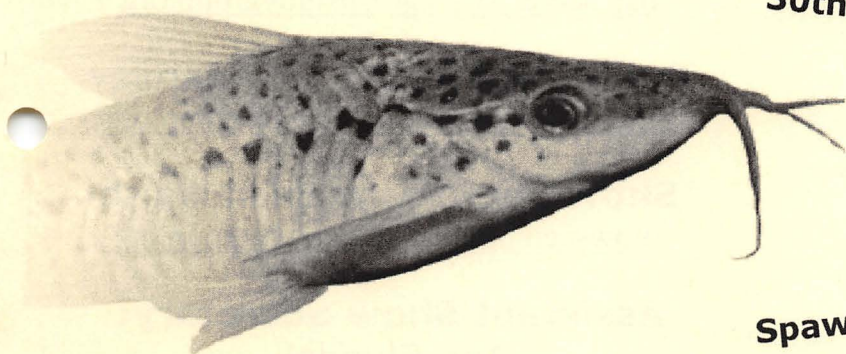


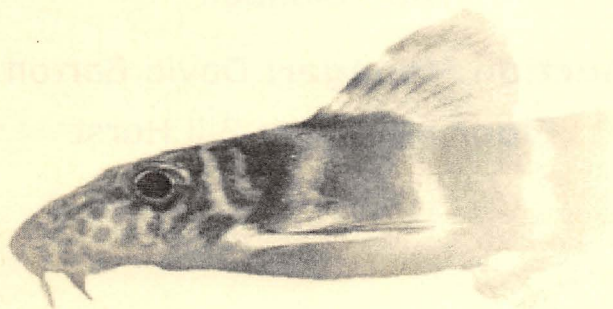
CAT CHAT

The Journal of the Catfish Study Group

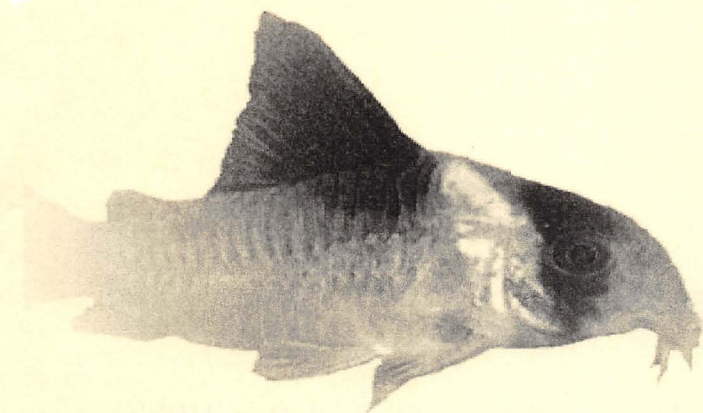
30th Anniversary Convention



Spawning Aspidoras sp C035



Micro Microglanis



My Trip to Peru

**Volume 10 Issue Number 2
June 2009**

Honorary Committee for the

Catfish Study Group

President: Trevor (JT) Morris
vice-President: Dr Peter Burgess
AquaticsDoctor@aol.com

Chairman: Ian Fuller
chairman@catfishstudygroup.org

vice-Chairman & Treasurer:
Danny Blundell
treasurer@catfishstudygroup.org

Secretary: Adrian Taylor
secretary@catfishstudygroup.org

Scientific Advisor:
Professor Isaac Isbrücker

Membership Secretary:
Bob Barnes
membershipsecretary@catfishstudygroup.org

Website Manager: Allan James
webmaster@catfishstudygroup.org

Cat Chat Editor: Keith Jackson
editor@catfishstudygroup.org

Print Manager: John Toon
printmanager@catfishstudygroup.org

Breeders Award Secretary:
Mark Walters
bap.secretary@catfishstudygroup.org

Publicity Officer: Lee Fearnley
publicityofficer@catfishstudygroup.org

Show Secretary: Brian Walsh
showsecretary@catfishstudygroup.org

Assistant Show Secretary:
Ann Blundell

Auction Manager: David Barton

Floor Member: Bill Hurst

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 weekend, held in the Spring at a Hotel.

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From the Chair

Ian Fuller

March started the second quarter of the year with a 'Bang', firstly in the form of the Spring Auction, which at first was thought to be a big mistake holding it just a week before the convention, however those fears were proven to be unfounded as the auction proved to be a great success.



from the speakers, whom all seemed to have had a great time and expressed their thanks for being invited.

I was particularly pleased and honoured to have had Mrs Pat Lambourne accept our invitation to be our special guest. She and her late husband Derek were founder members of the original Catfish Association of Great Britain (CAGB) from which we descended, firstly as an area group and then after it's demise progressed to what we are today, the Catfish Study Group. I am pretty certain that if it were not for the tremendous amount of time and effort Pat, Derek and a few other dedicated Catfish lovers originally put into the CAGB there would not be a CSG today.

The following week the groups 30th Anniversary Convention was held at the Britannia hotel Standish and this year the attendance figures were our best ever, with well over a hundred people attending, some even making the long journey from the USA. We were also pleased to see many returning delegates from Germany, Norway and Denmark.

I am not going to say any more about the 2009 convention here as I am sure there will be further reports from others better equipped to give an unbiased view of the event, after all I was the major organiser and would probably be a tad biased.

We also had an increase in the number of other specialist groups coming along and supporting with their stands, this gave the event an even wider range of interest for visiting delegates. I have been getting some great feedback, not only from the delegates, but also

Because of our commitment to support the British Cichlid Association (BCA), which meant that I and a few other members would not be able to attend, our April meeting was cancelled. Thankfully we have now made arrangements with the BCA to avoid such date clashes in the future. We just need to avoid some of the other date clashes with a couple of the other specialist

CATFISH STUDY GROUP

OPEN SHOW

AND AUCTION

20th SEPTEMBER 2009

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group events. Thankfully these clashes are becoming less frequent.

At our May meeting there was a fair turn out and with the days topic being 'Catfish health' and although we did not have a scheduled presentation there were some very interesting discussions on a variety of Catfish health issues.

Our next major event is the CSG Annual Open Show and Auction in September; we have twenty-seven

classes covering all known species. Why not bring along a couple of specimens and support your group, there will be presentation packs for all exhibitors, the content's of which will make to trip well worth the effort. Unfortunately this year I won't be able to be there, as I will be giving a Cory talk in Kansas, USA.

That's all from me for now, got to get back to organising another convention.

Editorial

Keith Jackson

The 30th Anniversary Convention has come and gone and it was a very special occasion for all sorts of reasons. We had excellent talks and exhibits but, then, we're used to that thanks to the very hard work of Ian Fuller and his band of helpers. Various people were picked up at local airports by CSG members and, in some cases, put up for a night or two into the bargain. I've written my account of the Convention elsewhere so I won't labour it again here except to say that anyone who did not attend missed a lot.

