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## Front cover – Convention 2012

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**Publication of the Catfish Study Group Journal  
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## Editorial

The main conflict I have with my fish keeping is the constant battle with competing priorities. A 42-tank fish house requires a fair amount of commitment and when you've got a full time job, young family and ongoing house developments something has to give.

Thankfully, fish are resilient and maintenance chores can be reduced by employing a few time saving methods. The main frustration is that just maintaining the fish implies there is no other time for harvesting eggs, raising fry and growing on juveniles. The frustrations rise when the few fish you can raise command little value on the open market to justify your efforts. Of course, very few of us are in the hobby to make money, and it would require a lot more effort than I can afford to make it pay for itself, let alone turn a profit. However, there needs to be some 'payback' for a breeders efforts, especially if he or she is devoting significant time to maintaining rare species in the hobby.

To help me maintain my fish and give me time to breed and raise species, I am constantly evaluating and re-evaluating what species I should keep and in which tanks, which is an essential part of any animal husbandry, to ensure the species in our care have the best conditions available to them. This means I regularly move groups of fish on to pastures new, where their new owners can devote more time than I can afford to keeping and breeding them. When things settle and I have more time available, new species find their way into the fishroom and new challenges arise. It is this constant change and new challenges that maintains my interest, resulting in trying something a little different and hopefully breeding new species.

This month I've managed to crack my 10th genera with a number of young appearing in my tank of dwarf woodcats – *Centromochlus romani*. Its taken nearly two years for me to move from nine to ten genera (to achieve my gold award in the BAP scheme) and typically I have just found well developed eggs being guarded by a male *Peckoltia* 'L038' genera number 11. Its occasions like this that regenerate my passion for the hobby.

Having a large fish house means I can also try existing fish in new setups and systems, and maintain some species together, and then separate them again. The change in environment often results in triggering spawning behaviour, or requires further change to find an ideal set of conditions for a species.



6 week old (approx) *Centromochlus romani*

I have centralized a number of banks of tanks to reduce maintenance, but also to provide stable conditions in a large volume of water. This has given me the opportunity to house species requiring similar conditions in their own multi-storey systems, significantly reducing effort on my part. Pros and cons will always need to be considered, but the benefits of the centralized tanks seems to outweigh most of the negatives. Plus the constant changes help to maintain my interest further.

I have pulled together an article describing the construction of my first fish house in 2005. Future articles will feature my new fish house constructed last year. I used some of the images in a presentation to the CSG Convention this year, which is featured heavily in this latest edition of Catchat. The Convention was another resounding success and brought together many familiar and welcome faces from across the globe. It is incredible how such a specialized hobby can encourage so many individuals to travel such distances to share their experiences.

The theme this year was on hobbyists and breeding, and featured amateur hobbyists familiar to most of us through on-line forums, publications and the fish club scene. Planning has already advanced for the 2013 event which promises to be another huge success. Non of this would be possible without the hard work of the CSG committee, sponsors, speakers and the Convention Manager Ian Fuller who brought the whole piece together.

In this edition, you can also read Steve Pritchard's article on the 2011 expedition to Peru. Steve was accompanied by CSG members Danny Blundell and Ian Fuller and presents many fantastic images from the expedition.

## Notices

The annual Catfish Study Group Show and Auction will take place on Sunday 16th September at the Derwent Hall, George Street, Darwen, BB3 0DQ

ooOOoo

### Show Rules (CSG 2010)

Fish will be judged to Catfish Study Group Show Size Guide.  
Submittance of an entry implies acceptance of all of the rules.

