

CAT CHAT

The Journal of the Catfish Study Group (UK)

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By
Isaac Isbrücker

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Volume Number 1 Issue Number 3
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MEMBERSHIP LIST

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THE FIRST 100

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Pullout Section - Membership List - for you to keep and update as new pages are published.

Dear Members

Once again, thanks to our contributors for their great articles.

To date there have been no replies to our 'Meet the Members' letter which a few of you have received. More letters will be sent with this issue.

Articles and pictures can be sent by e-mail direct to <bill@catfish.co.uk> or by post to

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Please don't write in about the two errors on page 11. The reference, bottom left, is from page 14. The other is a spelling mistake. Blame the fuel crisis!

The next issue will contain one large article (I did not like to split it between two issues) and the Open Show report and results. I can tell you that attendance figures were down which was a direct result of the fuel shortage.

Chapter 4, who printed the first two Cat Chat covers has closed down. We are currently looking for a new design and sponsorship for next year. Any offers out there?
Ed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the following (in no particular order) for their generous donations to support the Open Show: Prestwood Petzone, Barlows Aquatic Trading, British Aquatic Superstore, Mrs Page, Pier Aquatics, Mermaid Fish Imports and a special thanks to our Catering Department for their hard work.

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From the Chair



Hello everyone! The past three months seem to have flown by. I find there are just not enough hours in the day to complete all the tasks I need to do and there's a lot of midnight oil being burned to keep up. The attendance at the Group's last three meetings was a little lower than expected. The members who did attend all played an active part which made them very interesting and enjoyable.

June: Bagridae. Trevor Morris brought along a specimen of *Pseudomystus stenomus*, if my memory serves me correctly, and I took my *Mystus leucophasis* (The upside down Asian catfish). We discussed the conditions we kept them in as well as the various types of food they ate. This led on to the diversities to be found within the group of Bagrid catfishes from the smallest to some of the species that are far to big for the average tank. After the discussion on the live specimens and a short break it was the turn of Julian Dignal, one of our two Web Officers, who talked about the vast amount of catfish information that is available on the internet. He also showed us the page that he and Allan James, our other web officer, have put on their respective sites, Planet Catfish and Scotcat, to advertise and promote the activities of the Group. I think this is where I am losing all track of time when I'm searching around all the catfish sites.

July: Pimelodidae. Our President Trevor Morris did us proud and brought along some specimens of *Brachyrhamdia meesi* and an *Imparfinis* species for us to see and talk about. Once again everyone enjoyed

the discussions that followed Trevor's words of wisdom. This was then followed by a very interesting slide show, given by Danny Blundell, that showed us the diversity and colour pattern varieties that can be found within the Pimelodidae family. There was much discussion held about these fishes during and after all the slides were seen. All in all a very interesting meeting.

August: Mochokidae, and Trevor as usual brought along a couple of specimens for us to see. They were *Mochckiella paynei* and a specimen of a *Schilbe marmoratus*. The big disappointment of the day was the lack of members present. Perhaps holidays had a big part to play. However, it gave the committee plenty of time to finalise the arrangements for the forth-coming Open Show in September which, by the time you read this issue, will be over. Hopefully it will have been well represented with lots of entries on the Show Bench and plenty of interesting lots in the Auction. A full report on the show will be given in the next issue.

Ian Fuller

BOOK REVIEW

Bristlenoses - Catfish with Character

By Kathy Jenkins

The book for the hobbyist. This new publication by TFH contains just about all you need to know about keeping Bristlenose Catfish. If you have never had one, there is an explanation on what to look for when you buy one and how to look after it when you take it home.

As popular as these fish are this, surprisingly, is the first book dedicated to them. Kathy has taken care not to use too many scientific expressions and explains them where necessary. There are plenty of pictures,

drawings, charts and maps for those who like them which assist with descriptions, temperature ranges, climate and locations. There is also an interesting chapter on the blind Bristlenoses.

Well worth £9.95.

Bill Hurst

Note: If anyone in the UK has problems buying one, contact me and I can get one sent to you, post free. My telephone number is 01704 213690 (Preferably evenings or weekends)



MEET THE MEMBERS

Erwin Schraml

Our guest speaker at the Convention in February 2001

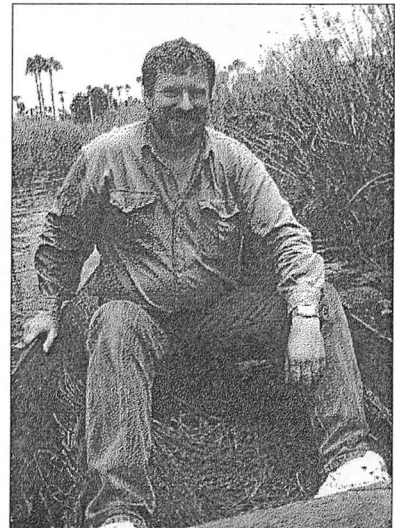
I was born in Augsburg in 1957. At a relatively early age I developed a keen interest in native fishes, with the element of mystery as a particular attraction; fishes elude normal observation methods by virtue of their quite different environment. Armed with net, rubber boots, and a bucket I wandered along drainage ditches and the local canal, drained for a short while for cleaning. In the case of the latter, every year I rescued many fishes from death by suffocation in the residual puddles; the larger specimens were transferred to the nearby river, but small ones were often taken home for study, mainly in the wash tub. This led to many a scolding from my mother come washday, when she wanted to use it herself! My most ardent wish, for an aquarium, was not granted until I was 13. Naturally the glass container offered a quite different view of my subjects - the fish could now be watched from the side, not just from above. I was also fascinated by the 3-dimensional effect that could be created by the clever use of decor. It was not long before a second aquarium followed, then a third. Before long every available inch of space in the house was occupied by a small piece of underwater habitat. I was occasionally able to earn fishes and food by doing small jobs for a local petshop owner. Eventually my enthusiasm came to the notice of the committee of an aquarium society, who invited me to one of their meetings. And for the first time I met other people (almost) as "fish-crazy" as myself. After a while I became possessed of the urge to share my observations with others, and I gave my first lecture to this club at the age of 15. One year later I joined the DCG (the German Cichlid Association), and after another year my first article for the association was published.