Don't miss out next year!

Just after the last issue had been put to bed a disturbing story appeared in the papers. Here is a link to the page from the Daily Telegraph archives:

<http://tiny.cc/80cMK>

Following on from late last year where someone found a dead snakehead in an English river, this is a report of a dead loricariid, probably the common plec *Pterogoblichthys* (formerly *Liposarcus*) *pardalis*. At 10 inches/250 mm it isn't a particularly big one, as we know, but it again raises questions about whether it's reasonable or responsible of the aquatic trade to sell any fish capable of growing to a considerable size to an unsuspecting punter. Remember all those pretty little red-tailed cats that appeared in droves about 15 years ago? What happened to them?

It's not just the unwary punter, of course, faced with a fish that grows rapidly from a couple of inches to a foot and more. What about the fish? I have no objection to anyone keeping any fish so long as they're fully aware of what they're letting themselves in for and they are prepared to stump up the money to keep it in a suitable environment for the rest of its life.

However, my motto would be: *Keep only what you can afford and don't try to keep anything bigger. It isn't fair on you or the fish.*

Which brings us back to the question "What about the trade?" I'm no fan of legislation because the chances are we'd all suffer under it but don't the trade need to put their house in order? Are pennies in the till always the be all and end all? It doesn't need me to tell anyone that there are good shops and fly-by-night outfits. No shopkeeper can be responsible for anything that happens outside his premises but they can act responsibly and stop seeing their livestock simply as a commodity, can't they?

There has been a minor change to the Committee. At the Committee Meeting following the May CSG Meeting, Roy Barton announced that he needed to cut his activities down on health grounds. The solution we arrived at will mean no disruption or reorganisation for members because Dave Barton, Roy's son - and heavy-lifting expert as anyone who's ben to one of our auctions knows - is taking over Roy's position but Roy has assured us that he'll be staying in close touch with Dave and that the same telephone number will be used to book lots.

While we're on official business, here's an early warning about next January's AGM. Adrian Taylor will give the formal notices and so on in the next issue but I've been asked to let everyone know, in plenty of time, that we will need a nomination for the position of President. The nature of the position has changed from a continuous to an elected one, hence the request. Should you be interested, please contact Adrian for details of the duties and responsibilities that go with the post.



30th Anniversary Convention

Keith Jackson

Arriving mid-afternoon on Friday 20th March, I found a large group of people clustered around the booking-in table in the hotel foyer - a good start! Ian Fuller was being as efficient as ever, with goody-bags issued to everyone containing some freebies, a souvenir shirt if you had pre-ordered one, a Convention programme and an all-important envelope containing your meal vouchers and room number, which made booking into the hotel very smooth for all concerned.

I soon found myself in the convention suite, helping to complete the final touches. A couple of hours fairly whistled by and it was soon time to get ready for the first of the dinners. About 60 people sat down with the speakers, well-known guests and Committee members scattered around to keep the conversation flowing. Like most people, it seemed, I had completely forgotten what food I'd ordered so it was just as well Ian's efficiency stretched to putting those essential details on every table!



After an enjoyable meal and some interesting chat it was time to begin the proceedings with a few announcements and the presentation of a Convention shirt to every speaker. Here's Mark Sabaj receiving his from Ian Fuller.



This was followed by presentations to the longest-serving members of the Committee. An awful lot of work has been done over the years by a not very large group of people and it seems only right to acknowledge the gift of their time to the Group once in a while.



An emotional moment came when Brian Walsh presented Pat Lambourne with a memento of the occasion to mark the Group's large debt to her husband, Derek. Brian also announced the restoration of an existing trophy with a new name: The Derek Lambourne Memorial Trophy.

For the last two Conventions, a talk has been given by a CSG member after the Friday dinner. This year it was Danny Blundell who was ~~lumbered~~ nominated and he gave us a truly riveting account of his 2008 trip to Peru with Margarita Tours. While many of us could only dream of collecting our own fish, Danny's account was regularly enhanced by contributions from others, like Mark Sabaj and Hans-Georg Evers, who know the highs and the lows of collecting in the Amazon basin. The highs were, of course, the flora and fauna. It seemed that the same could be said of the lows, with the many biting insects and the ever-present snakes coming top of the list of hates of all the contributors.



Danny, seen psyching himself to face the multitude. I wonder if Ann is wondering whether she's sufficiently anaesthetised?

After Danny's talk and the many questions it produced everyone mingled, with a great time being had by all concerned.

Saturday morning was given over to workshops, giving attendees the chance to chat with the people at

the stalls. There were representatives from the brand new Loach Association of Great Britain, the Anabantoid Association of Great Britain, the British Livebearer Association and the British Cichlid Association. Mark Breeze gave advice and sold many jars of his live foods. Dr Peter Burgess was manning a table for the Mars Group's fish products: Aquarian, API and Rena.



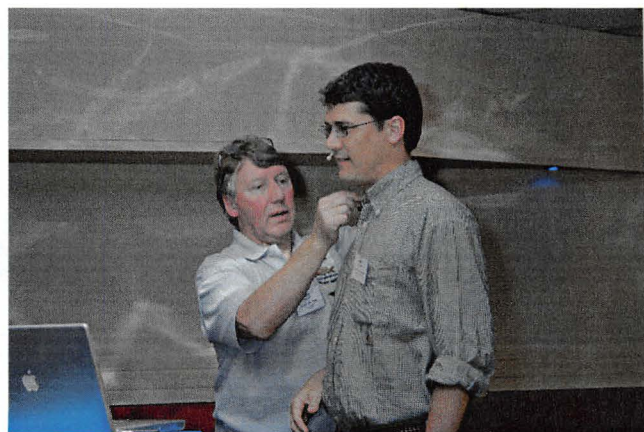
Our own Mark Walters brought several examples of his breeding skills to advertise the Groups Breeders' Awards Programme. The biggest of his displays contained his *Scleromystax* sp. CW38 and the adult males were a quite astonishing sight, with the greatly enlarged pectoral fins. It was no surprise that his youngsters found ready buyers. Other breeders also had fish for sale in the Group's Sales Area, manned by Bob Barnes and yours truly. The great majority were sold and a lot of very happy enthusiasts took their purchases away.



On prominent display, as is only right and proper, was the Group's Roll of Honour. I was unaware of the Roll until Brian brought it to the Convention and I am really quite embarrassed about that. Derek Lambourne's name is the latest to grace the Roll and I think it's a very good thing that we remember and thank those who have made the CSG possible. They are:

Bernie Baldwin, Steve Hooton,
Dorothy Hodges, Alan Waterhouse,
Adrian Morris, Martha Sands,
George Waterhouse, David Sands,
Ted Derrick, Barry Black,
Trevor Morris, Des Penny,
Thomas Anthony Ward,
Derek Lambourne, Terry Ward

As we were in a separate area of the dining room, lunch gave plenty of time for chat around the tables before it was time to return to the conference suite to begin proceedings proper: the talks.



