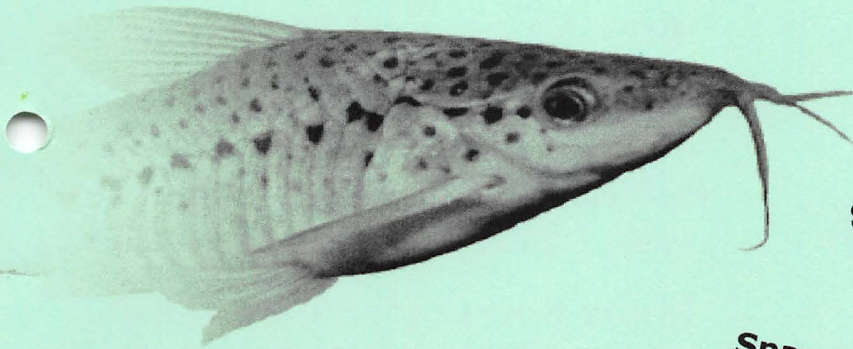


CAT CHAT

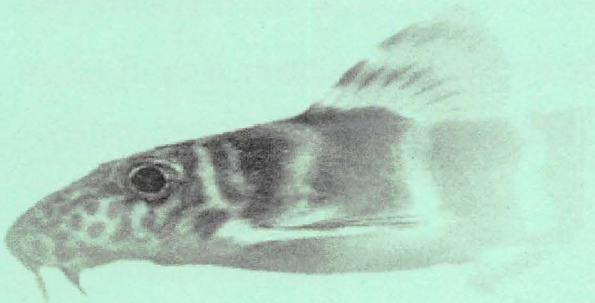
The Journal of the Catfish Study Group

Open Show Report and Results



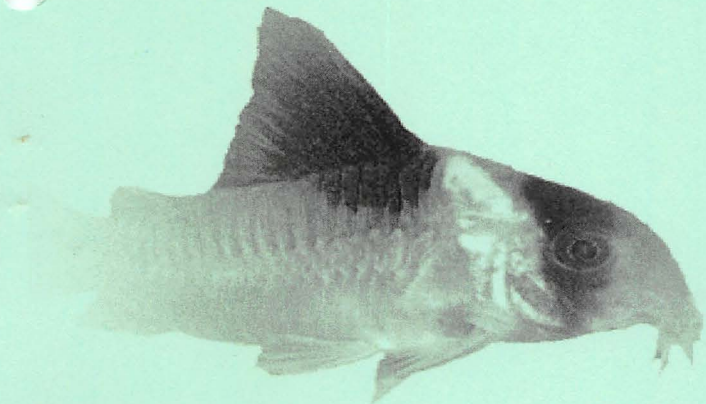
Spawning Corydoras C123

Spawning Aspidoras taurus (BAP)



Spawning Scleromystax C113 (BAP)

Project Amazonas



Invasive Catfishes - Hoplosternum littorale

**Volume 9 Issue Number 4
December 2008**

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Where We Meet:

The Group normally meets at the Highfield Working Men's Club, 1 Ratcliffe Street, Darwen, Lancs, BB3 2BZ on the third Sunday of each month from 1pm. The exceptions are the December meeting, which is held on the second Sunday at the usual place, and the annual Convention, held in the Spring at the Britannia Hotel, Almond Brook Road, Standish, Wigan.

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From the Chair

Ian Fuller

We are almost at the end of what has been a very successful CSG year. Having said that, there have been a number of problems that, regrettably, we are still trying to address. These have been in two main areas: the magazine mail-out has been late a couple of times and it looks very much like the last issue (Vol. 9, No. 3) has had delivery problems - not of our making, I may add. It is always difficult to know the extent of such failures, because we only really find out when the complaints start coming in. So if there are any of you that did not receive your copy, then please contact me or any member of the committee.



From my previous writings you will be aware that we have also had a few problems with memberships being misplaced in the records. Again we are doing our utmost to rectify this and get things back on an even keel.

Unfortunately due to many of the committee being unavailable for the October meeting it was decided to call it off. This decision was made at the September meeting - the Open Show & Auction - where many members were in attendance and could be informed. Notice was also placed on the home page of the CSG's web site. However it would appear that some members did not know, although they have internet access. Therefore I would ask all members that have Internet access and who intend coming to monthly meeting to just take a look at the web site for any latest news, thus avoiding unnecessary travel.

The Open Show was not as well attended as I had hoped it would be but what did strike me was the outstanding quality of the exhibits, I am sure it gave some of the judges a bit of a headache separating the excellent from the merely very good. I managed to gain several first places so I was very happy. There was a little grumble or two though and this was to do with the changes made to the pointing system. What has happened is, like most of the UK's other associations, we have taken the emphasis away from the size of an exhibit. It was thought that the size of an exhibit was becoming the number one feature and it was quite often seen that an average but full-sized fish was triumphing over better-quality, slightly-smaller fish. So by reducing the size-points from 20 to 10 it lessened the advantage of the poorer-quality fish. To maintain the full 100 points system, the 10 points

removed from the size section were given to a new category of 'Presentation', and guidelines were added to the judging system. Although the new system was well-documented it appears that some exhibitors and judges were a little confused as to how the new category was to be interpreted. Again the guidelines were clearly stated. Maybe at some point before next years show we can utilise one of our meetings to demonstrate what is required/expected. In spite of the lower attendance and with thanks to all our sponsors the show proved to be a very profitable event.

The autumn auction meeting in November was very well attended and one of the things that stood out more than anything else was that there were very few dry-goods lots. The variety and quality of fish and plants that came up for sale were very good and, considering the present financial climate, prices seemed to be very good. I am certain that there were many people that went home very very happy with their day, be it good sales for their items or a box full of bargains.

The 30th Anniversary Convention

The Convention is the main event of our year and is rapidly approaching; bookings have started to come in regularly. We are restricted to the number of people we can accommodate at the event so, to avoid disappointment, I would strongly advise members who are thinking of attending not to leave it until the last minute before making your booking. Besides, it's cheaper if you book early!

The Saturday morning of the convention will be a little different and we have changed its title to "The CSG Market." We decided to remove the single sales-table we had last year and, instead, there will be several inter-spaced with the trade and specialist-group tables. This will still have a workshop feel but will allow those selling their tank-bred stock to talk with their buyers and chat about their breeding techniques. The sales tables will be available for members and guests to sell their own tank-bred or surplus stock but only to those who are attending for the full period of the event.

Sales table bookings should be made at the same time as booking convention places. Please remember we do not have unlimited space so, again, an early booking will ensure you have a sales table. Because of the logistic nightmare of placing our normal 15% levy on sales made, there will be a standard charge of £12 per person. Anyone that has any question regarding the sales tables please feel free to contact me.

It only remains for me to wish you all a very Happy Catfish Christmas and Prosperous Catfish New Year

Editorial

Keith Jackson

"*Tempus fugit*" as my Grandmother used to say or, in English, "Time flies" and this issue marks the completion of my first year as Editor. I'm really not sure where the last few months have gone! A hearty "Thank You!" to everyone who has submitted articles and other copy for the magazine, without whose efforts there wouldn't be one. Any chance a few more people might make a New Year's Resolution to put finger to keyboard? I hope so!

Which leads naturally to the most enjoyable part of any Editorial at this time of year. I'd like to wish everyone in the CSG a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. If your religious leanings are elsewhere, please insert an alternative, seasonal wish of your own! :-)

This is the last issue before the Convention. March 2009 seems an awfully long way ahead right now but it will come along all too soon. I attended several of the one-day Conventions held by the old CAGB(NAG) at Wigan Pier in the nineties and they were great, with one or two talks still firmly lodged in my mind after a decade or so. I've been to the last two CSG Conventions and the fact that they're now stretched into two full days and effectively begin with an after-dinner talk on the Friday evening has not reduced the quality of the event one iota.

The 2009 Convention is the 30th Anniversary of the first CAGB Convention and promises to be another triumph. The speakers are well known and I have no doubt that the talks will be interesting. Add into the mix the chance to meet and chat with other catfish enthusiasts from all over the globe and the weekend becomes a must for your calendars. The hotel looks after us pretty well, too - the food's great and the rooms are nice. Transport's no problem, either, with Manchester International Airport on the doorstep, good train links to Wigan and the M6 motorway literally passes the hotel's front door.

So what's stopping you from coming?

While writing about the Convention, I'd like to acknowledge and pay a personal tribute to Ian Fuller's hard work in the preceding twelve months each year and thank everyone involved in the organisation of the event itself.

I've re-published a non-fish article taken from the Web in this issue. That's not something I'm planning to do

on a regular basis but Danny Blundell sent it to me for consideration and I thoroughly agree that it's worth wider exposure. It's part of a blog, published monthly, by people working on an initiative to preserve the South American rain forest. Project Amazonas is working with the local inhabitants and also directing studies into the forest, its environment and its creatures. It's something I believe is very worth while and I hope that you agree.

Now for notes from my fish-house. It's my normal routine to change around 30% per tank per week, though I know that the fish will be OK for about twice that long. Things were a little bit different when we took our motorcycle touring in northern Spain and Portugal in September because we were going to be away for a full 17 days. As a lover of belt-and-braces solutions, I put Tetra's excellent holiday food sticks and blocks in my tanks and also arranged for a fellow aquarist to pop in every three or four days to make sure nothing got too far out of hand. I lost a couple of fish and a few young fry but, overall, things went very well.