1. Fish will be exhibited in clear, flat-sided containers, the smallest of which will be 100mm x 100mm x 100mm. Jars will not be accepted. Exhibitors are requested to label their show tank with the Latin and/or Common name of the fish.
2. Gravel/Sand is allowed. Aeration may be used.
3. Show tanks must be of sufficient size to allow fish to swim and turn. Exhibitors may be DISQUALIFIED if the fish is poorly presented, in poor or cramped conditions. Fish will not be fed on the show bench.
4. Breeders teams will consist of 4 fish, minimum age 3 months, maximum 15 months. Date of birth/hatching and name of species must be shown on tanks.
5. Entries may not be moved, or interfered with once judging has commenced, except by order of the Judges or the Show Secretary.
6. DEBENCHING is not allowed until the Show Secretary makes the announcement, except by prior arrangement with him.
7. The show organisers reserve the right to RE-BENCH any fish into their appropriate class.
8. PHOTOGRAPHY of entries will be permitted after judging is completed.
9. Time will be allocated to allow viewing of the judges' decisions.
10. The Judges decisions are final. Judging sheets will be displayed in the hall.
11. Any complaints, comments, etc., should be directed to the Show Secretary.

Whilst every care will be taken, the Catfish Study Group will not be held responsible for the loss of or damage to fish, equipment, or persons.

ooOOoo

### Preston AS

Preston Aquarist Society have announced their 3rd annual conference.  
For further details of this and other Preston AS events this year contact the number below:



**PRESTON AQUARIST SOCIETY**

3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference - 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2012



**Morten Ask**  
Fish Collector  
(Norway)

**Hans Georg Evers**  
Editor- Amazonas Magazine  
(Germany)

**Colin Dunlop**  
Fish Importer  
(Scotland)

Informal Evening Discussion - Hosted by Brian Walsh

**Tickets £12 - includes buffet lunch**

All attending are invited to bring lots for a quality auction.

Guest societies will be in attendance

Venue - The Mill Hotel, Croston, PR26 9HP

Tickets and further details coming soon, or tel. 07721521681



## Convention 2012

### Allan James

Our 2012 Convention was held again, for the second year running, at the prestigious Kilhey Court Hotel, in Standish near Wigan where the roots of the CSG reside. The theme was catfish breeding and the talks and exhibits represented this. As always, the social side of the convention is as important as the lectures, where old friends can come together and share their aquatic experiences, usually over the odd pint or three.



Friends reunited. Carsten Goll, Ingo Seidel and Neil Woodward.

The talks this year were very diverse, and interesting, with first time visits from Canadian aquarist and *Synodontis* expert Birger Kamprath with a very interesting talk on the Mochokidae family.



Birger Kamprath



Presentation to Birger by our President Ian Fuller and master carver Brian Walsh

Next on the new list was Eric Bodrock who despite being a regular visitor to the Convention started his first talk on his successful methods of *Corydoras* breeding.



Ilan Fuller Erik Bodrock Brian Walsh

The next first was Eric's partner Regina Spotti, a successful fish breeder in her own right and a humorous slant on 'woman in fish keeping' which was her topic on the speakers rostrum.



Regina Spotti

Straying away from the Catfish theme was a talk by eminent Cichlid expert Mary Bailey on her first venture to Malawi in the 1980s.



Mary Bailey

Returning again this year was an old friend of the CSG, the German aquarist and author Ingo Seidel with his usual high standard of presentation on the breeding of rare Loricariids and a look at the *Pseudacanthicus* family.



Ingo Seidel

A new feature this year was a question and answer session with a panel consisting of all the weekend speakers plus Julian Dignall of Planet Catfish. There was a form given out to anybody who wanted to leave a question for the panel which was ably chaired by the CSG treasurer Danny Blundell. This was very successful and may be carried on to next years Convention.



Ask the experts

On the previous Friday night our usual CSG member talk was carried out by top breeder Mark Walters on the way he breeds his cats and also a look at his new fish house.



Mark Walters receiving best CatChat article award 2011/12

Trophy keepsakes, carved impeccably by our Show Secretary Brian Walsh were presented to each speaker in turn.

During the course of the weekend, there were numerous prize draws with fantastic aquatic goods to be won. Thanks to all who contributed prizes and a special thanks to our major sponsor Pier Aquatics who had run a prize draw from their premises for the previous three months with some fantastic shop vouchers to be won. Their efforts raised a significant sum to help the CSG fund future events.