First to set foot on the podium was Mark Henry Sabaj Pérez, who talked about the *All Catfish Species Index* project. It is a large research project, covering many aspects of catfish physiology, habitat and other areas. Its aim is to improve the understanding of this class of fish while there's still time. Some unexpected entertainment was given by the Group's new wireless microphone, which refused to stay put on Mark's ear. In the end he managed quite successfully with the microphone swinging from his lapel.

As fish keepers I suppose it feels peculiar to hear about fish being caught, photographed and killed for future study and some of the post-talk discussion focused on that aspect. The project's web-site is at <http://silurus.acnatsci.org/>



Next up was Kamphol Udomritthiruj. He showed a series of superb images of *Loaches from Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand*. With such an area, it isn't surprising that fish were shown from the bitterly-cold

highlands down to the much-warmer lowland waterways. It's a great shame that some of the prettiest fish came from waterways that were cold and fast-moving. Of course, that means the water has a high oxygen content but, unfortunately, that also means merely bagging one of these fish is enough to suffocate it in short order so they cannot be collected even for local purchasers. Those of us whose knowledge of this class of fish didn't extend much past the kuhli-, weather- and horse-faced-loaches, like me, got quite an education. Some of those fish were plain but others were absolutely gorgeous!

That brought the day to a very successful close and the attendees headed to their rooms to get refreshed before heading for the bar to start more discussions - and sink a few pints - before we went into the dining room. Eight tables of ten awaited us, surely a sign of the Group's stature and the tireless work done to make the Convention happen.



After dinner there was another talk, a first for the Convention, with Ray 'Kingfish' Lucas bringing his very own brand of entertainment across the Atlantic. To call Ray *a character* is to do him a considerable disservice. He claims Scottish descent but some of his ancestors must have come from across the Irish Sea in Blarney! His love of aquaria spans 50 years and runs deep, like some of his tanks and his pond!

He began Kingfish Services in 1989 as a service to both aquatic societies and manufacturers. After he retired from GM - Generous Motors as he tends to call them - he expanded his Kingfish campaign to spread the word on good practice all around North America. In this he has been sponsored and assisted by many aquatic companies who donate samples for Ray to distribute to his audiences, which benefits the societies and publicises companies that are happy to put something back into the hobby, an all-too-rare phenomenon in my experience.

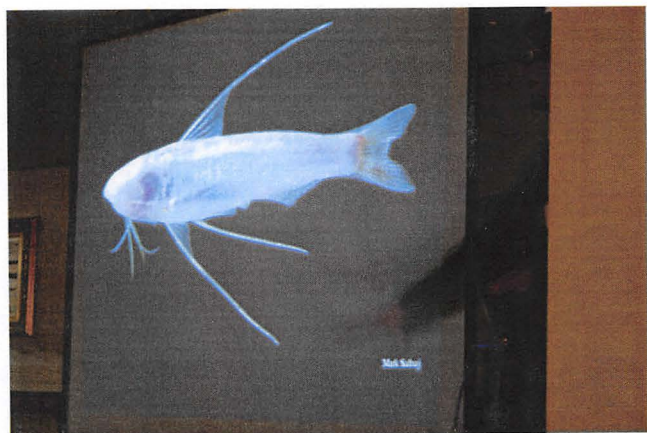
He gave us an alternately moving and hilarious ride through his fish-keeping life, his friends and associates and his beloved grandchildren. "Love Grandpa, love fish" is a motto he's put into practice, with every grandchild being given a tank almost before they could walk and his pride in their achievements being clear. He's also the proud owner of a car that's been in his

family for a very long time and anything car-related is as big a passion with Ray as are his fish.

Sunday morning dawned rather chilly and the suite was none too warm when we arrived but the large audience soon began to warm things up. Mark Sabaj was first up again and he told us this time about the *Highlights of the Peruvian leg of the Trans-Continental Catfish Expedition*. Visiting the Amazon is not a straightforward process, with a great deal of bureaucracy to be gone through before anyone can think of moving onto the river. It is also important, he said, to obtain the permission of the local people. This is not always forthcoming but, most of the time, they received a warm welcome and an invitation to a meal. That led to many pictures of the natives as well as the many catfish he found. One aspect of Mark's work I did like very much was the group's willingness to do impromptu educational talks to any groups that wanted them.

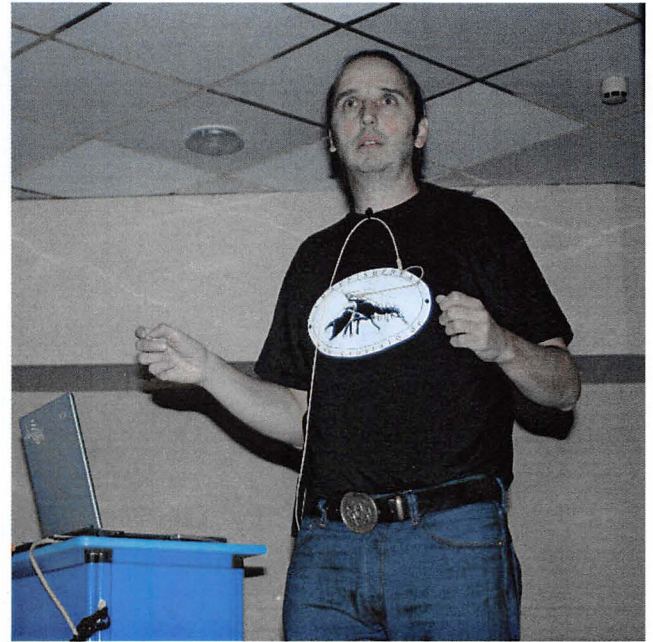


This shows the team on this leg of the expedition.



Mark showed us many examples of the fish they found but this blind specimen was perhaps the most unusual.

After the drinks-break, our annual non-catfish talk was given by Dave MacAllister on *Keeping and Breeding Livebearers*. Dave has been a frequent visitor to Mexico and Central America, collecting livebearers and bringing them home to breed. He's been very successful over many years so his talk was very wide-ranging, covering his trips, the habitats he found and he showed many superb examples of his fish. As someone who can't tell a Goodeid from a Swordtail I



was enthralled. It is always nice to hear from an enthusiastic expert in another area of fishkeeping. The talks I've heard in this series have certainly made me consider keeping other fish alongside the inevitable Corys. I think I've caught a mild dose of liverbeareritis from Dave and, from how much he enjoyed himself, I've got the feeling that his anti-coryitis shots didn't work..... ☺

The carvery lunch left me feeling a bit sleepy but the afternoon session soon had me sitting up to take notice. It has been a long-standing tradition that the Group presents each speaker with one of Brian Walsh's superb carvings of their favourite fish. The speakers are unaware of this so their surprise and delight when the presentations are made is quite genuine. Dr Peter Burgess, our Vice-president, did the honours.