Unwittingly, though, it would appear that I simulated a dry season. The fish looked rather hollow-bellied when we got home but my worm-cultures weren't producing so they had to make do with Tetramin flake, which is my staple food. Almost as soon as I started to do the belated water-changes my *Corydoras* C89, *Aspidoras* C119, *C. aeneus* sp 'Colombia' (Gold Shoulder), *C. Paleatus* and *S. Barbatus* all spawned.

I've seen Ian's presentation on breeding and know that he's had to reduce water levels and do all sorts of things to trigger some species but I'd guess those live in areas where the water flows stop completely and the rivers and streams slowly turn into nothing more than oversized puddles. Presumably there are areas where the flow slows greatly but doesn't stop so that the water quality deteriorates but not as much as those Ian simulated? I don't know but my fish have continued to produce at irregular intervals ever since. It's obvious that there are positive triggers that tell a fish that it's time to spawn. If the potential breeding period is quite long, though, are there negative equivalents that tell the fish it's time to stop?

Questions! Questions!



Derek Lambourne

1936 – 2008



Derek was born in Chelsea on the 1st of June 1936 and lived in South London up until 1985, when he and his wife, Pat, upped sticks and moved to a cottage in Cornwall where he lived until his passing on the 6th of September 2008.

He spent most of his working life in South London where he worked as a time-served carpenter save for his spell of national service, some of which was on tour in Northern Ireland. During his time serving King and Country, Derek became the armed forces snooker champion.

Having a strong interest in catfishes, it was in 1973 the Derek, along with wife Pat, Roy Goodson and Carol and Norman Sawford, founded the Catfish Association of Great Britain and a worldwide interest in catfish was born. There was not a great deal known about catfish within the hobby at that time so they contacted the British Natural History Museum, where they met Dr Humphrey Greenwood and Gordon Howes. From then on, a great relationship was formed and access to information was made available. With Derek's enthusiasm and drive, the CAGB soon started to grow and very quickly became a truly international group.

Derek and the newly formed CAGB encouraged many people into the world of catfish. He was certainly responsible for developing my interest and encouraged me whenever I needed a boost or a helping hand. His uncompromising attention to detail could also be seen in many of the CAGB magazines and especially the species information sheets. Because there were very few images of live catfish, he produced literally hundreds of accurate specimen drawings to illustrate species. His dexterity with pen & ink will be a permanent reminder in his many manuals as will be his mental skills. Although the CAGB no longer exists, many of Derek's drawings are still in use and I am pleased to say that we at the Catfish Study Group still admire them and are proud to figure many in our own publications.

I first met Derek at the first CAGB show at Key Gardens in 1974 and feel proud to have known him and call a friend; my life is certainly the richer for having known him.

Goodbye, my friend.

Ian Fuller
Chairman
Catfish Study Group



30th Anniversary Convention

1978-2008

The date

20th - 21st - 22nd March 2009

The Venue

The Britannia Hotel
Almond Brook Road,
Standish, Wigan,
Lanc's. UK. WN6 0SR

The speakers

Danny Blundell

Dave McAllister

Hans-Georg Evers

Kamphol Udomritthiruj

Mark Henry Sabaj Perez.

For details contact chairman@catfishstudygroup

Open Show and Auction

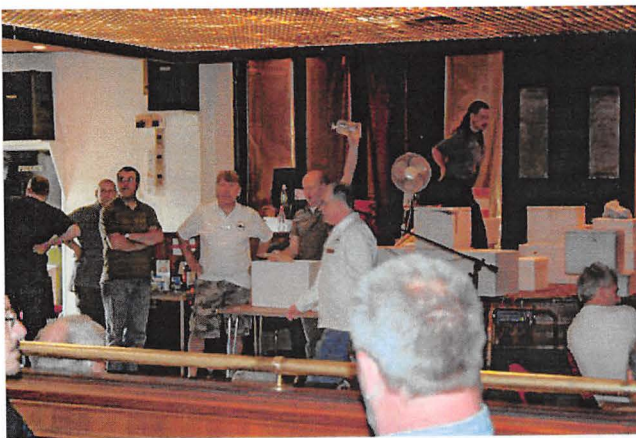
Keith Jackson

This year the arrangements were altered to improve both the auction and the show by using separate rooms. The auction had more space and the judges were less likely to be disturbed by people rubber-necking while they needed all their concentration to separate the high-quality fish being shown. It seemed to work well.

It wasn't on purpose (honest!) but, by the time I arrived at the venue, the work was well under way. The showing tables were in place and covered with white, paper sheets and the exhibits were beginning to be laid out.



In the auction room, our normal meeting-place, everything was ready for a prompt start. There was just time to greet friends and grab a coffee and a sandwich before the fun began.



I made the mistake of asking Adrian whether anything still needed to be done and was put in charge of selling the raffle tickets. It kept me out of mischief and meant I wasn't too tempted by the undoubted bargains that Steve was putting through with his usual efficiency. He held the audience pretty much spellbound all the way through.



Although the auction generated plenty of interest, the exhibitors were far more interested in the results that periodically appeared on the far wall. The judges were obviously working hard in the Show room although, inevitably with the quality of fish being shown across all the classes, judging was not completed until well after the auction was over.

A complete list of the award winners is given at the end of this article.

It seems a great shame, to me, that enthusiasts make the effort to come for the auction but don't take the opportunity to see some of the best fish being kept in the UK. Can we arrange things any better? Please write in with your suggestions.

It was unfortunate that both the number of fish entered and the number of exhibitors were significantly down this year but the quality remained high and very few classes received no entries. It was particularly good, as far as I'm concerned, to see many entries for the Breeders' Classes. With growing restrictions on exports, high-quality fish from enthusiast breeders may well be the only way we keep some species in the hobby before too long.

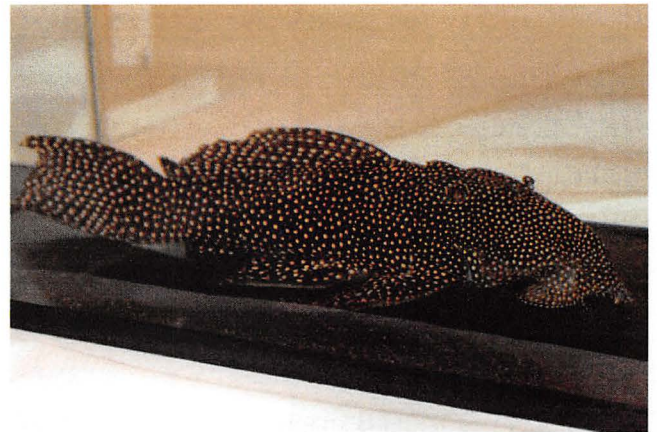
Now for photos of some of the fish on show. Apologies for the quality but they're mine and I'm no expert!



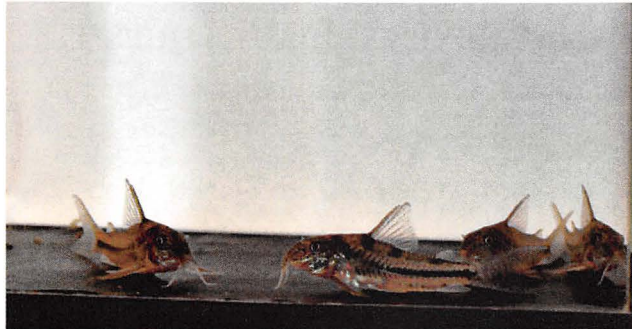
D & L Speed's *Bagroides melapterus* 1st in Class 10, Best in Classes 7-11 and Best in Show



Danny Blundell's L134 Youngsters 1st in Class 30



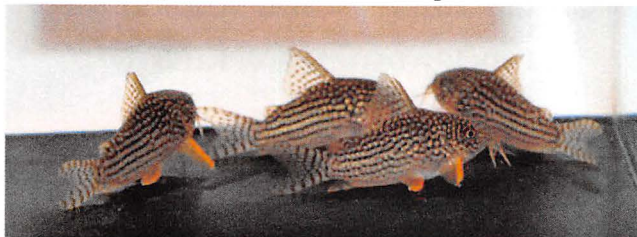
Stuart Brown's *L. Galaxias* 1st in Class 13



Adrian Taylor's *S. Prionotos* Group 1st in Class 29



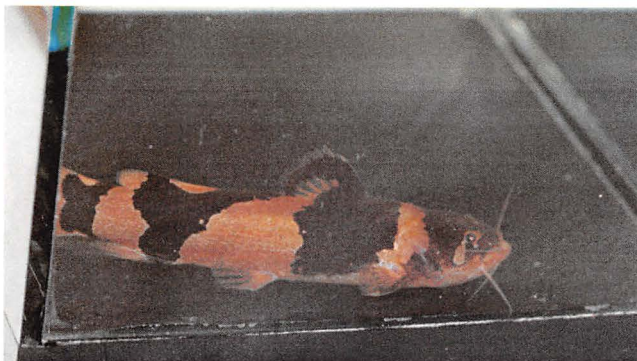
Ian Fuller's *Mochokiella paynei* 1st in Class 16