The display stalls during the weekend included the British International Loach Association, T.A. Aquaculture, B.D. Trading, GBW Products and Services and The Aquarium Gazette.



TA Aquaculture



Mars Fishcare



International Loach Association



Barlow's Aquatic Trading



The Aquarium Gazette



GBW



Breeders Award Programme Display

the Convention even better than last years which was no mean feat.

Thanks of course goes to the many visitors from all corners of the world who attended the weekend and thanks must also be given to our sponsors who you can view on our website. See you all at the same venue in 2013!

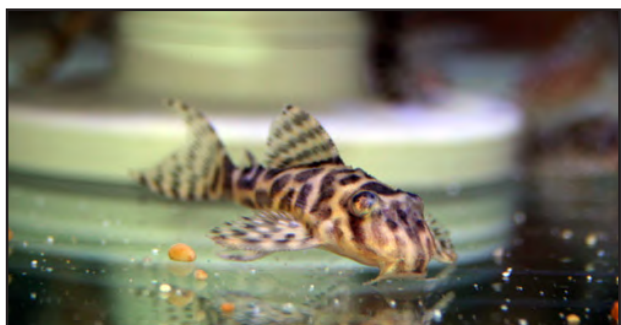
### Some of the cats on display



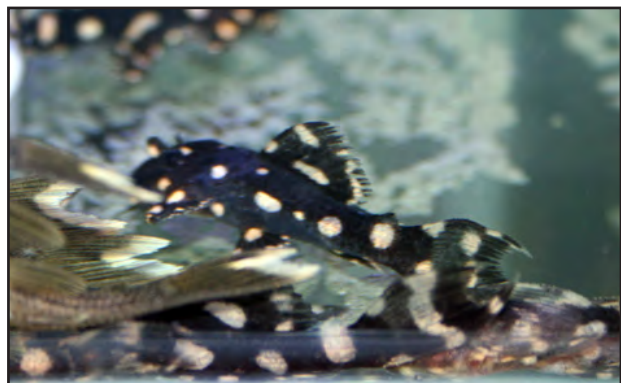
*Corydoras parallelus*



*Corydoras* sp CW051 (top) and CW049 (bottom)



*Hypancistrus* sp.



*Pseudacanthicus* L065



*Hemiancistrus snethlegae*



*Corydoras* sp. C90



*Corydoras eques* (front)



*Aspidoras* CW052

Images by Allan James, Danny Blundell and Mark Walters

### Pier Aquatics Grand Prize Draw

- 1st : Mr. D.Blundle from Morecombe
- 2nd: Mr. Fenton from Ashton
- 3rd: Mr. K.Astley from Blackburn



*Loricaria simillima*



*Corydoras ehrhardti*



# Convention Sponsors

The Catfish Study Group would like to thank the following sponsors for their continued and most valued support.





## Fish House Series Part One 'Construction on a Budget'

Mark Walters

The first in a series on fish house construction presents the authors' first multi-tank room which housed up to 34 tanks between 2005 and 2011

A house move in 2004, provided a fantastic opportunity to construct my first fish-house. I have kept fish for over 30 years, and as a teenager had 4 – 3 foot tanks in my bedroom. I wouldn't risk upstairs tanks again, and since that time had only kept one or two tanks, varying from experiments with marines, trickle filter systems and West African river bio-types.

Although I had kept many catfish varieties, I only really got serious with the breeding of my *Scleromystax barbatus*. I purchased a group in 2001 and they soon developed into fabulous fish, only too willing to spawn.

I made the common mistake of ignoring good advice and most of the group succumbed to too-high temperatures, the remaining female has since mothered hundreds of young with her new group.



*Scleromystax barbatus*

I had caught the *Corydoras* bug and wanted to offer the best for a planned breeding programme. The house move left a dilemma with where to house my one tank and I ended up with the spacious garage providing a temporary home.

I had convinced my wife that I could pursue my hobby out of sight with no risk of spillages and bad smells and the fish-house plans were drawn up.