Hans-Georg Evers then took to the stage to talk about *Corydoradinae Catfish in the Amazon Basin*. All of our speakers spoke from first-hand experience and it showed. Hans' photographs were superb and it was wonderful to be able to see the kind of habitats that these catfishes inhabit, from the small streams to ponds that form when the river is at its highest. Each was discussed at some length and it was a real surprise to hear how large the temperature variations can be that the fish experience over the year. If, as is true with carp, some of the more difficult species to breed need to be given an annual cycle to come into breeding condition then it's easy to see why they're so difficult in our closely-regulated tanks! It seems that modern-day scientists and enthusiasts take note of the conditions in which the fish were found, as well as the exact location with a GPS unit. As this information filters into the



Brian Walsh, Dr Peter Burgess, Mark Sabaj (*Leptodoras cataniai*), Danny Blundell (*L No*), Kamphol Udomritthiruj (*Bagroides melapterus*), Hans-Georg Evers (*Synodontis sp*), Dave MacAllister (*Neoheterandria elegans*), Ray Lucas (*Symphysodon discus*) & Ian Fuller



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hobby we should be able to replicate the conditions in the wild with all the benefits that should bring.

One thing I learnt that was not directly associated with fish-keeping was the reason why the Rio Amazonas is so poor in minerals. The rocks of the Brazilian Shield, which form its source and through which it flows, are amongst the most ancient anywhere on Earth so anything soluble was extracted millions of years ago.

The final talk saw Kamphol back at the microphone to enlighten us about *Catfishes in Thailand and Myanmar*. The range of catfishes he showed us was every bit as enormous as in the loaches he talked about the previous day, ranging from a few inches to a quite few feet! Having no European-style winter season, Thai enthusiasts can indulge their hobby by keeping some of the bigger and more-unusual species in outdoor ponds. Some of the examples he gave left me with the impression that his fellow citizens prefer the most bizarre-looking species to the pretty ones. Not all can be kept, though. Two species that were once very sought-after are now left in the wild, once their diet had been identified from stomach contents. Believe it or not, one species feeds on nothing but fins and the other only on scales.

And so the 30th Anniversary Convention drew gently to a close. Numbers attending were about 50% higher than last year and everyone I spoke to had enjoyed themselves and were planning a return visit. Everything I have heard since the Convention has been positive. I have no doubt that the germ of next year's event is already brewing in Ian Fuller's mind and that the organisation will be every bit as good. This was my third since I re-joined the Group, having been a member of the CAGB (NAG) in the mid-nineties, and each has been better than the one before.

Where else could the average enthusiast rub shoulders with some of the world's leading scientists? Meet famous names like Dr David Ford and Dr Peter Burgess - and find out they're also enthusiasts? Meet members of other fish-keeping groups and broaden your mind? Buy fish, live food and discuss breeding projects with Ian Fuller and Mark Walters, to name but two? Read posters and discuss research on the DNA of Corydoradinae with the research student and the academic supervisor?

Do yourself a favour. As soon as the date is announced, make sure it's in your diary because you won't be disappointed. Roll on the 31st Convention!

My Trip to Peru - Part 1

Kim Matthiasen.



We're looking out the window in our hotel room. It's 5:30 in the morning of September 16th 2008 and it's pouring down with heavy rain. It wasn't what we expected the night before, when we had a steak and a beer at a bar in Iquitos, Peru, with Fransisco Pin,

manager of Stingray Aquarium SAC, and Erlend D. Bertelsen from Norway. My travelling companions, Bård Farsted and Kristoffer Hauge from Norway, were also there. Bård was in Peru in 2005 and made all the arrangements for our trip from home. We had talked about where we should go first and Fransisco had suggested the Rio Itaya. It is a small river, running north between the only road out of Iquitos towards Nauta and the Amazon River itself. We should be able to find fish there despite the high water.

Despite the rain we we met at the hotel entrance by one of Fransisco's employees, Luis, who spoke English and was to be our translator but, generally, just keeping an eye on us. We rented a pair of three-wheeled taxis and went around the city to buy



Belén District, in Iquitos



Luis and Francisco

hammocks, mosquito nets and food. Especially the Belén market was something else than we were used to back home. Small stands and shops selling absolutely everything from clothes to raw meat (no fridge...) and from water to machetes!

After the shopping we went to the harbour where the boat was. And what a boat! It was wooden, with a sundeck at the back and enough room inside for the hammocks. We even had access to a toilet and shower. Luxury! We had four locals to run the boat and Luis as our translator. Fransisco and the owner of the boat made a short visit to make sure everything was OK before we set out.

After filling the boat with fuel, we headed for the mouth of Rio Itaya. The river runs through Belén, the poor part of Iquitos, and here we were going to pick up two local fishermen who knew the Itaya very well. We also tied two canoes to the boat for entering small



streams. It had stopped raining so, while the boat sailed upstream, we sat on the sundeck talking, having a cold beer and some bananas. We saw a lot of small parrots and small huts in the forest. A very nice little river.

Luis told us that the water-level was quite high so catching Corys and other fish by dragging nets could be difficult and we had to take an alternative approach. After a couple of hours we moored the boat downstream of a partly-sunken tree that might hold some sucker-mouth cats of various sorts. In the flooded grass along the banks we caught numerous clawed shrimps and silver tetras.



We soon got bored with this and concentrated on the tree. Erlend went all in while Kristoffer stayed in the canoe and Bård and I climbed the branches with our hand-nets.



There truly were many funny looking suckers, mostly *Otocinclus/Hypotopomas*, some others similar to *Hemiodontichthys acipenserinus* and small cichlids.

Later that day we arrived at a small town where an stream entered the river. We took the canoes up the stream to see if fishing got easier but there was still a lot of water and an hour's searching gave us one killifish, one angelfish and one *Amblydoras*. We decided to skip the fishing and say hello to the people in the town. It was a small town with one street with wooden houses at either side. The school, church and



hospital were concrete though. The town did have streetlights so it was not as far from everything as we thought. The people were friendly and, even though the children were a bit afraid of us in the beginning, we showed them that we could take pictures so they could see themselves. That caused great amusement. After spending an hour in the town, we went down on the boat for some late afternoon food which consisted of chicken and rice.

We continued upstream until it got dark and then the fishermen took out the big dragging net. They found a suitable fishing-spot using their flashlights and got into the water. They dragged the net along the bank for a while and we helped sorting out the catch. What a catch! Loads of tetras, catfish and knifefishes! *Amaralia hypsiura*, *Sorubim lima*, *Sturiosoma nigrostrum* and lots of whiptails and undescribed species of *Tatia* and *Henonemus*. We also caught one of the weirdest looking fish I've ever seen: *Ageneios ucayalensis*. It was quite unbelievable to see so many different species in a relatively small area. We put the catch in some boxes with water and went to sleep.