B & K's *C. sterbai* Group 1st in Class 34



Stuart Brown's *A. longifilis* 1st in Class 28



Stuart Brown's *M. poecilus* 1st in Class 18



Stuart Brown's *T intermedia* 1st in Class 9



Ian Fuller's CW009 Pair 1st in Class 24



Mark Walters' *B colombianus* 1st in Class 8



D & L Speed's *Ambydoras hancocki* 1st in Class 11

OPEN SHOW RESULTS 2008

1: ASPIDORAS ENTRIES 9

1	Roy Johnson	Oldham A. fuscogutattus	82
2	Adrian Taylor	CSG A. C119	81
3	Ian Fuller	CSG A eurycephalus	80.5

Sponsor: *Ian Fuller – Corydorasworld.com*

2: BROCHIS ENTRIES 2

1	Ian Fuller	CSG B splendens	85
2	Ian Fuller	CSG B splendens	79.5

Sponsor: *Ian Fuller – Corydorasworld.com*

3: CORYDORAS "A" <55mm SL[F]

ENTRIES 18

1	Ian Fuller	CSG C multimaculatus	88
2	Mark Walters	CSG C weitzmani	87.5
3	Adrian Taylor	CSG C dyphes	87

Sponsor: *Lee Fearnley - Corys4u.co.uk*

4: CORYDORAS "B" >55mm SL

ENTRIES 12

1	Ian Fuller	CSG C pulcher	80.5
2	Stuart Brown	CSG C gossei	80
3	Mike Kirkham	CSG C pulcher	79.5

Sponsor: *Lee Fearnley - Corys4u.co.uk*

5: CORYDORAS C N°/Unidentified

ENTRIES 9

1	Adrian Taylor	CSG C89	83
2	Mark Walters	CSG C113	82.5
3	Ian Fuller	CSG C65	82

Sponsor: *Lee Fearnley - Corys4u.co.uk*

6: SCLEROMYSTAX ENTRIES 5

1	John Toon	CSG S barbatus	85.5
2	Bern'd O'Neill	CSG S prionotus	84.5
3	Stuart Brown	CSG S prionotus	84

Sponsor: *Lee Fearnley - Corys4u.co.uk*

7: AOV CALLICHTHYIDAE ENTRIES 2

1	Stuart Brown	CSG Mergalechis picta	79
2	Mark Walters	CSG Callichthys callichthys	75

Sponsor: *Ian Fuller – Corydorasworld.com*

8: ASPREDINIDAE ENTRIES 4

1	Mark Walters	CSG B colombianus	81
2	Dave Barton	CSG B verrucosus	79
3	J T Morris	CSG P cotylephorus	75

Sponsor: *Richard Edge – Midland Waterlife*

9: AUCHENIPTERIDAE ENTRIES 1

1	Stuart Brown	CSG T intermedia	79
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Sponsor: *John Toon*

10: BAGRIDAE ENTRIES 3

1	D & L Speed	CSG Bagroides melapterus	82
2	D & L Speed	CSG Leiocassis siamensis	79
3	Mike Kirkham	CSG Bagroides macracanthus	70

Sponsor: *Mike Kirkham*

11: DORADIDAE ENTRIES 1

1	D & L Speed	CSG Amblydoras hancocki	81
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Sponsor: *Richard Edge – Midland Waterlife*

12: LORICARIIDAE <130mm ENTRIES 5

1	Adrian Taylor	CSG Otocinclus cocama	82
2	Mark Walters	CSG Parotocinclus maculicauda	80
3	Roy Johnson	CSG Otocinclus affinis	77

Sponsor: *Julian Dignall – Planet Catfish.com*

13: LORICARIIDAE >130mm ENTRIES 5

1	Stuart Brown	CSG L galaxias	81
2	D & L Speed	CSG B pemantoides	80.5
3	Ian Fuller	CSG F acus	80

Sponsor: *Julian Dignall – Planet Catfish.com*

14: LORICARIIDAE L&LDA N° <130mm

ENTRIES 5

1	D & L Speed	CSG L72	87
2	D & L Speed	CSG L169	83
3	Mike Kirkham	CSG Rineloricaria sp	80

Sponsor: *Julian Dignall – Planet Catfish.com*

15: LORICARIIDAE L&LDA N° > 130mm

ENTRIES 0

Sponsor: *Julian Dignall – Planet Catfish.com*



16: MOCHOKIDAE > 130mm ENTRIES 2

- 1 Ian Fuller CSG Mochokiella paynei 77
- 2 Stuart Brown CSG Mochokiella paynei 75

Sponsor: *Allan James – ScotCat.com*

17: MOCHOKIDAE >130mm ENTRIES 0

Sponsor: *Allan James – ScotCat.com*

18: PIMELODIDAE <100mm ENTRIES 3

- 1 Stuart Brown CSG Microglanis poecilus * 84.5
- 2 Stuart Brown CSG Microglanis poecilus * 83.5
- 3 D & L Speed CSG Microglanis iherengi 79

**Judged as M iherengi*

Sponsor: *Allan White – QSS*

19: PIMELODIDAE >100mm ENTRIES 0

Sponsor: *Allan White – QSS*

20: COLDWATER CATFISH ENTRIES 0

21: AOV CATFISH - SOUTH AMERICAN ENTRIES 0

Sponsor: *Bob Barnes*

22: AOV CATFISH - AFRICAN ENTRIES 1

- 1 Adrian Taylor CSG Belonaglanis brieni 64

Sponsor: *Audrey Ward*

23: AOV CATFISH - ASIAN ENTRIES 5

- 1 Adrian Taylor CSG Akysis prashadi 83
- 2 Adrian Taylor CSG Akysis clavulus 82.5
- 3 Stuart Brown CSG A longifilis 78.5

Sponsor: *Adrian Taylor – Hillstreamcatfish.com*

24: PAIRS CORYDORADINAE ENTRIES 9

- 1 Ian Fuller CSG Corydoras sp CW009 83
- 2 Ian Fuller CSG Corydoras weitzmani 82
- 3 B & K CSG Corydoras weitzmani 78

Sponsor: *Ian Fuller – Corydorasworld.com*

25: PAIRS LORICARIIDAE inc L&LDA N° ENTRIES 1

- 1 Ian Fuller CSG Farlowella magdalena 78

Sponsor: *Brian Walsh*

26: PAIRS AOV S AMERICAN ENTRIES 1

- 1 Stuart Brown CSG Tatia intermedia 79

Sponsor: *Bill Hurst*

27: PAIRS AOV AFRICAN ENTRIES 1

- 1 Ian Fuller CSG S contractus 73

Sponsor: *Roy Barton*

28: PAIRS AOV ASIAN ENTRIES 1

- 1 Stuart Brown CSG A longifilis 79

Sponsor: *Mike Kirkham*

29: BREEDERS CORYDORADINAE ENTRIES 15

- 1 Adrian Taylor CSG Scleromystax prionotos 80
- 2 Ian Fuller CSG Corydoras sterbai 79
- 3 B & K CSG Aspidoras sp 78

Sponsor: *Lee Fearnley - Corys4u.co.uk*

30: BREEDERS LORICARIIDAE Inc L&LDA ENTRIES 2

- 1 D Blundell CSG L134 80
- 2 Mark Walters CSG Farlowella vitatta 74

Sponsor: *Brian Walsh*

31: BREEDERS AOV S AMERICAN ENTRIES 0

Sponsor: *Tony Pickett*

32: BREEDERS AOV AFICAN ENTRIES 0

Sponsor: *Brian Walsh*

33: BREEDERS AOV ASIAN ENTRIES 0

Sponsor: *Adrian Taylor – Hillstreamcatfish.com*

34: FAMILY CLASS – Pair & Breeders Team ENTRIES 3

- 1 B & K CSG Corydoras sterbai 153
- 2 B & K CSG Corydoras weitzmani 152
- 3 Mark Walters CSG S C113 146

Sponsor: *Stuart Brown*

35: BREEDERS MASTER CLASS ENTRIES 2

- 1 Mark Walters CSG 225
- 2 David Bent CSG 214

Sponsor: *Stuart Brown*



SPECIAL WINNERS 2008

Best Fish in the Show

D & L Speed (CSG) Bagroides melapterus - Class 10

Best Corydoradinae

(Yvonne Cank Memorial Trophy)

Ian Fuller (CSG) Corydoras multimaculatus - Class 3

Best from Classes 7-11

D & L Speed (CSG) Bagroides melapterus - Class 10

Best Loricariidae

D & L Speed (CSG) L072 Yellow prince – Class 14

Best Pimelodidae

Stuart Brown (CSG) Microglanis peocilus (M
iherengi) – Class 18

Best AOV Catfish

Adrian Taylor (CSG) Akysis prashadi – Class 23

Best Pair

Ian Fuller (CSG) Corydoras sp. CW009 – Class 24

Best Breeders

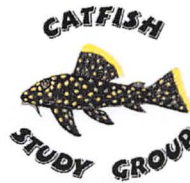
Adrian Taylor (CSG) Scleromystax prionotus

Best Catfish Over 300mm

No entries

Junior Trophy

No entries



CSG Auction Rules

1. All items offered for sale to be for the fish-keeping hobby only.
2. All electrical goods MUST display the name and telephone number of the vendor and a statement of the condition of the item i.e. working; spares or repair only etc.
3. All plants and fish offered for auction should be in clear plastic bags, jars or buckets suitable for the size of fish/es being offered for sale.
4. Catfishes, Loaches and Cichlids, MUST be double bagged; failure to comply will result in the item being returned unsold to the vendor.
5. GM, Painted, Tattooed or colour injected fish WILL NOT be auctioned.
6. All fish offered for sale must be identified by their common or scientific name.
7. All fish should be presented in suitable boxes and, for health & safety reasons, each box should weigh no more than 17kg. Any boxes over 17kg will be returned to the vendor with contents unsold.
8. Any fish offered for auction requiring re-bagging WILL incur a re-bagging charge of 50p
9. A 15% commission charge will be levied on all sales. Settlement to vendors will be made at times suitable to the CSG's officiating teller before the close of the day's activities.
10. If in doubt, only bid for an item as seen. In the event of a problem, the vendor's name will be made available to the purchaser only on the day.