Cichlids were my first great passion. And before long it was no longer enough to describe my observations in words, I wanted to record them with photos as well. First with borrowed equipment, later with an old Praktica "Super TL", which had only a manual shutter but was at least a singlelens-reflex camera. This produced the first usable transparencies, which were actually good enough to be published in aquarium magazines. Fishes and fish photography were now the be-all and end-all of my existence. At an aquarium centre in Munich I found just the selection of exotic fishes I was looking for, and this formed the basis of a collection of

photos that now numbers thousands and now allows me to contribute to the illustration of numerous books and magazines. Because published information on fishes is easily forgotten and often difficult to find again, I developed my own data banks in order to catalogue and archive aquaristic and ichthyological information, thus making it easy to access at any time. As an amateur diver I observed the behaviour of fishes in their natural habitat, thus filling the gaps in my knowledge. Only recently I was able to undertake journeys to distant places, now that my children are older. Top of this wish-list were Tunisia and the desert mouthbrooders of its oases, the Gambia and its fascinating river, and most of all Uganda, where I could visit the magnificent Lakes Victoria, Edward, George and Albert, and many other small lakes.

The interest in catfish was developed relatively late. First of all around 1980 were species of the genus *Synodontis* only kept as occupants for cichlids. But around 1990 I made pictures of newly imported lorocariids for a wholesaler. Because for some strange reasons it was not possible to publish them as new LDA-numbers in a magazine what developed these numbers, so I made an arrangement to transfer this system to another journal. That's how LDA-numbers were created (L-numbers published in "Das Aquarium"). Doing this I soon found contact to many catfish-scientists, and last but not least to aqualog. These people were looking at that time for a photographer of their constantly new imported fishes. Later I became an author for two of their books. Fish have become a major part of my life. Nevertheless I have managed to pursue a parallel career as a social worker in order to support myself and my family.

Erwin Schraml



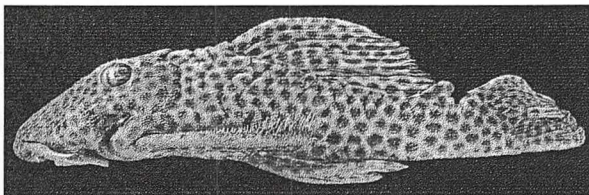
The submerse residence of the loricariid *Hemiancistrus medians* (Kner, 1854): a catfish found its home after 138 years

BY ISAÄC J. H. ISBRÜCKER

Vertebraten/Ichthyologie, Zoölogisch Museum Amsterdam, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Postbus 94766, 1090 GT Amsterdam, Nederland

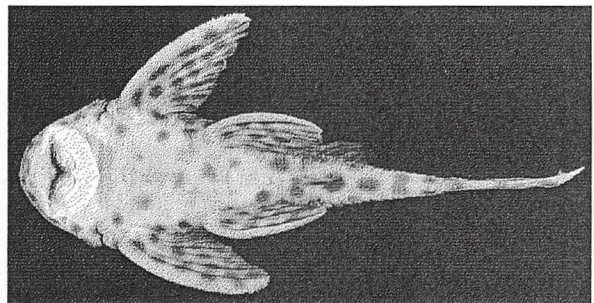
The bulk of commercially imported animals (and of plants for that matter) is transferred from one owner to the next without detailed information about the locality from which they had originally been taken. In the past, many species were described with wrong or even without locality information at all.

When it concerns an identifiable, thus known species, the only disadvantage may be that we cannot be certain whether such specimens came from a known or from a hitherto unknown place. It frequently happens, however, that imported animals are specimens that represent unknown species (they are new to science, such is the common expression). The scientist confronted nowadays with such a case is facing a dilemma, even when the new species is clearly distinct from its closest relatives. The lack of any detailed knowledge about the original locality (called the type locality, an important bit of information) is a severe drawback. It frequently takes many years - and more often than not a little bit of luck - before one is able to retrieve the place from which such animals must have been gathered. In view of the serious handicap yielded by specimens of new species of unknown provenance, scientists have rightfully shown great reluctance, even ignorance, to use them in establishing a new species until such a time that reliable information about its natural residence becomes available.



The Austrian ichthyologist Rudolf Kner [1810 — 1869] published descriptions (1854a, 1854b) of all of the species of Loricariidae present at the time in the Vienna Museum, mainly those collected by Johann Natterer during his long sojourn in Brazil: 18 years, in which he collected 1617 specimens of fishes (Papavero, 1971). Kner (1854b: 256) stated: "...finally, I add some observations I made in the various German museums which I visited most recently on account of this family of fishes. This contributed in several ways to the extension of my knowledge about this group." He continued on the same page: "All the museums combined which I visited in Germany do not yield the richness in species,

which the Imperial Museum [in Vienna, Austria] possesses alone; moreover, the identifications are not always quite reliable." ... "Besides these I only found ... a hypostomid in the Royal Museum of Stuttgart, erroneously named *barbatus*, which is lacking from the 'Court-Naturalia-Cabinet' at home. It is an *Ancistrus* with a stocky appearance, a dorsal fin with few rays, keeled and coarsely toothed trunk scutes, a bundle of very long hooks with a form like those in *Anc[istrus] mystacinus* m. [Kner, 1854, then also a new species] and the following species, with a short head, broad snout, large eyes, very long pelvic fins reaching beyond the anal fin and very prickly pectoral fins; trunk and fins are covered with large, dark spots, the abdomen is close-set with small scutelets. Even the last character alone distinguishes it from all other species with which I am acquainted, since I do not know any other *brachypterin* [meaning short-finned] *Ancistrus* [meaning provided with barbed hooks] with an abdomen covered with scutelets, which, in contrast, is characteristic of all the *macropterin* [= long-finned] *Lictores* [after 'lictor,' a minor officer among the Romans, from the Latin verb *ligare*, meaning to bind, alluding to the bundles of bound rods which he bore]. While therefore this species represents the intermediate link between both groups, the name *Anc[istrus] medians* would probably appear to be not inappropriate."