The next morning we had grilled *Sturiosoma* and whiptails for breakfast along with eggs and rice. Quite different but, actually, OK. We motored further upstream until we reached a place where another stream entered the river. The plan was to take the canoes up the stream and walk through the jungle to a lake to see if it was better for fishing. In the stream we tried fishing in sunken bushes as we passed, catching only a few freshwater crabs. We also saw a couple of



Sturiosoma and *Henonemus* caught with the big net



Magnificent *Sturiosoma* destined for the table

very large spiders on a tree we passed. This made Erlend wake up as he has a passion for those critters. We reached a point where we couldn't go any further in the canoes so we walked along the stream for a while and then tried to fish a good looking area with a lot of leaf-litter using our hand-nets. And bingo! After a few tries one of the fishermen caught a *Corydoras elegans*, which made me even more eager as I would really like to catch my own cory. After a



bring home and walked back to the canoes. Back on the boat we took a dive into the Itaya from the roof to get the sweat off and then we headed downstream again towards Iquitos.

Next issue: our visit to the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve.



Photographing the catch

few minutes my heart almost stopped! In my net was a bright green *Brochis multiradiatus*! I was over the moon but, unfortunately, we only got this one specimen. We caught some *C. zygatus* which are now residing in my fishroom in Denmark and a very large *Hoplo* of some sort - a very nice fish but, again, only one specimen. We caught a variety of suckermouth cats and a few *Apistogrammas* as well before continuing our walk through the jungle to the lake.



Crenicichla

The lake was half-moon shaped and very long and narrow. At one end it was connected with the Amazon River. The margins were thick with various floating plants and quite swampy. It was a fantastic sight and although we were sweaty and tired we had to get some fish out of this lake! The fishermen dragged the big net and we tried our luck with the hand-nets, mostly catching *Characidium* sp. The fishermen caught a wide variety of small Piranhas and *Crenicichla* sp. plus a few *Brochis splendens* and *Leporinus* sp. After a couple of ours we sorted out the fish we wanted to



Tetra



Small Cichilids



Corydoras Biotope



The lake and a Doradid



Kim and his first Pirana



Roasted Cichlids



The Boat



Erlend, Luis, Bård and Kristoffer

What's New?

Mark Walters

This article presents sightings of newly available (or reappearing) species and abstracts for five recently published scientific papers for which further details are available.

Catfish sightings: Following on from the list of not-unusual or new species available in the hobby, the following have been sighted: *Akysis prashardi*, *Hisonotus aky*, *Hara horai*, *Baryancistrus beggini*, *Pecoltia braueri*, *Bunocephalus lyrifrons*, *Synodontis polli*, *Liosomodors morrowi*, *Ancistrus ranunculus*, *Pecoltia oligospila*, *Centromochlus romani*, *Corydoras aurofrenatus* (below)



Brief details are given for the following selected scientific papers:

Carvalho, TP & RE Reis, 2009. Four new species of *Hisonotus* are described from the upper Rio Uruguay, southeastern South America, with a review of the genus in the Rio Uruguay basin. Of particular interest is the redesignation of the vivid green *Epaactionotus aky* as *H. aky*.

Ng, HH & RK Hadiaty, 2009. *Glyptothorax ketambe*, a new sisorid catfish from northern Sumatra has been described. *G. ketambe* can be distinguished from its

congeners (except *G. schmidti* and *G. siamensis*) in having a color pattern consisting of a dark brown body with yellowish midlateral and mid-dorsal stripes. It was discovered in the Alas River drainage in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam Province, northern Sumatra

Lujan, NK, M Arce & JW Armbruster, 2009. A new black *Baryancistrus* with blue sheen has been described. In fact the fish, *B. beggini*, has been in the hobby for a while, under the Datz classification L239. Also commonly called the blue-finned 'panaque', the fish has been designated as a *Baryancistrus* with the characteristic membrane between the dorsal and adipose fins. *B. beggini* is found in the upper Río Orinoco and lower portions of its tributaries, the Río Guaviare in Colombia and Río Ventuari in Venezuela.

Ng, HH 2009. A second species of akysid catfish from the Sittang River drainage in Myanmar, is described. *Akysis portellus* has been confused with *A. longifilis* and only close examination has revealed sufficient differences to warrant a new species designation. The type locality for *A. portellus* is only 90km south of that for *A. longifilis*. The paper includes some stunning photographs of preserved and live specimens of *A. portellus*.

Ng, HH & M Kottelat, 2009. A new species, *Mystus cineraceus* from Myanmar is described from the Irrawaddy River drainage. The identification of *M. bleekeri*, a species from India similar to *M. cineraceus*, are also discussed in the paper.

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.walters100@yahoo.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.

The Catfish Study Group Convention 2009

Dr. David Ford

This article first appeared in the Aquarium Gazette

Since there are between 5 million and 30 million species of Catfish in our World, it is no surprise that the fish has its devotees. Some English aquarists formed the World's first group devoted to their study in 1973. These were hobbyists in the South of England and they launched the CAGB (Catfish Association of Great Britain) with its own magazine published in 1974. Membership grew steadily to more than six hundred.

The Northern Catfish people decided to form their own group within the CAGB and the NACG

(Northern Area Catfish Group) was launched in 1979. 30 years ago.

By the late 1990s the parent group had faded, leaving the Northerners as the only Catfish Society, so they took over and launched the CSG (UK) - the Catfish Study Group (United Kingdom). That was year 2000.

Overseas membership gradually increased until it became necessary to view the group as worldwide society and the UK part was dropped in 2006. The society is now the CSG (Catfish Study Group).

They still reflect their Northern origins by meeting every 3rd Sunday each month at Highfield Working Men's Club, Darwin, Lancashire (WN6 0SR). They hold an annual Conference, in March, at the prestigious Britannia Hotel in Wigan. This year it was a special celebration for their 30th Anniversary.

The three-day meeting, from 20th to 22nd March 2009, needed 50 rooms at the Britannia Hotel, with a celebration dinner for 80 people and lectures from an international group of experts.

David and Sue Marshall had arranged to hold an Aquarium Gazette stand but, sadly, circumstances beyond their control would mean that they had to cancel their plans at the last minute. Upon hearing this news I volunteered my services to report upon the event so here goes.

The Market Place

The impressive Conference Room at the Hotel had a separate area from the lecture theatre and this was filled with stands from Aquarian, Rena and API, and the BCA, BLA, BKA, UKAPS, AAGB and LAGB, with displays on Catfish husbandry and breeding and sales of home-bred species. Experts on hand to talk to members were Dr Peter Burgess (who is Vice President of the CSG), Anabantoids by K & C Webb, Cichlids by Mary Bailey; Livefoods by Mark Breeze, Livebearers by Dai Jones and, new for 2009, and the Loach Association of Great Britain stand manned by regular Aquarium Gazette contributor Mark Duffill.