The CSG accepts no responsibility for the condition of items sold at any of its auctions and is in no position to exchange or make a refund for an item.

Breeding Corydoras C123, July 23rd 2007

Dave Penney



This small catfish from the family Corydoradinae originating from Peru belies in its early colouration the beauty it exhibits when fully grown. I purchased four young individuals from Pier Aquatics in the latter part of 2006 almost as a whim, as my intended targets that day were *C. weitzmani* and *C. 91*. At that time they were barely 20mm SL and were a very pale grey colour with little discernable markings save the three faint stripes from the mid body to the caudal peduncle of white, dark grey and white and very faint line markings in the dorsal fin. They did however already show that were the same general shape as the arbitrary group of Corydoras that included *C. elegans*.

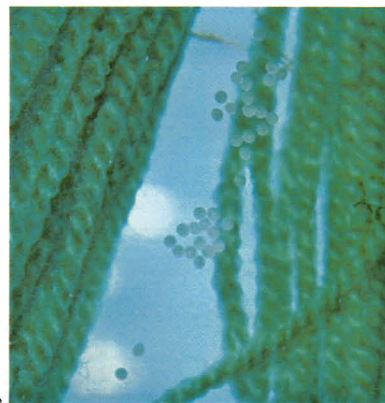
I placed them in a small 30cm cube with a substrate of very fine gravel, a sponge filter and a small clump of java fern. They were fed the usual basic diet in my fish room of flake or tablets twice daily with occasional supplementary feeds of frozen bloodworm. Unfortunately I lost one of the fish after a few weeks but the other three seemed well settled in their new environment. It was several months on this diet and regular weekly water changes that they started to grow into their adult colouration. I realized then that I had 2 males and a female. Sexing these fish became easy as the dimorphism is quite marked in this species. The three stripe markings become more prominent in the males, as do the spots and scribbles on the head and upper body. In the females these spots and scribbles are less pronounced. One of the most striking things about this species is their yellow fins, which in the males becomes quite bright during breeding.



By summer 2007 the males had grown to 35mm and the female to 40mm. She also started to fill out, making her sex even more obvious. Water changes continued at 25% weekly and frozen brine shrimp was alternated with the bloodworm. The size of the female

started to give me cause for concern looking laden with eggs but with no courtship activity, but 2 days after the photo was taken showing her size in comparison to the male, spawning commenced.

I was in the fish room during the afternoon of 23rd July when I noticed a clump of eggs on the front glass and at once noticed that the spawning was ongoing. Both the males courted the female and she responded to both, although the least



colourful male seemed preferred. In each T position clinch between 12-20 eggs were deposited into the ventral fin pouch and after a short rest period, a search for a place to deposit them took place, taking between 2-5 minutes. All sides of the aquarium were used and the clump of java fern but although a wool spawning mop was available that was not used by the fish. In all over a period of 3 hours approximately 500, 1.3 mm diameter eggs were laid.

The water conditions were taken at the time of spawning, (see table for details) and a preliminary report was posted on the Corydoras World Website.



Temp (°F)	73	pH	7.6
TDS	342	GH	14
KH	5		

Spawning Conditions

I decided to remove the adults to another tank and leave most of the eggs in place. Two drops of methylene blue were used to try and reduce the chance of fungus setting in. The 60 or so eggs that were laid in the java fern were removed to a floating hatchery. The eggs took four days to hatch and, by then, quite a number of them had developed fungus. Fearing that most were lost I was pleased to see that 19 hatched in

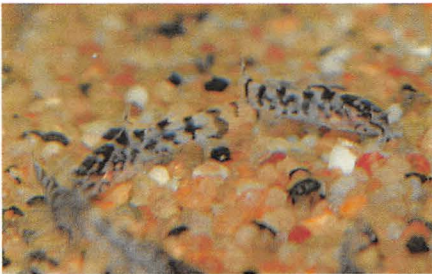
the hatchery. The photograph below shows them to be



4-5 mm in length. I could not see how many had hatched in the aquarium but I didn't think there were many as I only glimpsed a few, occasionally, as they moved about, their small size making them difficult to see even amongst the fine

gravel. No food was offered for three further days, then micro worm and crushed flake was fed twice a day, the fry in the hatchery seemed to feed well.

My job takes me away from home for periods of 14 days, so the care of the fry was left to my wife Jan. When I next returned



home the fry were 20 days old and as can be seen in the photograph they were now 11-13 mm in length and sporting a fetching black and white patterning across the body. Since the fry could now be clearly seen in the aquarium I noted approximately 45-50 had hatched and survived. Although this was only 10% of the total eggs laid there did seem to be enough healthy looking fry for me to believe I would be able to raise a fair number.



It was noted that about 40% of the fry were also much darker than the rest, although still showing the same pattern. I speculated that this could be due to the

genetic make up of the two males involved in the spawning, or it could be usual for this variation to occur within the species or possible even an early indication of sex.

The fry continued to progress well and despite a few losses along the way I have 27 healthy C123s starting to show adult colour, at 90 days or so it is possible to sex these fish although even now at 144 days the yellow pigment in the fins has not fully developed. It is not possible now to pick out those fry that were much darker when they were between 30- 90 days of age.



C123 Juvenile 142 days old

In full colour these are amongst the most stunning Corydoras, their small size and temperament make ideal aquarium additions. I have not seen these fish for sale other than when I bought them last year, so hopefully they will spawn again and I am able to raise a few more. I intend to keep about 6-7 from this first breeding to see if how long they take to fully develop and attempt to spawn.

If they do spawn again and there are a number that are darker than the rest I will try and separate a few out in an attempt to better understand the significance of this darker colour.



CATFISH STUDY GROUP

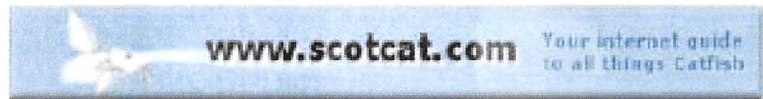
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Spawning *Aspidoras taurus*. Lima & Britto, 2001

Presented for the CSG B.A.P by Adrian W Taylor. F.N.A.S. Dip; MB.



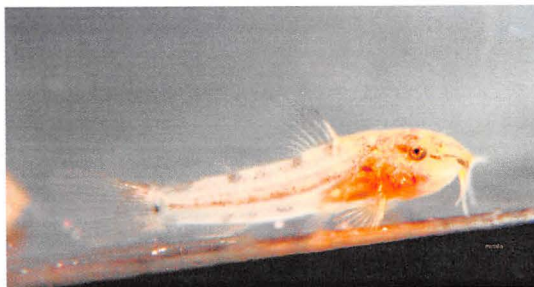
The name of the local fish store where I found these diminutive members of the *Aspidoras* family escapes me but, needless to say, when I enquired as to what they were the store owner informed me that they had come in labelled only as wild caught *Aspidoras* species. So I duly purchased four; as I had already purchased other fish that I wanted at the time and had a limited purse.

Upon returning home I housed them in a tank containing a few small danios and, apart from feeding them, I left them alone for a week or so in order to let them settle in before I went in search of their identity. After searching through a few reference books, scientific notes and surfing the Internet, the fishes turned out to be *Aspidoras taurus* as per specimen MZUSP 571549 (Cristiano Moreira; pg 32, Identifying Corydoradinae Catfish by I. A. M. Fuller & Hans-Georg Evers). Over the next couple of months they grew and filled out a bit but, unfortunately, one day I left the cover glass slightly ajar and one of them decided to impersonate Steve McQueen and had a go at escaping. Also like Steve McQueen, he died in the attempt. It was at this time that I noticed that it looked as if I had two males and a lone female, as one of the three remaining *Aspidoras* was more plump than the other two and I decided to move them to a smaller tank with the intention of spawning them.

The water I used was 50% of the water from the tank that they had been housed in and 50% water which was an equal mix of RO and rain water. For the next two weeks I carried out water changes at a rate of 30% every other day and fed them on a diet of small pieces of catfish tablets, sifted daphnia and small blood worms; although the female was still quite plump, I could not find and eggs anywhere in the tank.

One day, while it had been raining, I carried out a 60% water change and, the following morning, I again inspected the tank for eggs, as the female seemed to me to be less rotund. It was during this search that I discovered 14 small eggs laid in a tight clump on the top side of a broad leaf plant that was 'floating' at the surface in one corner; these eggs were subsequently removed, placed in an aerated hatching tray and after thirty hours the fry emerged from their eggs, only three failing to hatch. These fry then remained in the

hatching tray until they had absorbed their yolk sac, whereupon they were transferred to a fry tank that had very similar water parameters to those they were hatched in and filtered using a small, air-powered sponge filter. The fry were fed on infusoria, mixed with a small amount of marine-invert food for the first week. For a further two weeks they were fed on a mixture of finely-powdered flake food and micro worms and I added newly hatched brine shrimp to their diet. The fry grew quite rapidly for the first month then they seemed to grow at a lesser pace. It was not until their fifth month that they were of an acceptable size that one could distribute them to fellow aquarists.