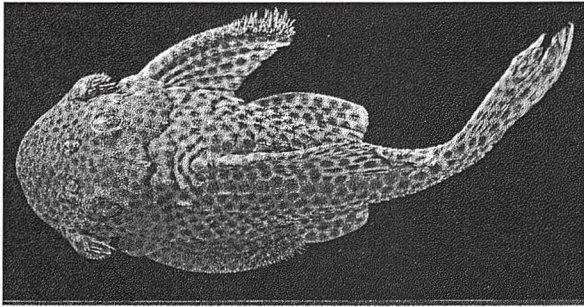


This completed the description of this species when new to science. Kner (loc. cit.: 281) mentioned its systematic position, without adding data. Apparently he



had examined only one specimen (which is then the holotype), although it is not impossible that he had seen more than one specimen (which are then syntypes) while writing the description. Size nor locality were recorded by Kner.

On the basis of this description only, Pieter Bleeker (1862) established a new genus for Kner's species, which he named *Hemiancistrus*.



Albert Günther (1864) considered *Hemiancistrus* as a subgenus of *Chaetostomus* [the correct spelling of which is *Chaetostoma*]. He gave a rather detailed description of two "fine specimens" from Surinam of his "*Chaetostomus medians*" which were purchased of Mr. [August] Kappler, but Günther provided the reference to Kner's description with a question mark. He added: "I have no doubt that our specimens are identical with *Ancistrus medians* of Kner, although he describes the belly as densely covered with small shields [Günther, however, observed: "Thorax and belly nearly entirely naked, being covered with patches of small granulations only laterally and anteriorly."]; M. Kner saw his specimens in the Stuttgart Collection, which received them from the same source as the British Museum."

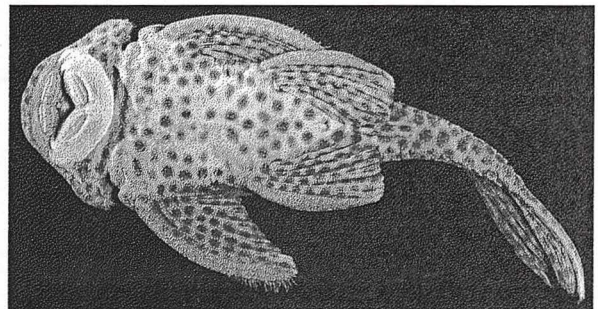
Charles Tate Regan (1904) placed *Hemiancistrus* as a synonym of his *Ancistrus* (which was a genus completely different from the one we call *Ancistrus* nowadays) and again described the same two specimens which had been available by Günther 40 years before; the largest one measured 220 mm in total length.

In February 1989 I learned that Dr Ronald Fricke, Curator of Fishes of the Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde in Stuttgart was preparing a catalogue of type specimens of fishes in his collection. In reply to a letter of mine he noted that in the old catalogue there were records of three specimens, identified as "*Chaetostomus medians* Kner". One was a dried specimen, collected by Kappler in 1848 (before Kner's description), the other two were adults preserved in alcohol, also collected by Kappler but in 1860 (after this description). Further correspondence with Dr Fricke, including a comparison of specimens with photos yielded (20-III-1991) that the holotype of *Ancistrus me-*

dians must be considered lost, since there does no longer exist a dried specimen from 1848, the characters of which match Kner's description. Fortunately, in the Stuttgart Museum (SMNS 791) the two specimens in alcohol of *Hemiancistrus medians*, collected by Kappler in 1860 are in good condition.

They originated from the Rivière Marouini (spelled Marowini Rivier in Surinam), downstream of the village Epoia, Maroni (Marowijne in Surinam) river system in French Guiana, to which I restricted the type locality (Isbrücker, 1992: 57). Previously, this area was Surinamese territory.

The specimens illustrated in my previous (and this) note were collected by Dr Jean-Pierre Gosse at the type locality on 22 October 1969. Finally, it is not only possible to redescribe *Hemiancistrus medians*: because it is the type species of the genus it is also possible to prepare a meaningful revision of *Hemiancistrus*. The illustrations of the habitus of this important species, published in my note of 1992 possibly were the first such illustrations ever issued. The conspicuously long odontodes on the pectoral fin spine in the adult may or may not indicate a sexual difference of the male.



Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Dr Ronald Fricke of the Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde, Stuttgart, to Dr Jean-Pierre Gosse of the Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Brussels, for information and for the loan of material, and to Mr Rainer Stawikowski, Gelsenkirchen (Editor in Chief, DATZ, Die Aquarien- und Terrarien Zeitschrift) for moral support.

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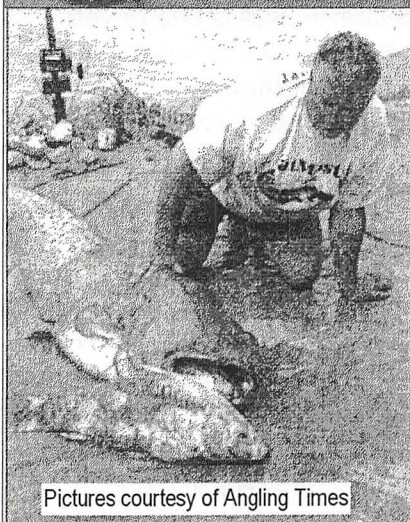
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Pictures courtesy of Angling Times

What Do You Feed Your Catfish?