Aquatic books were on sale, so too were fish carvings by Brian Walsh and, of course, Catfish Conference mementos. Free tea, coffee, snacks and a licensed bar all contributed.

Lectures

Mark Henry Sabaj Perez (USA) is a taxonomy expert and he revealed that the Academy of Natural Sciences was granted a budget of \$4.6 million to collect and 'describe' the world's Catfish. This shows how important the fish is for data on species loss from climate changes. Up to last year 3,300 Catfish types have been described from the 4,000 held by the British National Museum. The taxonomy of the Catfish families was explained.

Kamphol Udomritthiruj (Thailand) showed 'slides' (now digitals via PowerPoint, of course) of the Loaches of Myanmar & Thailand. The Mekong is the world's 4th longest river and home to hundreds of species of Loaches. These were shown from tiny specie just a few millimeters in size to Loaches 15 centimeters long. The 'kick gravel and net' technique for collecting these fish was explained.

Mark Perez resumed lecturing the next day with a talk on 'Highlights from the Peruvian Leg of the Trans-Continental Catfish Expedition'. The bureaucracy of collecting was revealed, from a bottle of Rum for the local chief to talks at the local schools. How to collect the fish too, with dip nets, cast netting (especially at night since many Catfish are nocturnal), drag netting, trawling, damming and draining channels, electro-stunning, even bow and arrow shoots. Visiting local fish markets was also very useful for collecting dead specimens.

To bring a little light relief from all this Catfish information, Dave MacAllister talked about his methods for housing and breeding Livebearers. He owns a large fish house stocked with often-rare breeds of Livebearers he has collected from South America.

Hans-Georg Evers (Germany) has written books on many Catfishes but his favorite fish is the Cory and he has visited Brazil 30 times collecting thousands of these fishes. He showed slides of many species and their natural habitats. This revealed that many Corys live over vast areas of flat sand so he does not recommend gravel or pebbles in the home aquaria for these fishes...use sand. He also showed Catfish from turbid 'white water' areas have yellow - even glittering gold - colouration in the wild. This always fades to grey in the aquarium.

Kamphol returned with part two of his talk 'The Catfishes of Myanmar & Thailand'. Hundreds of slides showed an amazing range of Catfish types. Every possible colour in patches and spots and stripes, Deep water Cats, Fighting Cats, Blind Cats, Tiny Cats, and Giant Cats (one weighed in at 85 kilos). Some species eat only the fins or just the scales from other fishes.

The highlight presentation was a talk by Ray 'Kingfish' Lucas (USA - see www.kingfishservices.net) at the Saturday evening Conference Dinner. Ray showed slides of many of the top aquarists in the USA, UK and Europe with anecdotes about their eccentricities. This would have been quite embarrassing if they had been in the audience (some were!). Ray shows that fishkeeping is fun.

Presentations

Danny Blundell made CSG awards to Mark Walters, David Bailey and the CSG Chairman Ian Fuller. Every one of the lecturers was presented with a carved fish by Brian Walsh and fish paintings by Ian Fuller.

It was a most memorable Conference and a fitting tribute to the 30 years of devotion by Catfish people to their chosen fish. This is also recognised by supporters of the Conference with no less than 28 businesses sponsors. If you appreciate Catfish visit www.catfishstudygroup.org for more information.

Micro *Microglanis*

Steven Grant

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Specimens of the genus *Microglanis* Eigenmann, 1912 often appear in aquatic shops and on the show bench. Unfortunately we only tend to see a few of the approx. 17 valid species (with another 3 new species soon to be described).

Microglanis translated from Greek means 'small cat-fish', and the reason for this becomes obvious when one considers that the largest specimen of the type species of the genus (*M. poecilus* Eigenmann, 1912) measures less than 4cm. About 10 of the known species have type specimens with sizes less than 6cm, although a few can reach a bit larger at around 8cm SL. *Microglanis* look at first sight similar to some of their (usually) larger cousins: *Batrochoglanis* Gill, 1858 [Fig. 1]; *Pseudopimelodus* Bleeker, 1858 [Fig. 2]; *Cephalosilurus* Haseman, 1911; and *Cruciglanis*, Ortega-Lara & Lehmann A., 2006. See Ortega-Lara & Lehmann A. (2006) for a discussion on the differences in these genera (and *Lophosilurus* Steindachner, 1876).

Colombia, that all tend to get called *M. iheringi*. Some of these may turn out to be different species [Fig. 4].



Figure 4: *Microglanis* sp. aff. *iheringi*

Some of the '*M. iheringi*' in the hobby sometimes get sold or shown as *M. poecilus*. I think this is due to a combination of misidentifications in early aquarium books and because show people know that *M. poecilus* is a smaller species! Let me say now that all images and specimens that I have seen labelled as *M. poecilus* have always been '*M. iheringi*'. The true *M. poecilus* is a much smaller species and has distinctively shaped extended upper caudal lobe. It has a different pattern too. I have only ever seen one live specimen [Fig. 5], and it is one that my friend Roy Blackburn has owned for many years now, and is still only approx. 3cm SL.



Figure 1: *Batrochoglanis raninus*

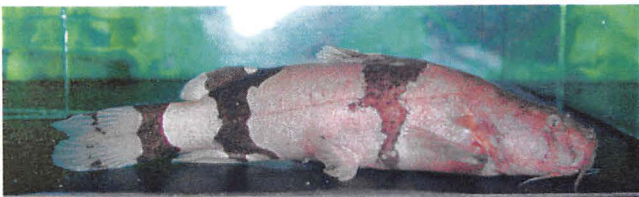


Figure 2: *Pseudopimelodus* sp. aff. *Pulcher*

By far the most common species found in the hobby is *M. iheringi* Gomes, 1946. This species can be easily recognised by its comparatively large adult size (approx. 8cm SL), and the large pale patch on the side of the head [Fig. 3].



Figure 3: *Microglanis iheringi*

Having said this there are a number of potentially different species originating in Venezuela and



Figure 5: *Microglanis poecilus*

Another small species that has rarely found itself into the hobby in the past is one that possibly comes from around Rio de Janeiro, Brazil [Fig. 6]. It is similar to and potentially comes from the same region as *M. nigripinnis* Bizerril & Perez-Neto, 1992, but tends to have a more flattened head and body profile.