Fry @ 10 days



Fry @ 2 months



How Easy Is It To Miss A Spawning? Musings On *C. narcissus*

Keith Jackson

Mike Hardman's excellent article in the last issue makes it pretty clear that spawning triggers are a complex and complicated part of the lives of our fish but how easy is it to miss the fact that a spawning has taken place without our intervention? I'm basing these thoughts on things I've noticed about my *Corydoras narcissus* over several spawnings that could be extrapolated to others. There's nothing scientific about this article, just the simple observation of fish behaviour and any thoughts and comments it generates would be more than welcome.

For the most part, my *C. narcissus* behave very much like any other Corydoradinae species, spending their time between resting quietly and foraging in the substrate. Like other long-nosed species, the females don't get very plump, though they are slightly stockier than the males. I don't find them all that easy to sex by eye, in all honesty, but the fish can so that's all right!

The first time mine spawned was about a year ago, I wasn't sure what was happening to begin with. Two of my four fish were off the bottom, dancing around, touching and rubbing against each other. I watched this balletic exercise for some time - a good quarter of an hour - and was quite astonished when they suddenly settled into the T-position and the female set off to place a single egg. The pair then began dancing again and didn't produce another egg for 10-15 minutes, which proved to be the norm. The other two fish took no notice of the mating pair so there was none of the frenzied chasing about you see with, for example, *C. panda*. Had I not walked into the room and watched that unusual behaviour there is no way I would have realised they were spawning.

My *C. narcissus* have spawned several times since and always with the same, gentle ritual. Only two fish are ever involved and I even saw a T-position where one of the mating fish was lying across the top of an uninvolved fish, the latter taking no notice whatsoever. There are never many eggs. I'd say 15-20 is a good spawn, much like my other long-nosed species, *C. septentrionalis*. They are placed high up in the tank, where the outflow from a Fluval 405 filter hits the front glass of a 36in (W) x 18in (D) x 24in (H) tank. A few have been put on the glass but most have been placed on leaves of giant vallis. They are never placed on the upper or lower surfaces of the leaves but on the very edge. The eggs are always placed singly or in pairs and are well spread, never in large 'clumps' as you find with *S. barbatus*, *C. paleatus* or *C. panda*.

Before the most recent spawning I had replaced the floating Indian fern (*Ceratopteris cornuta*) that had become rather scruffy with some water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) obtained from a fellow-member of the Derby & District AS. Over the next few weeks the plants rapidly multiplied and their hairy roots extended

to a couple of inches, reminding me of a cat's tail when it's angry. When I saw the fish doing their dance I started to look for the eggs and only one of the half-dozen they'd laid was on a vallis leaf this time. All the rest were on the hairy roots and looked to be quite well hidden amongst all the hairs. Unfortunately, *C. narcissus*, seems to be quite easy to put off and they did not produce any more. As I write, though, I do have five babies whizzing around a tub in the fish house. My fingers are now very firmly crossed because I've never managed to raise any before!

Something else that I've noticed is that the fish have changed colour as they've matured. The upper photo was taken in January 2007 and shows the fish looking much like *C. arcuatus*. There is just a hint of a dark patch behind the gills. The second, taken in June 2008, shows the dark colour has increased in length. In fact, this is a tell-tale for sexual readiness, turning into a black triangle running the length of the body when the fish are about to spawn. The fish have hardly grown so, clearly, size and maturity do not go hand in hand.



January 2007



June 2008

Now to the main point of this ramble. Their tank is in our dining room and is now the only one inside the house so it's undoubtedly the most observed tank I have. When any of the fish change their behaviour it's not difficult to spot but if these *narcissus* had been in the fish-house I doubt very much if I would have spotted that a spawn had taken place because their mating ritual is really subtle and the eggs are both few in number and quite small. It all makes me wonder how many spawnings get missed because the fish don't behave as we expect them to.

Spawning *Scleromystax* sp. C113 or 'Baianinho III'

Presented for the CSG B.A.P by Mark Walters

One of the most stunning new *Corydoras* types of recent years arrived in the autumn of 2006. Pier Aquatics in Wigan announced an import of 'Baianinho III' catfish from South East Brazil.

I wasted no time in visiting the store and picked up three adult fish. There was no clear differentiation between sexes in the shipment so I selected two with the greatest difference in body shape and finnage and one of intermediate proportions. They ranged between 50-65mm and all had flowing pectoral fins and the stunning gold/green flash down the back.



Adult Male 'Baianinho III'

They were placed in a typical *Corydoras* type set-up, a 30 gallon tank with sponge filtration, a sand substrate, bogwood and java moss maintained at 24C. The long snout and constant foraging in the sand gave an indication of their preferred food and worms of all types were eagerly devoured. I continue to be amazed by the non-stop activity of these fish as they cruise the mid-waters, chasing and sparring with their conspecifics. The activity is a refreshing change from other *Corydoras* types I have kept!

In fact, the 'Baianinho III' catfish are members of the catfish genus *Scleromystax*, which was split from *Corydoras* in 2003. The genus includes the more frequently encountered *S. barbatus* the occasionally seen *S. prionotus* and *S. lacerdai* and the now protected *S. macropterus*. Although not officially described, 'Baianinho III' have been given the 'C' number 113. 'C' numbering is similar to the 'L' numbering system devised for naming undescribed Loricariid species, but in this case is to give undescribed *Corydoradinae* (including *Corydoras*, *Scleromystax*, *Aspidoras* and *Brochis*) an identity. C112 has been given to another *Scleromystax* type – 'Baianinho II' and, to complete the picture, 'Baianinho I' is the common name for *Scleromystax lacerdai*.

After researching the species, I realized that the conditions I was offering them were probably on the warm side. C113 comes from the South East corner of Brazil, in the state of Bahia. Another catfish that

originates from this region is the closely related bearded catfish, *Scleromystax barbatus*, which is known to enjoy the cooler temperatures and swift river flow of the Atlantic coastal rain forest streams. Conditions suitable for *S. barbatus*, which I have bred for a number of years, should be suitable for C113.

I moved the group to a tank on the bottom tier of the fish house at around 20C, and this time used a fluval 4 internal filter - total over-filtration for this 15 gallon tank but they seemed to enjoy the current.

Despite the cooler water and daily feeding with chopped earthworms, frozen bloodworm and live daphnia there was no real indication of breeding activity or a clear differentiation between the fish. Discussions with *Corydoradinae* expert Ian Fuller, who had also picked up a group, suggested that the Autumn shipment could have been an all-male affair.

Interest in this catfish had spread amongst other *Corydoras* nuts and Pier Aquatics duly obliged with a second shipment of C113's in the spring of 2007. This time there was no mistaking females amongst the group, with much-reduced pectoral fins and a wider girth when viewed from above. I selected a pair and added these to my group. The interest from my original males was obvious and the usual hyper-activity became even more frenetic.

Over the coming weeks I offered my group the best live food in the fish house, performed weekly 50% water changes maintaining soft water at a pH around 6 (using 50/50 rain water and treated tap water) and watched and waited.



Male C113

Nothing happened for 2 months and I began to wonder if the female was in fact another male. I fished the group out for a closer inspection and was left in no doubt that I had 4 males and a female. The differences are quite apparent in adult fish. The males' pectoral fins sweep down the sides of the body, almost reaching the anal fin. In addition the most intensely coloured male displayed cheek bristles – a diagnostic feature of

Scleromystax catfish. The female has standard more-rounded pectoral fins and a fuller profile

Corydoradinae eggs from the glass using my fingers. This seems to minimize the risk of egg damage.



Close-up, Showing Male's dontodes



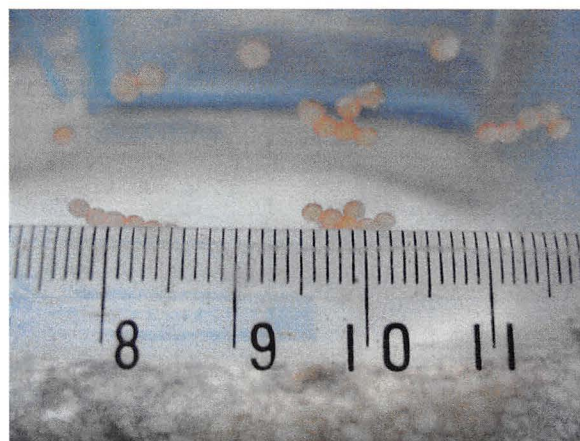
Egg Deposition Against The Strong Current

Another tip is to re-adhere the eggs on the side of the hatching tub, if possible, rather than dropping them to the bottom of the container. For hatching I usually use a 1 or 2 litre clear Perspex tub with reasonable aeration and a few alder cones to reduce fungus.



Group Of C113, With Female In Foreground

I took a few pictures popped them back in the tank and a few days later was amazed to see a patch of eggs adhered to the glass. One thing I did do prior to the first spawning event was to add a few litres of water from an adjacent event tank where *S. barbatus* were in the full-throws of spawning. I hoped the pheromone-laden might do something to encourage the C113's only they will know what stimulated them.



Eggs After Transfer To Hatching Tub

Although I didn't witness the first event, subsequent spawnings have been preceded by the female performing dry-runs, looking for suitable spawning sites and driving the males wild.

The eggs hatched after 4 days and I was presented with 60-odd wriggling blobs. After another 4 days, they were offered microworm and ZM100 fry-food in alternate feeds, twice daily. 90% of the water was changed twice daily using the parent tank water.