This catfish, caught on the River Ebro in Spain, weighed in at 172lb

It's captor, angler Martin Walker from England, together with his friend, Colin Bunn, caught 8000lb of catfish during their June holiday. The largest weighed in at 174lb. However, it was Martin's smaller fish that stole the show. He said "When we had the fish out of water, we saw that it had a huge, abnormal swelling in its stomach. After weighing it and taking some pictures we decided to investigate. I held the mouth open as Colin put his hand down its throat and he promptly began to pull out an undigested decomposing Carp of 19lb. What was even more bizarre was the thick orange hair that Colin also took out of the Carp. It looked exactly the same as the hair on the backs of the wild boar that cross the river". (Original article by Steve Partner for the Angling Times)

Catfish Safari... Virginia

by R. Shane Linder shane@wizard.net

I recently had the opportunity to go collecting native (North American) fishes with about the best crowd you could ask for. Mike Thennet, my regular "collecting buddy", is the Virginia representative for the North American Native Fishes Association (NANFA). Mike and I met up with Bob Bock, the president of NANFA, Chris Scharpf (the editor of NANFA's magazine "American Currents"), and Christen a graduate student at Virginia Polytech Univ. studying fish population genetics.

Our first stop was on the Maryland side of the Chesapeake where we collected various fishes from brackish areas. These were mostly *Fundulus* spp., but also collected were anchovies and other odds and ends. After Christen had all the fish for her study, and we all had more killies than we could keep, Chris mentioned a location not far away that held madtoms.

Needless to say, I nearly ran to the car to get going. We drove Northeast about thirty miles and were near the Maryland-Delaware border. Here is a "down and dirty" description of the habitat in which we caught *Noturus gyrinus*, the tadpole madtom.

The location was a creek about five feet wide (1.5m). In places the creek was backed up and formed pools up to 15 feet (3m) across. No madtoms were taken in these pools. The creek averaged about a foot deep and flowed along at a lazy pace. The creek was about 68-70 F and the ambient temperature about 85 F and very humid. The best location to collect madtoms was in submerged terrestrial vegetation. I am not sure what the plant was but it reminded me of clover. The best way to collect the madtoms was to run a handnet through the vegetation. The net would then have lots of vegetation that would have to be carefully removed. The most common species collected with the madtoms were tessellated darters (*Etheostoma olmstedii*), swamp darters (*E. fusiforme*), pirate perch (*Aphredoderus sayanus*) and eastern mud minnows (*Umbra pygmaea*).

Mike caught the first madtom and immediately called for me. As I made my way up the creek, Mike reached into the net to pick up the tiny catfish (about one inch, 2.5cm)

and got a surprise from the fish's pectoral spine. Madtoms pectoral and dorsal spines are poisonous, and from Mike's reaction, I do not doubt that the venom stings! The spine stuck Mike on the tip of his index finger. The wound left a tiny red mark but there was no swelling. Of course, being a true friend I ignored Mike as he sucked at the wound and danced around the creek. I bagged the little guy up happy to have my madtom. Mike sucked at his finger and then pulled it from his mouth every few minutes to issue a series of profanities. I asked Mike to describe the pain (all in the name of science of course!). He said it was at first like a pin prick but then began to burn. The burning sensation then traveled up to his shoulder. The pain stopped all together after 15 minutes.

Other fishes removed, mainly from the pools, included Redbreast sunfish (*Lepomis auritus*) and Chris' catch of the day, a foot and a half long American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*).

Total take for the 30 foot (10m) section of creek was five madtoms at one inch, two at two inches, and one at three inches. I would guess the littlest guys were from this spring and summers spawnings while the two inchers were from last year and the three incher was an adult. I took five home and Mike took one.

I set mine up in a ten gallon tank full of Java moss and "decorated" with broken flower pots. Filtration was via a sponge filter rated for 40 gallons. The fish immediately took to frozen bloodworms and brine shrimp, and soon after they took dry foods. The tank was unheated and varied between about 72F and 74F. There have been no problems with the fish and they have adapted well. One fish, on closer inspection, had a parasite of some type on its side just back from the pectoral fin. This did not make removal of the parasite easy since I really did not feel like being stung. I managed to remove the parasite with forceps and the small wound that was left was nearly healed a week later. The madtoms became more active as they adjusted to captivity and were soon feeding even with the lights on. I would highly recommend these cats for the aquarist that wants to experiment with natives.

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The Spawning and Raising of the Pygmy Cat

Synodontis petricola (Mathes, 1959)

by Graham Burnside (photo's by the Author)

I first chanced upon this species in the spring of 1995 in a well-known aquatic outlet in Bolton, Northern England.

The price of £37.50 put me off at first but I then decided on the spur of the moment to splash out on 3 youngsters which I was told were about one year old and wild caught.

On returning home to Scotland and after a period of quarantine, I then housed them in my 48" x 18" x 15" Rift Valley tank that had been set up in my fish house for a few years, with an assortment of Cichlids coming and going over a period of this time. This tank was furnished with tufa rock and sand filtered by a Fluval 403 filled with perlag to help boost the p.H.

Time passed and one night in September 99., I decided to take my new digital video camera into the fish house to video a tank that was situated above my Rift Tank which of course housed my 3 *Synodontis petricola* which by now had a single tankmate, *Tropheus moorii*. As I was busy videoing, something caught the corner of my eye in the tank below; I spotted two of the *S. petricola* chasing around each other in circles with the *T. moorii* in attendance. They were releasing eggs and the *moorii* was busy eating them.! You can just imagine the panic that I was in! so I quickly removed the Cichlid to another tank and went back to watch the spawning scene that was unfolding in front of my eyes.