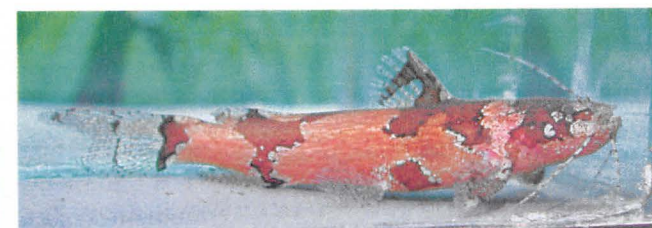
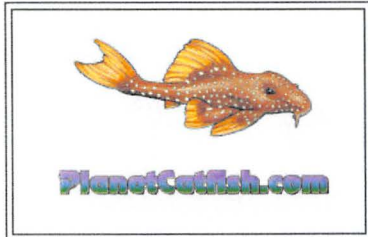
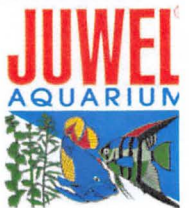


Figure 6: *Microglanis* sp. 'Black'

It also differs in the same way to *M. ater* Ahl, 1936. I have only seen these available on two occasions and the last time was some years ago. If they are from Rio de Janeiro then we are unlikely to see them again. They reach around 3cm SL and can appear quite black

Convention Sponsors

The Catfish Study group would like to thank the following convention sponsors for their continued support.



sometimes. Again, Roy had some of these for some years and they always stayed small.

Another small species that has been available recently (and was in the late 1990s) is one that is said to originate in Peru [Fig. 7].



Figure 7: *Microglanis* sp. 'Peru'

This species (so far) appears to reach around 4 or 5 cm SL. In the aquarium it usually appears almost completely black, but when caught it tends to go paler and one can see a solid band running horizontally along the body, which is unusual as most banded *Microglanis* have vertical bands.

All these *Microglanis* are easy to keep. They will readily accept temperatures between 75 and 80 deg C, and seem to do well in soft, slightly acidic water. They are good eaters, readily taking bloodworm and chopped earthworms.

Hopefully we will see more species in the hobby. Top of my list is *M. variegatus* Eigenmann & Henn 1914, a beautiful cream and brown speckled species!

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Memoirs of the Carnegie Museum v. 5 (no. 1): i-xxii + 1-578, Pls. 1-103.

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Cruciglanis, a new genus of Pseudopimelodid catfish (Ostariophysi: Siluriformes) with description of a new species from the Colombian Pacific coast.

Neotrop. Ichthyol. 4(2):147-156.



Breeder's Award Programme - June 2009

Mark Walters, BAP Secretary

The Breeder's Award programme is still attracting plenty of new registrations from new members and for new species. This quarter I will present the latest stats.

To date, 135 registrations have been submitted for 81 species of catfish. The most regularly bred genera are Corydoras with 76 registrations for 50 species followed by Scleromystax (15 for 5 species), Aspidoras (12 for 8 species) Loricariids (20 from 15 species and 7 genera), Erithistes (2 for 2 species) and Trachelyichthys (1).

Still no Synodontis or even 'Hoplos' (Megalechis, Lephthoplosternum etc) reported yet. The most popular species bred is Scleromystax barbatus – the bearded Cory, which is surprising considering the relative lack of them in the shops. 5 members have bred this species. Next most commonly bred is Corydoras duplicareous with 4 members registering success.

Good to see plenty more registrations since March. Allan James successful spawning of Aspidoras sp

'C035' has been included in the table below due to it not being included in previous reports. It is believed that the collection site for this species has been destroyed in the wild, rendering the species possibly extinct. All the more reason to maintain our efforts keeping and breeding (and distributing) rare and endangered fish.

Points are only awarded for reports and other submissions so keep taking records and ultimately, submitting articles to Cat Chat.

To remind members of the targets:

For a BRONZE award a total of 500 CSG BAP points must be gained and species bred must be from at least three Catfish Genera.

For SILVER award a total of 1000 CSG BAP points must be gained and species bred must be from at least six Catfish Genera.

For GOLD award a total of 2000 CSG BAP points must be gained and species bred must be from at least ten Catfish Genera.

AJ1	01/09/2008	Aspidoras sp C35	Allan James
DAB7	19/03/2009	Rhineloricaria sp	Danny & Ann Blundell
PH5	17/03/2009	Scleromystax prionotos	Paul Hards
PH6	27/03/2009	Corydoras loxozonus	Paul Hards
PH7	27/03/2009	Corydoras sp CW010	Paul Hards
PH8	27/03/2009	Corydoras duplicareous	Paul Hards
PH9	27/03/2009	Corydoras aeneus 'black'	Paul Hards
PH10	29/03/2009	Corydoras araguaiaensis	Paul Hards
MW24	06/04/2009	Hypancistrus sp L066	Mark Walters
AT17	02/05/2009	Aspidoras sp C118	Adrian Taylor
AT19	20/04/2009	Aspidoras albater	Adrian Taylor
AT20	08/05/2009	Stirusoma panamense	Adrian Taylor
CE1	09/03/2009	Scleromystax barbatus	Colin Eveson
CE2	05/04/2009	Sturisoma aureum	Colin Eveson
CE3	29/03/2009	Corydoras weitzmani	Colin Eveson

Breeder's Points to Date

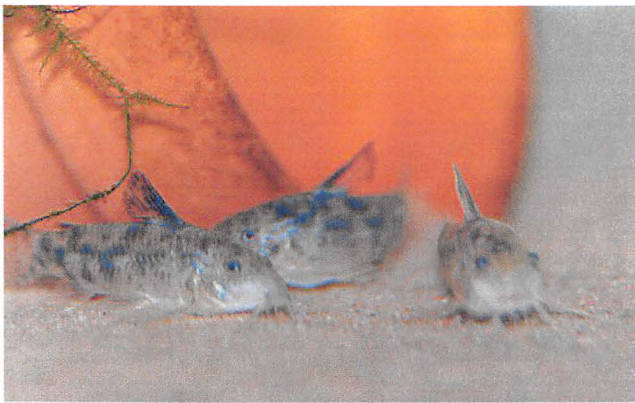
Ian Fuller	1065
Mark Walters	1800
Dave Penney	400
Adrian Taylor	815
Keith Jackson	220
Eric Bodrock	80
Frank Falcone	20
Allan James	100

Notes on the spawning of the “Black Phantom” *Aspidoras* sp. C035

Allan James

Arriving at the Catfish Study Group Convention of 2008 I made my way to the bring and buy table as I had been informed a week earlier that one of our American members, Eric Bodrock, was bringing some of his C 035 youngsters from across the “pond” to sell and I was hoping that it being late on the Saturday morning that he might have some left. I was in luck and purchased a bag from him which contained 6 small fry and dutifully took them to my Hotel room and placed them in my holdall in the darkness, as I wasn't going home until the Sunday night.