The actual act of courtship involved the female selecting a suitable male – usually the dominant fish, and embracing for a few seconds in the classic Corydorax 'T' position. The female then deposits 5-8 eggs in her pelvic fins and places them on the chosen substrate. In all spawnings, the eggs have been laid against the glass in an area of strong current. On the first occasion, 69 eggs were laid in neat rows, unlike the random clustering of *S. barbatus*.



Fry After 18 Days

I removed the eggs after 12 hours, giving enough time for the egg membrane to toughen. The eggs are highly adhesive, as expected under the flow conditions. Rather than using a razor blade, I prefer to roll or peel

Growth was quite rapid and after 2 weeks the youngsters were starting to show the first signs of pigmentation. I transferred the fry to a 30cm rearing tank with a sponge filter and increased the range of foods offered. By 4 weeks, the youngsters were even

tackling whiteworm and daphnia. After 8 weeks the fry measured 20mm standard length.



Fry After 6 Weeks



C113 At 10 Months

C113 has everything going for it, an attractive and active catfish without the aggression between males sometimes experienced with its close relative *S. barbatus*. I have distributed many of the offspring amongst CSG members and other enthusiasts and look forward to 'Baianinho III' remaining in the hobby for years to come.

The parent fish have since spawned on over 20 occasions, at fortnightly intervals. Spawns have averaged 60-80 eggs, with a very high hatching and survival rate.



Introduction to Project Amazonas

Stephen Pritchard

Two weeks in Peru or two weeks in wintery England? No contest! The answer saw Danny Blundell and I on the Rio Napo and Rio Mazan, two tributaries of the Peruvian Amazon, at the end of January 2008.

It was February 2nd. We joined the trek from where our boat was moored on the Rio Mazan to a piece of primary forest that Project Amazonas had just secured title for, protecting it from any development and destruction resulting from the soon to be constructed road from Iquitos to Mazan

Devon Graham was visiting the site for the first time with Fernando Rios, Project Amazonas' 'in country' manager, whom I had first met in 1998 on my first 'trip of a lifetime' to Peru.

On this trek we took time to take in the forest environment, we sweated, stopped to drink water, catch our breath and cautiously make our way across streams that dissected our path. To be honest I think we were slowing the group down in its objective to get to the new reserve and do a preliminary survey of the land.

We did make it as far as a clearing on the top of a hill where we could see the edge of the reserve across the scar cutting that had been pushed through the forest marking the new road. After a rest, the group split and we returned to the boat, while Devon went on to the Reserve.

The following article is from Devon Graham giving an update on progress of the Reserve and the 'Road'

On Motorcycles, Phantom Logging, and the Zen of Forest Reserve Establishment in the Amazon

Devon Graham, Ph.D., Project Amazonas, Inc.

3 August 2008: I'm really starting to regret having decided to check out the new road. What was going to be a quick jaunt has turned into aching thighs, sunburned face, tense arms, hand spasms from gripping too tightly, and a lot of *déjà vu* of the time I put 10,000 km on a 75 HP Suzuki motorcycle in 5 months – most of it off-road. But that was in the Peace Corps 20+ years ago, and my body isn't as tolerant of such punishment any more.



The new road between Iquitos and Mazan in the Peruvian Amazon might be new, but it is far from finished. Some sections are 50 feet wide and relatively smooth (apart from grader-tracks), but other, longer sections are definitely of “off-road” quality: deeply rutted, muddy, dusty, blocked by heavy machinery, covered with grasses and brush, composed of curving 20-percent grades, and crossed by drainage channels – sometimes seemingly all at once. At one point the road crosses directly across a soccer field in front of a school, and we zoom through the goal posts. “!Gol!” exclaims Luis, my driver; “*doble-gol*” I respond, and he chuckles as we bounce along. I wonder what happens when a game is actually in progress.

Later on we lose Fernando Rios, the in-country Project Amazonas manager, and his driver Ricardo for a while.

When they catch up they explain that they were held up by an ornery cow. “¿La vacita negra?” (“The little black cow?”) Luis asks. They nod. We'd both noticed it staring madly at us as we went past where the road crossed a pasture. I guess a suffering gringo on the back of a roaring motorcycle pushed its bovine brain over the edge. It couldn't take any more, and I'm getting to the same point. The pasture-lands and farms grade into tall forest on both sides as the ribbon of dirt and mud slides by beneath the wheels, and fourteen kilometers down the road I spot a sign on the side of the road – the first sign we've seen on this newest of roads. I breathe a sigh of relief, tell Luis to stop, and stiffly and ungracefully get off the back of the motorcycle. We have arrived.

Fernando and I are on a mission to check out the road access to the newest of the Project Amazonas field sites and forest reserves in Peru. This site is different from the other three that Project Amazonas already operates. It has no river access, but instead is located on a new road between the Peruvian Amazon's largest city (Iquitos), and the Napo River port city of Mazan. Once that new road is a little less new and, presumably, in better condition, there is little doubt that the tall primary forest that covers the hilly upland terrain will soon disappear. In January 2008, we purchased the first two lots of land with funding from Margarita Tours. In February and March, two additional purchases and some creative land-swapping enabled us to double the size of the acquired lands to 84 hectares (208 acres). In the subsequent months, all the survey work and title-work for the 4 parcels we've acquired of lands was completed through the Ministry of Agriculture which handles such matters. In July, however, an adjacent land-owner offered to sell his parcel of 24 ha to us as well – acquiring this parcel would put us just two narrow parcels away from the Santa Cruz community's forest reserve lot of 300 hectares – and so I say yes, we'll buy it, I'll get the money one way or another!





If we can border the community's forest reserve, it will create a block of protected forest area of over 600 acres, and open up many possibilities for developing collaborative management of the lands for education, conservation, research, and ecotourism purposes. So we're there to check out the new parcel, as well as to determine where we'd like to put a caretaker's house and, in the near future, an educational center.

To seal the deal with the landowner, Fernando has given him a used motorcycle and a cash sum from his salary. Tomorrow I'll pay the landowner the remaining amount and we'll sign the paperwork for the bill of sale. Both Fernando and I will be reimbursed our personal funds out of a conservation donation from the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey which was made for the express purpose of acquiring the new parcel of land.

Perhaps we could have waited until those funds arrived in a week or so, but things can change fast when a new road opens in the Amazon, and we aren't taking any chances.

The sign we've reached was installed by Fernando in July at the eastward extension of our new lands. He has another sign ready to install at the western extension border with the road once the pending land sale is completed.

I'm so glad to be off the motorcycle that we walk the entire 2 km extension of road frontage of the property. Approximately mid-way along, there is a bend of the road with a nice flat area lacking large trees. Centrally, it drops off gently to the valley bottom, and more steeply on either side to a pair of small creeks. Fernando and I agree that it would be an ideal location for a caretaker's house and educational center.

Patrolling the road frontage would be easy from such a centrally located site (we're envisioning a regular dirt-bike for the caretaker to use), and a trail network could be started from the same location without having to navigate any immediate steep slopes.



As we walk along the road, we notice numerous *shungos*, the hard, rot-resistant heartwood of long-dead trees of various species bulldozed to the side. These will serve as excellent material both for fencing the road frontage, as well as for construction. There won't be any need to cut large living trees for those purposes.



Fernando is enthused by the number of large *tornillo* trees – these are highly valued for boat building purposes and for certain types of construction that require a very dense wood that can resist the rot that results from frequent wetting and drying. I'm more enthused by the number of birds that I can hear in the forest or that are flying across the road.

Unfortunately my binoculars are waiting for me at the Madre Selva Biological Station – several hours downriver from Iquitos by boat, and where I’ll be headed in two days. Before long we reach the border of the lands that Project Amazonas has title to. A narrow cleared line in the understory marks where one parcel of land begins and the other ends. These border lines are the standard means of marking property boundaries in the Amazon. Curiously, however, this border line appears to be freshly cleared, and at the road edge is a wooden post sporting a trio of blue plastic “A’s”. We puzzle over why the land owner would bother to put in a post and clear the border right before a sale is finalized.

Walking down the road to the other edge of the to-be-acquired-parcel, we spot another wooden post with the enigmatic blue “A’s”. Fernando tries to call the landowner, but cell-phone reception is spotty in this hilly area, and so we continue to wonder. We decide to take the motorcycles a bit further onward to where the Santa Cruz forest reserve lands end and another community’s lands begin. The delineation couldn’t be much more obvious. On one side of the cleared border strip is tall forest, the other side is covered by bananas and plantains, with the odd remnant tree sticking up as if to emphasize the lack of forest cover. The air itself feels hotter. We hop back on the motorcycles and head back toward Mazan – we could have continued on to Iquitos, but that would mean sitting on the back of the motorcycle for twice the distance that we’ve already come. I’m not ready for that – maybe when the road is in better shape, but not today. The trip back doesn’t seem so long – we stop once to watch a troupe of marmosets cross the road, and again to visit a local farm. Then my driver hits a slick spot and we start to fishtail. The fishtail turns into a wipe-out and there is the sound of breaking plastic. We both hop off, unhurt, and upright the motorcycle. Fortunately damage is minimal – just some plastic housing broken, nothing essential. We head on to Mazan again.