I started videoing the ritual that involved the male laying his body across the female's head in a quivering motion not unlike the T-position encountered in the *Corydoras* species. The female was very rounded between the pectoral and ventral fins and the male would move his mouth up and down her flanks in this area and use his mouth in a rasping motion. He would also follow/chase her around the tank using his mouth to stimulate her then they would take up the spawning

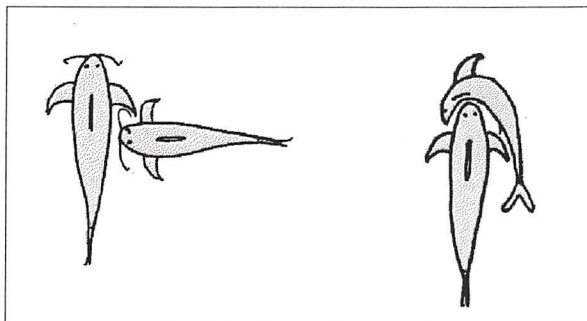


position where he would grasp her head firmly and they would both shake violently until a cloud of eggs were released. He would also lie alongside the female quivering his body wherein the female would release her eggs and the male would fertilise them with his sperm. The eggs were honey coloured and were between 1.25-1.50 mm in size, they were difficult to see as they blended into the sand as they were similar in colour. The spawning sequel lasted about 2 hours so I took the parents out and the other *petricola*, (most likely a younger female as it was less plump, and the male was making half hearted advances to it) who took no part in the proceedings.

I started videoing the ritual that involved the male

laying his body across the female's head in a quivering motion not unlike the T-position encountered in the *Corydoras* species. The female was very rounded between the pectoral and ventral fins and the male would move his mouth up and down her flanks in this area and use his mouth in a rasping motion. He would also follow/chase her around the tank using his mouth to stimulate her then they would take up the spawning position where he would grasp her head firmly and they would both shake violently until a cloud of eggs were released. He would also lie alongside the female quivering his body wherein the female would release her eggs and the male would fertilise them with his sperm. The eggs were honey coloured and were between 1.25-1.50 mm in size, they were difficult to see as they blended into the sand as they were similar in colour. The spawning sequel lasted about 2 hours so I took the parents out and the other *petricola*, (most likely a younger female as it was less plump, and the male was making half hearted advances to it) who took no part in the proceedings.

The male had a very prominent pointed genital papilla



in front of the anal fins and pointing back towards the caudal, the papilla was white the same as the underbelly. In the female it is a rounded, swollen enlargement from which the eggs are expelled. The parents (and the gooseberry) ignored the eggs while they were spawning and were removed when they stopped.

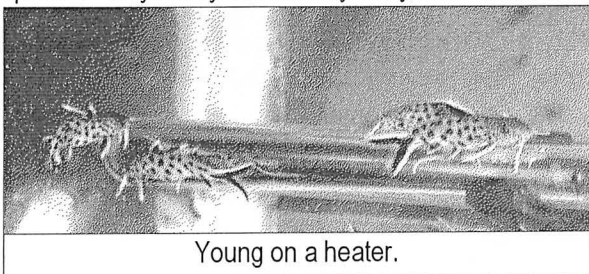
I removed about half of the eggs into various small tanks and ice-cream cartons (with the ice-cream out of course!). I then added Methylone Blue to some of the containers, as I wanted to lengthen my odds on hatching rates. So I had 3 options, eggs lying in the main tank, eggs with or without Meth Blue, I also placed aeration in some of the tubs but this didn't make any difference later on with the quality of the hatchings. I did inadvertently add an extra drop of Meth Blue to some of the containers and even though the water was



Young on a sponge filter.

still a light blue in colour the eggs did not hatch, so I quite possibly overdosed them, which then led me to the conclusion that the eggs were sensitive to an over-indulge of this treatment. Some of the hatching tanks - containers were illuminated by florescent tubes and there was no difference in the hatch rate, so there is probably no sensitivity to light.

The grand total of eggs reached 800 and out of this number I managed a 65% hatch rate, the rest of the eggs turned white and were non viable. The fry hatched out after 24 hrs and were like thin slivers of glass and very small. Fry were free swimming after three days, their bodies and fins were white all over including the large yolk sac. On the tenth day after spawning they started to take freshly hatched brine shrimp and a few days after this they started to take on dark brown patches along the top of the body, but no spots. A very hardy fish as only thirty or so have died



Young on a heater.

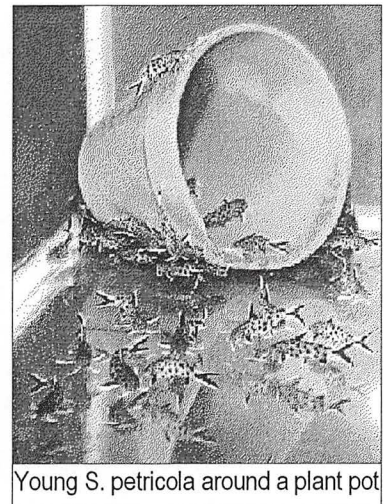
since they were free swimming and most have these have been due to filter problems (see handy tip later). Food-wise the fry also loved finely ground Aquarian flake + Promin (80+20%). The young are happier in larger groups and more likely to come out into the open to feed, the tanks with more young in them grew faster no matter the size of tank or filter. Provide plenty of hiding places to make them feel more confident.

I then fed Brine Shrimp Naupli for the first couple of months as their mouths are very small, and after this fed Tetra tabimin tablets and my own recipe of a homemade mix of flake and spinach bound together with gelatine. At 6 months they were 1 1/2 ins standard length (from snout to caudal peduncle). I found them to be very slow growing but I now have about 500 carbon copies of the parents which are relatively easy to raise on the afore mentioned food .

Tank Information: 24" x 12" x 12" with tufa rock, sand and a large sponge filter. P.h. 7.5.

Handy Tip: If using internal power filters make sure the return outlet is above the water line, as the like to swim up this and into the impellor (death) chamber, especially if the outflow is slowing down. Another place you will find them is below your undergravel filter plate, so make sure your uplift tube ends above the waterline.

Afterthought: These fish have apparently been spawned in the aquarium before but using the cuckoo method and with small numbers of fry being produced. This spawning was obviously an egg-scattering type, as the number of eggs (and the video) clearly proves. So



Young *S. petricola* around a plant pot

what does this fish use as a spawning method in the wild, the similar species, *Synodontis multipunctatus*, has only ever been reported as spawning in the cuckoo style. Is that why it is more prolific in the wild? Does it give its young a better start in life rather than just scattering its eggs ???

