks to the British Killifish Association for allowing us to share their event and their venue and I hope that we will have more such joint events in future. I must also thank Steve, Bill, Clive, Paddy, John, Kamil, Jamie and the rest of the team for all the work and thought that they put in to make the event such a successful and happy one.

**2. The next event** is a show and auction to be held in Leicester at the end of April. We are planning to have a livebearer show, a guppy show, talks, biotope displays and a livebearer auction. The British Cichlid Association are also planning on joining us to make it a joint event. I will email out details nearer the time.

### **Wanted**

Has anyone got a spare male *Xiphophorus nezahualcoyotl* that I could buy from them? My email address is :- [gjrsrr12@gmail.com](mailto:gjrsrr12@gmail.com)

Newish BLA member Richard Sproson would like to get hold of wild-type *Xiphophorus variatus* and any of the more unusual *Limia* species. If you can help him out his email address is :- [richard@sproson5.co.uk](mailto:richard@sproson5.co.uk)

Thanking you in anticipation.