Once in Mazan, there is good cell coverage again. Fernando makes a series of calls, and eventually we’re in touch with the landowner. The mystery of the triple blue “A’s” begins to unfold. The landowner is surprised, and is not responsible for them. The community of Santa Cruz isn’t responsible either, but they do have more information. The posts were installed two days previously by unknown persons who were marking a “bosque local” (a local forest slated for logging) belonging to the community of Paraiso (Paradise), some 20 km distant on the Napo River. How one community can designate logging lands inside of the titled lands of another community is a mystery to me, but Paradise has designated about 1000 hectares (nearly 2,500 acres) of Santa Cruz land as having timber belonging to Paradise. Community leaders and land-owners in Santa Cruz are upset, and rightfully so, and on Tuesday (5 August) are presenting a formal denunciation in Iquitos at INRENA (the government agency in charge of forestry and



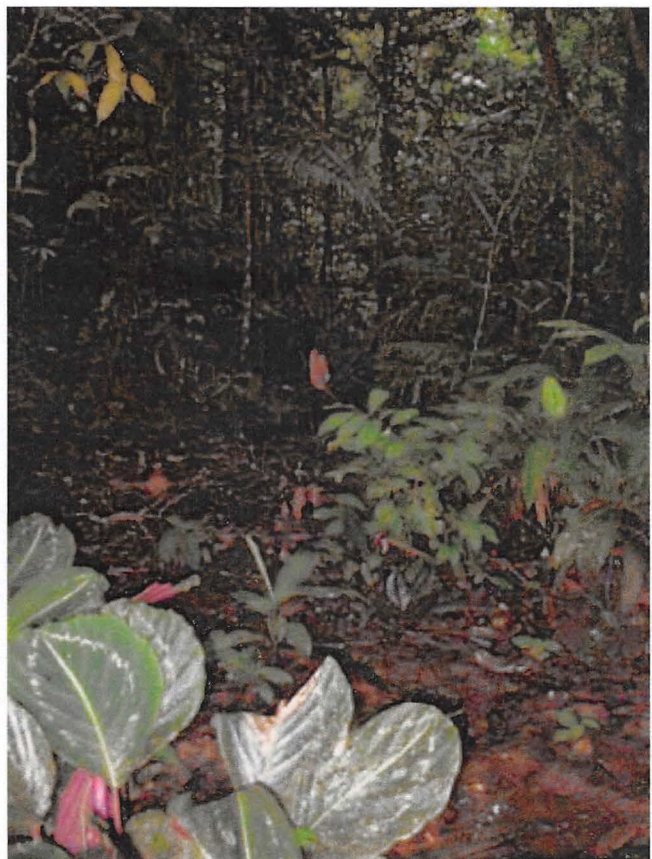
natural resources use). Fernando patiently unravels my confusion. He explains that crooked forestry engineers take money from equally crooked logging barons to fabricate official looking studies and documentation giving the loggers the authority to log on lands that don’t lie within any logging concessions, and which may or may not cross into private lands that are somewhat remote from community centers where everyone would know if something was going on. Inspection and enforcement is expensive and sparse,



Border Of Santa Cruz Forestry Reserve: Reserve To Left, Banana Plantations To Right

and loggers may move fast, counting on official inertia to allow them to take out high value lumber from an area and be gone before any thing can be done. Some landlords don't actually live on their plots of titled lands, others may agree to accept a small sum of money from the loggers in exchange for not raising a fuss – while such sums may seem like a fair bit of money to a poor landowner in need of ready cash, these payments are a mere fraction of what the timber on the land is actually worth. Bribing of key community officials sometimes helps as well. It really is still a frontier area. Ironically, community leaders in Paradise may not even be aware of their “claim” to the timber of Santa Cruz.

Instead they are probably being set up to take the blame and to shield the identity of the true parties responsible. Fernando refers to such fabricated land claims as “títulos fantásmicos” (phantom land titles) that have no legal basis to them, and which count on local people not having the economic resources to fight a well-financed logging scam. It costs money to send a delegation to Iquitos, and many communities simply don't have the resources. Besides, everyone “knows” that you can't fight the government, so when loggers show up waving official-looking papers with all the stamps and signatures and backed with plenty of muscle-power, what is a simple land-owner without connections in high places supposed to do? Most just try to make the best of an unjust situation.



Forest Creek At The Santa Cruz Site – Although There Was Only A Couple Of Inches Of Water With Intermittent Deeper Pools, At Least A Half- dozen Fish Species Were Present.

This time, however, the plot has been caught early before any damage has been done. I instruct Fernando to let the Santa Cruz community leaders know that we'll help out with transportation expenses for their delegation if needed. The incident also drives home the need to quickly fence the lands that we've acquired and to build a caretakers house so that there is someone on site to keep track of things on a daily basis, and, more importantly, so that everyone else knows that the land is valued, cared for, and not to be messed with! As they say, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".

Fortunately, I already have a financial commitment from Nature's Images, Inc., natural history writing and photo company in Texas to fund the fencing of the property, Building a sturdy caretakers house with associated kitchen and bathroom and a water collection system will be around \$1,800; monthly salary and benefits for a rotating caretakership (where all community members who wish to participate can do so for three months at a stretch) will be about \$175 monthly.

This is the fourth time that Project Amazonas has had to face the threat of illegal logging, and so far we've "won" three times, thanks to the intervention of local communities and the fast action of our on-the-ground people in Peru. We won't lose the fourth time, either, and with strong local community support as well as international assistance, we'll be going "four for four".

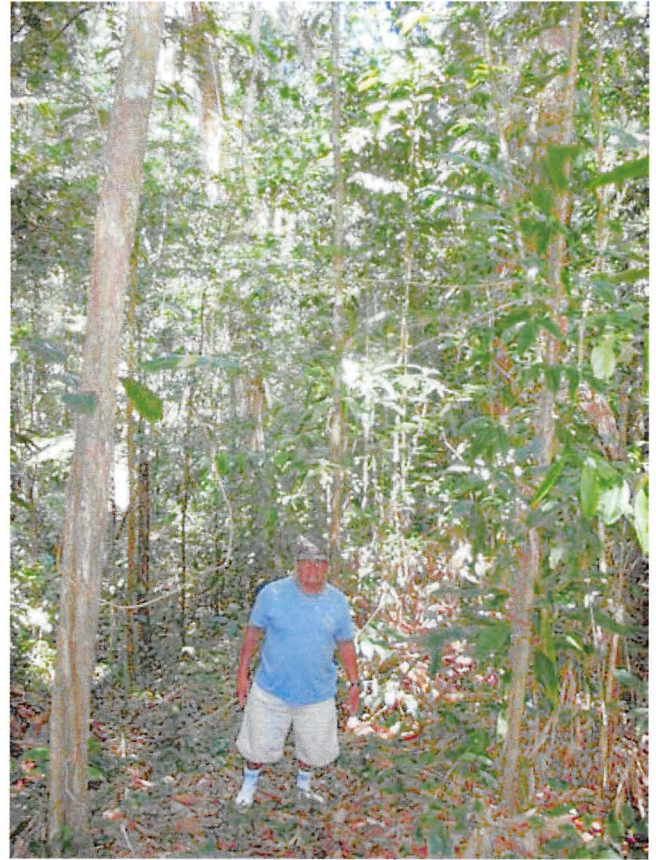
My butt may be sore, my arms and face burned, but I'm burning hottest inside! There's forest to be saved and work to do.

Postscript:

On 6 August 2008, thanks to a lot of footwork by Fernando Rios, we finalized the purchase of the adjacent 24 ha (60 acres) from the adjacent landowner, and now have the official title to Lot 77, along with the transfer of title and all other legal papers. We need about \$750 to finalize the transfer of title, official survey papers, and notarization fees for Lots 73, 74, 75 and 76 which, when done will give us the single contiguous block of land of 104 ha (260 acres).

5 August 2008: The authorities of Santa Cruz presented the formal denunciation of the logging claim within their community. Project Amazonas helped to cover their transportation costs, and we have a copy of the denunciation. This will now be worked through in the courts, and the forestry engineer and/or logging company responsible will be sanctioned accordingly. There is virtually no chance that the community will lose its case.

1 September 2008: An additional plot of land has become available which would connect our existing 260 acres directly with the Mazan River, giving us a long corridor of protected lands. The asking price is \$10,000 (about US \$4,000 including administrative and titling fees). If you would like to fully fund the acquisition of this parcel of land, we would be willing



Fernando In Forest Interior At The Santa Cruz Site.

to name the annex as you wished (assuming of course, that you wouldn't choose an offensive or derogatory name for it!).

At the same time, the Iquitos-Mazan road has undergone further improvements, and is now accessible to 4-wheeled vehicles. At the Iquitos end of the road, extensive land-clearing activity is already underway. This activity will march steadily toward Mazan, so the window of opportunity for acquiring additional tall forest is very limited.

22 September 2008: In October, Peruvian herpetology student Jhon Jairo Lopez will begin the very first scientific work at the Santa Cruz property when he begins a herpetological survey of the area. In December, ornithological, fish and botanical surveys will also begin with the work of Dr. Haven Wiley (UNC) and myself (FIU), and volunteer Nicholas Arms will be assisting with the herpetological work as well. We will be spending the Christmas holidays at the site starting around the 15th of December. If you would like to participate in survey and other work at the new field site, please contact us as soon as possible.

Project Amazonas, Inc., is a USA-Peruvian non-profit organization which maintains and operates four biological reserves in the Peruvian Amazon. These are open for use by students, researchers, courses and ecotourists. Project Amazonas manages the sites in collaboration with local communities, and also engages in medical, education, and community development activities with isolated communities in the north-eastern Peruvian Amazon. Project Amazonas

is registered as a 501(c)3 organization in the state of Florida, and as the Asociación Civil Proyecto Amazonas (as it is formally called) is registered at the national level in the Republic of Peru. For more information, visit www.projectamazonas.com

Dr. Devon Graham is a tropical biologist who has been involved with Project Amazonas since the fall of 1994, and who became president of the organization in 2000. When not working in the Peruvian Amazon with Project Amazonas, Dr. Graham hosts a variety of

ecotours in the Amazon and elsewhere with Margarita Tours, Inc., and also teaches in The Honors College at Florida International University in Miami, Florida. He can be contacted at mionectes@aol.com.