Graham Burnside.
burnside@madasafish.com

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REFERENCES FROM PREVIOUS PAGE:

Corydoras barbatus. Rio de Janeiro Aqualog Page
97,98 (s18530-4)

Corydoras barbatus, Sao Paulo

Corydoras lacerdai, Aqualog, Page 100 (s19105-4)

Corydoras sp (Baiananho11) Aqualog Page 100
(s20030-4)

Breeding:

C barbatus(Qouy & Gainard 1824) [www.scotcat.com/
articles/article14.htm](http://www.scotcat.com/articles/article14.htm)

Photo Credits:

Corydoras barbatus (Rio de Janeiro) = www.scotcat.com

Corydoras barbatus (Sao Paulo) male = Jim Makin.

Corydoras lacerdai = Adrian Payne.

Corydoras barbatus (Sao Paulo) Juvenile = Jim
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Corydoras barbatus (Sao Paulo) Female = Jim Makin

Corydoras barbatus (Sao Paulo) eggs = Jim Makin

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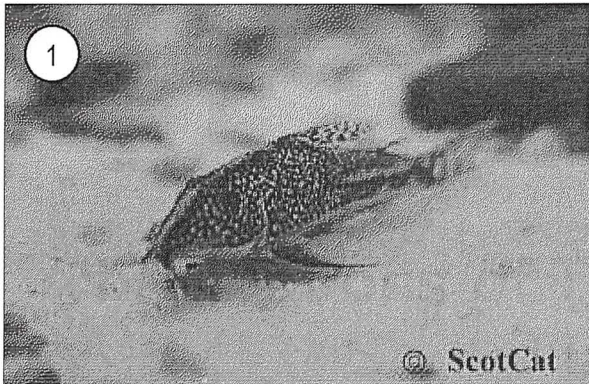
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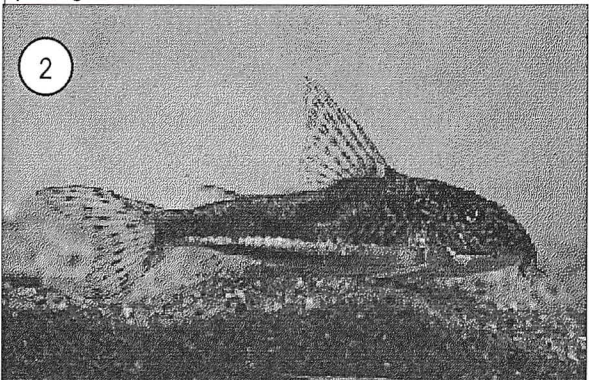
Observations of Three Species of the Genus *Corydoras*

by Jim Makin

Returning to the hobby after a break of several years, I was expecting to find many a new and interesting species, but a dwarf species resembling *Corydoras barbatus*? This I would love to have. In the eighties I kept and bred some 20 species of *Corydoras*, having particular success with *barbatus* (*Sao Paulo* type) but I didn't breed the larger *barbatus* (*Rio de Janeiro* type) until I returned to the hobby in the mid nineties. In 1997/8 I managed to purchase eight *Corydoras lacerdai*. My first thoughts were how close they resembled *Corydoras barbatus*, which I had at home at this particular time. I have now kept and bred all three species but felt that it was time to collate all the information gathered during my spawning success.

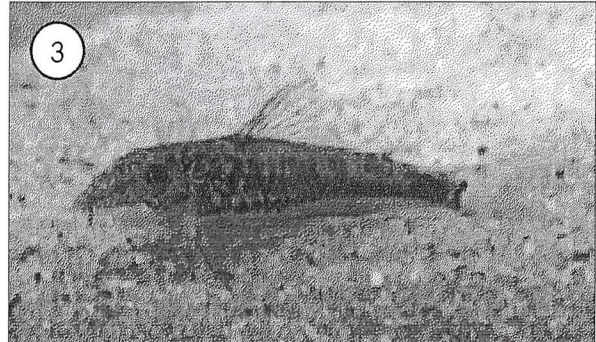


Corydoras barbatus (*Rio de Janeiro*) 10 cm/12 cm. This is the largest of the three species both in actual size and stature. The pectoral and dorsal fins are longer with the males sporting cheek bristles.



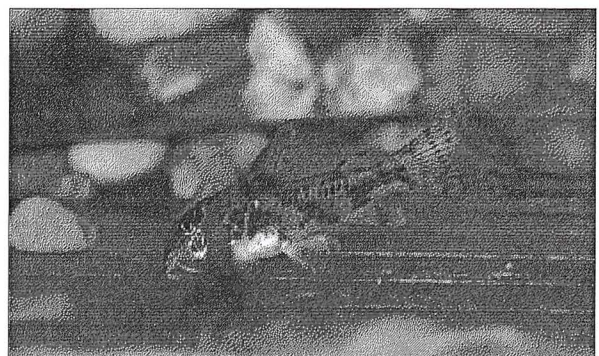
Corydoras barbatus (*Sao Paulo*) 9cm/10cm. This is now being sold as *Corydoras kronei* and is a finer looking species never attaining the size of the *Rio de Janeiro* type. The males do not appear to have cheek bristles (at least they are not visible by the naked eye) The females of these two *barbatus* forms are almost identical

I believe there is another type, *C. barbatus*, sp. (BAIANINHO 11) this type is caught in black water tributaries, totally different conditions from the other three types mentioned. I have not seen this fish, in the flesh so to speak, but in the photo's it does appear similar to the *Sao Paulo* type and appears to be a little smaller like *C. lacerdai*, but may have a different head shape, only time will tell.