When I finally arrived home I placed them in a 18” x12” x 12” tank which I had set up previously with a silver sand substrate, sponge filter, flower pot and a clump of java moss. The water parameters were a p.H. of 6.5, temperature of between 75°f and 79°f. and a KH of 1. Over the next week I lost the smallest fry then the next week another died but the remaining 4 continued to feed well and grow at an astonishing rate and they sexed out as 3 females and one male.



A trio with the male to the left.

I continued to feed over the next few months on my usual mixed variety of foods of quality flake, tablet, grindworm, brineshrimp and frozen bloodworm. Twice a day I feed flake in the morning and I rotate different foods in the evening. Water changes are usually 50%, twice a week. Males of C035 reach a size of 3cm. and females a little larger at 4cm sl.

Colouring of the body is a pale yellow/silver with black blotches. The males have an intense black dorsal, especially when in breeding mode. The females have a less intense colouration and have black in their dorsal, only in the first few rays.

A Little History

If you were at the Catfish Study Group Convention this year you may have caught a footnote from Hans-Georg Evers talk , “Corytales - stories from the living room” Hans recalled on a trip back to Goiania airport in Brazil when the driver had to stop to relieve himself at the side of the road in some bushes, when he stumbled upon a small creek and some small *Aspidoras*

swimming about. Hans recalled that the water was crystal clear; the bottom of the stream was sandy with loads of leaves and sticks with the p.H. around 6.5. Temperature: 26.2°c (79°f) and conductivity 32. It was of course this very species and this is the only spot in the state of Goias in Central Brazil where you can see them. The water is very shallow and flows through Caatinga. It is not in the rain forest but is surrounded by bushes and some trees.

The Caatinga is a semi-arid scrub forest. It is extremely rich in natural resources but when compared to the rain forests there is little available information on its biodiversity.



The area mentioned is circled in the Brazilian map and is near the city of Goiânia, capital of Goiás state and 205km from the Brazilian capital of Brasilia.

The First Fry.

This appeared one night at the beginning of September 2008 as I was feeding in the fish house and I was of course delighted with the discovery. I looked for the rest but none was forthcoming, but never the less I was pleased with this start.

The image shows the first week-old fry, very hard to photograph as they move around very fast and like the



parents are always on the go. You will notice the so called tri-colour pattern. The head area has a black band the middle body area

below the dorsal is more or less clear and the hind part of the body has large dark marks. They are very striking. Exactly two weeks later another fry appeared and this fortnightly pattern continued until I had 5 youngsters. Not a great return but better than none at all I told myself!



Aspidoras sp. C35 - 14 days



Aspidoras sp. C35 - 1 month



Aspidoras sp. C35 - 6 weeks



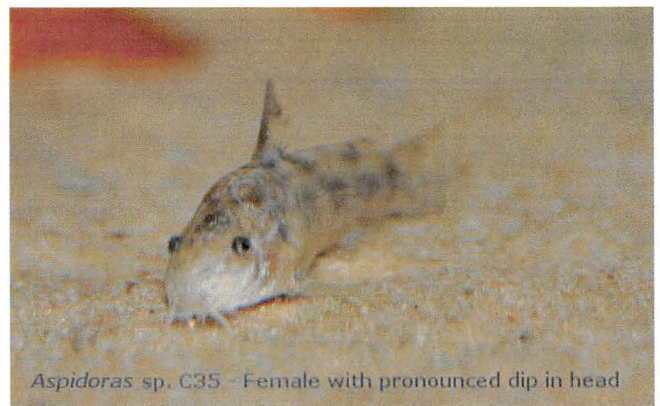
Aspidoras sp. C35 - Male & fry

Each fry appears after 2 weeks so the parents are either just laying one egg in the java moss (can never see it) or eating the eggs and the odd one surviving. When they appear they look well nourished so I would imagine that they are feeding of the sponge filter. They are very fast growing and feeding well with the

parents. The first fry which is about 6 weeks old now must be about 1.5cm in length which I think is good going for a species that grows to around the 4.5cm mark. You can notice the difference in sexes at about 6 weeks. The fry pictured at 6 weeks is a male.

Loss of the Parents

I noticed about a month after the spawnings that one of the females was not looking right. The head was taking on a dip profile and it started to whirl around uncontrollably and was losing its appetite. Another female was acting in the same manner and the lone male was getting thin. The first thing that I thought of was a condition known as "Whirling disease". I had heard of it but had never seen it in any of my fish over the years. So I investigated further.



Aspidoras sp. C35 - Female with pronounced dip in head

It was very similar to the so called "Whirling disease" and its symptoms. The skull and vertebral column become misshapen and alters the inner ear control of the fish which makes it swim around erratically. It is usually a disease which takes hold of the cold water fishes of the Salmonids.

The cause seemingly is caused by the feeding of tubificid worms and free swimming stages of the pathogen are involved. I have never fed live tubifex to any of my fish over the years so my only assumption is that the original parents had been fed these worms at one time or another.

I did contact Eric about this but he did not have any problems in that department although he did feed blackworm to his stock which is a variety of the tubifex and a cleaner alternative to the tubifex worm.

I lost two of the females and the male but the youngsters and the lone female were not infected.

I am still not 100% sure if this was indeed this disease as the rest of the fish are growing on fine and 7 months on they are going through the motions of the young males (3 off) chasing the females around the tank and I hope soon of seeing the ritual again of one fry appearing every two weeks.

They seem to be sexually active around 7 to 8 months as I had judged from the parents who must have been around this age when they started to spawn.



Aspidoras sp. C35 - adult

across the Atlantic (not literally of course 😊) and spent two days cooped up in a holdall they settled down well. With two, 50% water changes a week they fed with gusto and grew very fast. Not really a catfish for the hurly burly of a community tank, best in a species tank on their own but I would imagine would do all right in a small tank with upper small feeders, such as Neon's or Rasboras.

Images by Author

The last image shows the first fry at 7 months old and actively chasing the females.

Conclusion

A very hardy little *Aspidoras*. I had small difficulties at the beginning but, considering that they had travelled

Acknowledgments: Hans-Georg Evers (pers. comm.)
Eric Bodrock (pers. comm.)

References: Dr. George Post :Textbook of Fish Health:. 1987 T.F.H. Publications.

Dates for Your Diary

2009

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 Dave Barton 01942 248130)
December 13th	Christmas meeting - not to be missed :-)

Members are invited to attend any Committee Meeting as observers. Committee Meetings are held after Group Meetings, with the exception of the Convention and the Christmas Social. Please contact the Secretary if you would like to attend.

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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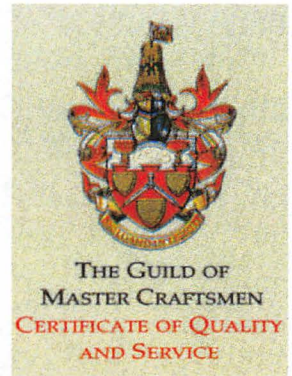
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