If you've missed one of our "blogspots", let us know and we'll be happy to send it to you!

#2: On motorcycles, phantom logging, and the Zen of forest reserve establishment in the Amazon (Sep 08)

#1: Ancient trees look for love in the Amazon (Aug 08)

Invasive Catfishes No. 4: *Hoplosternum littorale*

Heok Hee Ng

Part four and the last of our series on non-native, invasive, catfish species focuses on a species one would hardly consider an invasive species: the brown hoplo *Hoplosternum littorale*. This medium-sized catfish (reaching about 20 cm SL) is native to lowland areas of South America from Venezuela, Trinidad and the Guianas south to northern Argentina. A feral population of this species was first discovered in the United States in 1995, and it is now established throughout much of central and southern Florida. This species is gradually extending its introduced range northwards but low temperature is a key factor that will limit its northward expansion. Although the source of the introduction is not known, the ornamental fish trade is a prime suspect.

Hoplosternum littorale is an opportunistic omnivore/scavenging generalist that consumes a variety of benthic invertebrates, algae and detrital material. Individuals exhibit an ontogenetic shift from a juvenile diet of rotifers, copepods and cladocerans, to an adult diet consisting of larger crustaceans, insects and insect larvae, detritus and algae. Like other

callichthyids, this species possesses the ability to breathe air through their intestines. Its generalized diet, tolerance of a wide range of water conditions (it is able to withstand brackish water as well as elevated levels of hydrogen sulfide), ability to breathe air, and parental care of eggs and young may account for the success of *Hoplosternum littorale* as an invasive species in Florida.

In Lake Tohopekaliga in central Florida, *Hoplosternum littorale* has formed an interesting association with an invasive aquatic plant (*Hydrilla verticillata*, originally from southern India), which has covered much of the lake, with the catfishes using the *Hydrilla* in constructing their nests (male *Hoplosternum* construct bubble nests covered with aquatic plants and leaf litter). The negative impacts of *Hoplosternum littorale* in Florida have not been fully ascertained; it has been suggested that this species preys on eggs of native fishes, but this has not been proven. Fisheries authorities speculate that the brown hoplo may successfully outcompete native fish species; it has also been suggested that breeding males may direct their aggression towards co-occurring fishes.

'What's New' - December 2008

Mark Walters

This article presents sightings and abstracts for four scientific papers for which further details are available.

Catfish sightings: Following on from the list of not-usual or new species available in the hobby, the following have been sighted: *Hemiodontichthys acipenserinus*, *Otocinclus cacoma*, *Scleromystax kronei*, *S. lacerdai*, *Corydoras armatus*, *C. pastazensis*, *C. 'teniente'*, *C. areio*

Selected Scientific Papers:

Rodriguez, M and A Miquelarena (2008) - A new species of whiptail catfish named *Rineloricaria isaaci* has been described from the Uruguay River drainage in Argentina and Uruguay. The catfish is named in honour of Isaac Isbrücker

Lujan, NK & CC Chamon, (2008) - Two new species of Loricariidae have been described. *Hemiancistrus*

pankimpuju and *Panaque bathyphilus*, are described from the main channel of the upper (Marañon) and middle (Solimões) Amazon River, respectively. Both species are diagnosed by having a nearly white body, long filamentous extensions of both simple caudal-fin rays, small eyes, absence of an iris operculum and unique combinations of morphometrics. The coloration and morphology of these species, unique within Loricariidae, are thought to be associated with life in the dark, turbid depths of the Amazon mainstream. Extreme elongation of the caudal filaments in these and a variety of other main channel catfishes is believed to have a mechanosensory function associated with predator detection.

Pethiyagoda, R, A Silva & K Maduwage (2008) - A new catfish from Sri Lanka, *Mystus ankutta* is described from the lower reaches of rivers draining the

south-western quarter of the country. It is distinguished from all Peninsular Indian and Sri Lankan congeners by the combination morphometric characters and unique colouration. The description of this species brings to four, the number of *Mystus* existing in Sri Lanka.

Ng, HH, (2008) - Another new Aksis species has been described from Myanmar *A. vespertinus*, is described from the Ann Chaung drainage in western Myanmar. It is distinguished from congeners in having a unique combination of morphometric characters including a

narrow snout, causing the head to appear acutely triangular. There are now six species of *Akysis* existing in Myanmar.

If you have any sightings you would like to share or would like to track down a paper featured, contact me for the full reference: mark.walters70@ntlworld.com. Acknowledgement is made to Planet Catfish, Practical Fishkeeping and the All Catfish Species Inventory (ACSI) database for the original source of information on papers.

Breeders Award Programme- December 2008

Mark Walters

It has been good to see some more hard-to-breed and new species spawned in the last quarter. Catfish Study Group members are making great efforts to coax fish to reproduce and hopefully distribute the offspring far and wide!

The award of points for the submission of an article should encourage members to write up their successes more formally, and enjoy the reward of seeing their efforts in print. Articles will, of course, also provide a wealth of information for our Cat Chat Editor.

Assuming the spawning has been registered, I am happy to receive the article, and final stage report, even if previous reports have not been sent on time. Points will be awarded in full. Now is the time to catch

up with outstanding reports, in time for presentations at the March convention.

The table below indicates the new submissions and points to date. 92 reports have now been submitted with a further 5 new species (72 in total!) up to December, a quite incredible achievement by our members! Participants are encouraged to update their records with the latest photos of their offspring, and even partial reports will be awarded points when submitted to the magazine.

Please contact the BAP secretary for details of how to enter the programme, or for clarification of your reports and submissions to date. You can make use of the new CSG forum or contact directly.

MW21	04/09/2008	Corydoras aeneus 'black'	Mark Walters	Y
MW22	10/10/2008	Ancistrus sp L144	Mark Walters	Y
KJ8	06/11/2008	Corydoras narcissus	Keith Jackson	Y
KJ9	06/11/2008	Corydoras nattereri	Keith Jackson	Y
MW23	10/11/2008	Scleromystax kronei	Mark Walters	Y

Breeders' Points to December 2008

Name	Points to Date
Ian Fuller	880
Mark Walters	1360
Dave Penney	260
Adrian Taylor	735
Keith Jackson	160
Eric Bodrock	80
Frank Falcone	20

Dates for Your Diary

2009

January 18th	Annual General Meeting
February 15th	Feeding Catfish
March 15th	Spring Auction
March 20/21/22nd	30 th Anniversary Convention, Britannia Hotel, Almond Brook Road, Wigan, Lancashire
April 19th	BAP Reports and Discussion
May 17th	Catfish Health
June 21st	Catfish Habitats
July 19th	Migration in Catfish
August 16th	Setting Up a Catfish Aquarium
September 20th	Annual Show and Auction
October 18th	Plants for the Catfish Aquarium
November 15th	Autumn Auction (Pre booking Roy Barton 01942 248130)
December 13th	Christmas meeting - not to be missed :-)

Magazine Closing Dates

Normally the 1st of the Month of Publication.

Please note: When submitting articles, if you supply all the images as separate files it makes them much easier to import into the software so that they display to their best advantage in Cat Chat.

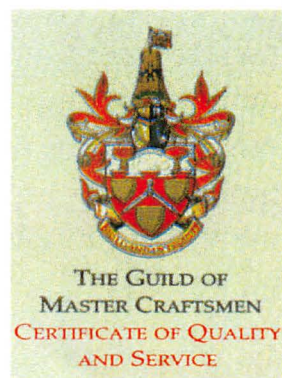
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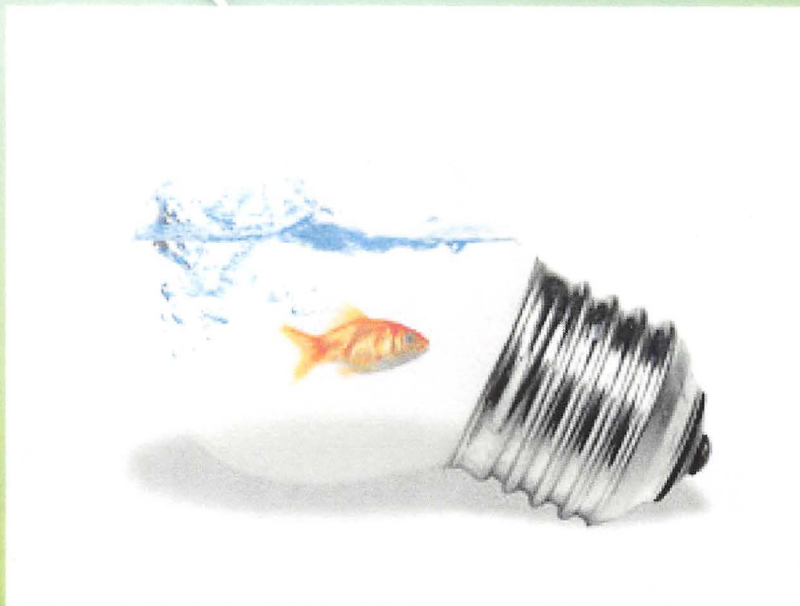
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