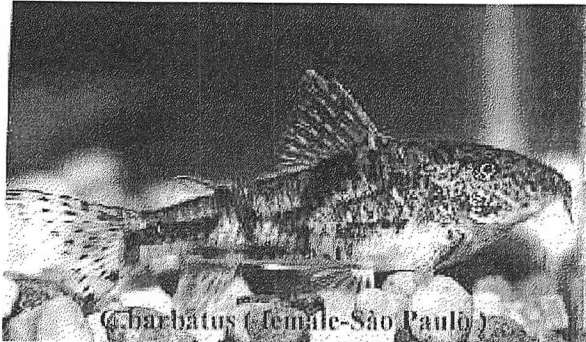
Corydoras lacerdai - 5 cm/6 cm. In size this Cory resembles the genus *Aspidoras* but its body shape certainly resembles *C. barbatus* but having no apparent cheek bristles. When eight fish (4 males 4 females) were bought some *Aspidoras* were in the same shipment, which I had mistakenly caught as they so closely, resembled the female *C. lacerdai*.

Breeding *C. barbatus* (*Sao Paulo*). (Ref. Catfish Association GB. 1978)



I have very recently bred these fish again (1999). On this occasion five fish, 2 males and 3 females, were kept in a 72 x 24 x 15 aquarium with *Corydoras narcissus* and *Cory.sp* (Peru Blacks). Temp was low at 70F, pH 6.8 -7.5. DH was never checked. The tank was well filtered and plenty of water circulation. On this occasion some interesting observations were made with both males taking turns in spawning with the two females. The females would lay their eggs on the area where the respective males had cleaned.

Both females spawned with the two males. It would appear that the aquarium was large enough to accommodate territories for both males, the eggs were laid high near the water surface. The eggs were removed and hatched out in a small tank. The fry were moved on as they out-grew their container and they were finally reared on in 24 x 24 x 12 tanks.



They were fed on brine shrimp, micro worm and grindle worm. I found that you had to be very careful with the micro worm as they could easily infest the tank/container and eat the very small fry. I also found that one of the commercially made fry foods was the best until the fry could eat the grindleworm or brine shrimp.

Breeding *C. barbatus* (Rio de Janeiro) Temp again was low at 70F and pH 7. This form was first kept in the late 80's but no serious attempt was ever made to breed them. It was not until the mid 90's that they were kept and bred. A group of six large fish were kept in a 40 x 15 x 15 aquarium and the spawning occurred after they had been conditioned for several months. An apparent pecking order was observed. The alpha male had a richer colour and dominated the tank with his constant showing of to the females and subordinate males. The dominant male carried out the spawning, and as the females became ready he would entice her to the area he had prepared were they would lay the eggs in the normal cory manner and then place them within an inch or so of the water surface. They hatched within four to five days and reared as previously described.

Breeding *Corydoras lacerdai*. Reproductive and feeding activities are similar to the other two. The eggs again being laid high and nearly out of the water, they did prefer higher water temperatures and out of 6 spawnings only three produced viable eggs and fry. The male would be so obsessive, chasing the other males away. The female he was spawning with would eventually strip herself of eggs. She could be seen coming out of the water laying the eggs as near to the water surface as possible. The eggs were collected

and fry reared as *C. barbatus*. Some difficulty was encountered when spawning attempts were made as the males were more aggressive and would not tolerate any other males (similar aggression was observed in *C. Narcissus* and *C. sp* (Peru Blacks). In fact two males were lost which appeared to be caused by harassment from the alpha male. In later attempts with *C. lacerdai*, the fish were paired off and placed in a 12 x 10 x 10-inch tank with *C. Pygmaeus* and some young Cory's. This was not successful, as the fish did not seem to settle in this situation. Both the *C. barbatus* types were produced easily and in large quantities, but sadly not the *C. lacerdai*. After six spawning I lost all the parents and remaining juvenile fish after I moved them to the new fish house. I do believe some of the young I bred still survive around the UK today, and hopefully will be reproduced.

Drawings of fry growth.



C. lacerdai developed their adult colour patterns by nine months and they are sexually mature and would produce viable fry by one year. *C.lacerdi* colour will change to adult between 6/ 9 months while *C.barbatus* retains this colour till 18 mouths.

Conclusion: We have here a group of Corydoras that are closely related. They're feeding behaviour, reproductive behaviour and day- to-day behaviour is very similar in the three types kept. The colour development of the fry in all three types are also alike. In *C.barbatus* it is not until the are 18 months old that the different types can be identified. The two male types were then easy to identify but the females are almost identical in colour, eventually the larger size of *Rio de Janeiro* type was the only visual difference. Care should be taken not to mix these similar Cory's as the may inter- breed.

As an aquarist we do not have the scientific knowledge to comment on the validity of these species. But in our hands we do have the opportunity to make observations on their behaviour that will never be seen, which could shed some light on the true identification of such similar Corydoras.

Jim Makin 2000

Jim.ekoz@cableinet.co.uk

References: (see Page 11)



MEET THE MEMBERS

Bill Hurst

The Hon Secretary & Treasurer of the Catfish Study Group (UK)

When I was little my mother used to take me out in the countryside, there was plenty of it then. It was from these outings that I got my interest in nature. I used to catch frogs, newts, natterjack toads, sand lizards, sticklebacks, minnows, in fact anything that would fit into a net. When I joined the army, I took up angling and used to have an aquarium to keep small coldwater fish in - like gudgeon, pope, lampreys (which I never saw until cleaning time) millers thumb and cray fish.

I was eventually posted to Celle in Germany where I was given a small aquarium. The intention was to get a goldfish for my young son. My wife went into town and a smart salesman talked her out of a goldfish and into buying a tropical set-up. I have always had a tropical aquarium wherever I have been since then. I joined Salisbury tropical fish club shortly before I left the army and served as chairman for a while.

When I became a civilian in 1984 I worked with Dave Sands in his DEE BEE Aquarium World (you'll see my name in the acknowledgements in a couple of the volumes of *Catfishes of the World*). It was during this time that I became a member of the Sandgrounders Aquatic Society and the treasurer of the Northern Area Catfish Group (the forerunner of the Catfish Study Group).

This period as a civilian was short lived and I got a job in Angola (carrying an AK 47 and a pistol) where I worked on and off for twelve years. I had returned to England for a while when my mother fell ill, and did a short stint as Secretary for the NACG during that short stay.

In 1996, after the General Manager was killed by a landmine and work ceased, I returned to the UK and



rejoined the NACG and the Sandgrounders and became gainfully employed.

During my time in Angola, I acquired some glass and made myself an aquarium. I went prepared with some silicone, an air pump and some fishing tackle.

I managed to fish in the Rio Cuango, home of *Synodontis cuangoanus*, Rio Luembe, Rio Chiumbe and a number of still waters where I caught a variety of fish. When I caught my first *Synodontis*, I still don't know exactly what it was, I was excited - my first tropical fish - my pal thought I had gone mad. *Synos* were very much in demand in England at that time and were quite expensive. He told me to give it to the houseboy to eat. I stupidly replied that I could get £60 for it. "Not here you wont, they only use Kwanzas here and they're no good outside Angola".

The best chances I had of obtaining fish was when the rivers were diverted and the original river bed was mined for diamonds. Most of the Angolan workers knew me and would keep fish for me when I was patrolling the area. I managed to photograph quite a few of the fish but I had to develop the films myself because the communist system would not let undeveloped film out of the country. In my home made tank I had had elephant noses, long, short and no nose. I had *Synodontis* which I thought were *afrofischeri* but later discovered that they were *cuangoanus* (personally I couldn't see any difference), *Euchilichthys*, a tyre track eel, *Phractura*, baby *Clarias*, *Heterobranchus* and various charachoids.

Since keeping tropical fish I think I have kept most types but I favour catfish and I have also managed to breed a few common types like *Farlowella*, *Corydoras*, *Ancistrus* and *Rineloricaria*.

During the time I was Secretary of the NACG (the first time) most of the committee members lived in Southport where I now live. (Southport is a seaside town north of Liverpool). Now the Committee is scattered all over England and Scotland and I have been lumbered with the job of Secretary/Treasurer/Cat Chat assembler. Contributions are hard to get from people. Although most fishkeepers will tell you exactly what you want to know, very few will put pen to paper. I don't believe that they can't write, I just think that they are frightened of being contradicted.

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The following Membership Rules are extracted from the Catfish Study Group booklet:
'THE CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS RULES.'

Members are reminded that any changes to the constitution and the Rules can only be made at the Annual General Meeting (see also Rules 28 & 29).

A number of members have queried Rule 12.

To clarify the matter, it means that if a current member, for example, does not subscribe in 2001, he/she will not receive mail from us but his/her name will remain on the membership list for that year. If he/she then requires to re-subscribe after one year, in 2002, there will not be a joining fee.

If that member does not subscribe again in 2002 his/her name will be deleted from the list. Should that person then wish to rejoin, he/she will be treated as a new member and pay the full cost of membership and be given a new membership number

MEMBERSHIP RULES

11. There will be a one-off Membership Joining Fee (for administration purposes) together with an Annual Subscription.

12. Membership will be from AGM to AGM. Membership and Subscription Fees shall be set at the AGM and will not be refundable or reduced for part of any year. Members who fail to renew after one year of lapsed Subscriptions will have their records deleted. Should they wish to rejoin at a later date, they will have to pay the Joining Fee again.

13. Every Member will have a permanent Membership Number, including Family Members who will have the affix a, b or c etc. after the main family member number. Family Members who leave the family home, will thereafter pay a separate Subscription Fee (but not the Joining Fee).

14. There are to be two classes of Membership only:

Adult/Family: Aged 18 yrs and over and Includes husband or wife and family as one member, provided they reside at the same address in Great Britain or Ireland (including the Republic).

Overseas: Any Family/Adult residing outside of Great Britain and all of Ireland.

15. Membership to the CSG shall not be restricted by colour, religion, sex, nationality etc. but it shall be a requirement that all Members agree to abide by these rules. Any Member found to be discriminating to any of the aforementioned groups will be invited to either conform or leave the CSG.

16. Any fully paid up Member shall have the right to attend any CSG Committee Meeting. Details of the venue should be obtained from the Chairman.

17. Any fully paid up Member may arrange to inspect the CSG Account Books and Minute Book with the Treasurer or Secretary at any meeting.

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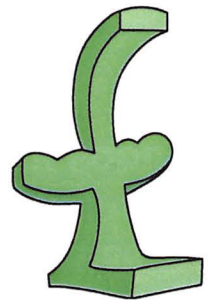
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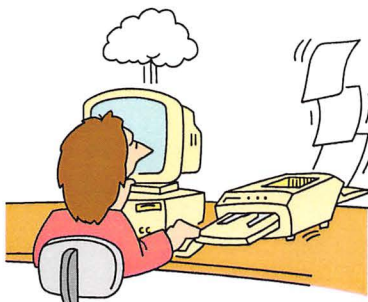
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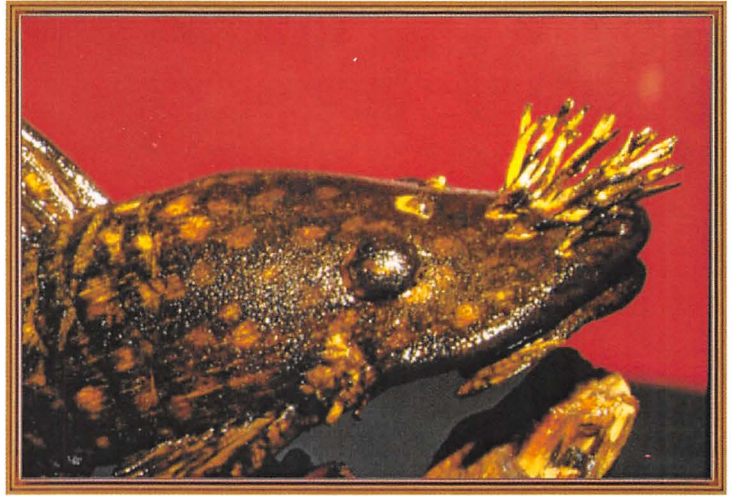
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