The 'garage' was an old artist's studio very well-built in the 1920's, with a concrete floor added later. I planned an area 8 foot square, utilising an existing partition wall and one side of the garage. It was a relatively straightforward DIY job to throw up another timber side and one end to provide access. In effect, I had a room within a room, protecting the fish-house from the elements.

The room was insulated using Kingspan 2" sheets. The insulation presented the greatest cost to the project at some £200.



The old studio garage

I had a limited budget, and with 2 young kids and a sky-high mortgage (who hasn't), needed to work to a shoe-string.



External insulation of the fishhouse (prior to demolition in 2011)

All the timbers were salvaged and I soon had sufficient to start work on the staging. I planned two sides with 8' long staging, 2 foot wide. The first side was constructed with 3 shelves. The top was at 6', which I have now learned is too high for practical tank maintenance. Shelves 2 and 3 were staged at 2' intervals. All construction was with 2x4 salvaged, cleaned-up timber. Rails and cross-bearers were screwed together with 4" screws – no jointing needed with big screws and heavy timbers.

The shelves were laid with 9mm plywood and covered with thin polystyrene glued in place with PVA. I picked up a dozen 2 foot tanks off e-bay, for £40, and these were placed end-on, on the lower two racks. A further 4 x 2 footers went up top with room for a fry rearing system.



Detail of screw and cross brace support

I purchased a 70 l/m blower and 20 bargain Algarde biofoam 200's on-line, plus a 3kw space heater from a car-boot fair. Play-pit sand served as substrate, with bogwood and java moss (probably originating from my bedroom 30 years ago!) and with a Catfish Study Group auction looming I was ready to fill tanks!



Filling tanks

In a nut-shell, that's all there was to it. The first side was completed in the summer of 2005, however it took another 12 months to complete the second side. Obviously, by now I was far too busy to complete the job caring for the fish I had introduced!



Ceiling, showing insulation



Ice cream tubs converter into a fry rearing unit

That first stage of tanks was very successful, with over 100 spawnings from 9 different *Corydoras* species in the first 12 months. Like many aquarists, I had built up my fish house by begging, borrowing and getting discounted materials, whilst also improvising with recycled tubs and other bits.



Shelves constructed with a plywood tank base

The air blower had plenty of capacity for more tanks and the space heater provided a nice temperature gradient from 20C at the bottom to 26C at the top. Species were housed according to their natural temperature requirements.

I also squeezed a rack between the two sides for hatching tubs, which you can see in the following picture.



First side to be completed with 2 foot tanks end-on.

My wife had suggested we put a nice show tank in the house, but the maintenance required for over 30 tanks was enough without the worry of keeping water splashes off the dining room carpet!



Stage 2 completed



Stage 2 under construction

I used 12" high tanks, rather than the 15", so I could accommodate the additional shelf. I set up 2 x 4 footers on the top as growing-out facilities and added a cheap job-lot of 18" tanks. The lower tiers housed cooler *Corydoras* and *Scleromystax*.



4 tiers of tanks.

The second article will present construction of the new fish house, started in 2011.

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## Product Review

Mark Walters

I wouldn't normally go to the effort of singing the praises of an aquarium product, that's what advertising companies are set up to do, but at the CSG auction I won a few tubs of a new product I wasn't previously aware of. Many of the auction-goers will have also received samples, handed out as freebies on the day.



When we received the sachets, we were intrigued by the spongy texture of the food – a sinking catfish pellet from New Era. I dropped my sample in a bag and forgot about it. After the show, I was unpacking the prizes I had won in the show and had a closer look at the pellets.



They appear to be an extruded pellet and are certainly soft to the touch. The guidance says to handle with dry hands – I suspect they will quickly foul if water gets into the tub.

I've not been a big fan of pellets and have always assumed many of the products available are repackaged trout pellets with too-high a protein content.

These seemed a different product altogether and well worth a try.

On adding to the tank, they sink quite quickly. However, the most noticeable characteristic is the response by the fish.



*Auchenipterichthys coracoides*

The pellets must have a desirable scent because usually-shy species readily appeared to feast on the pellets. Corydoras actively grazed on the pellets as they softened whilst larger species of the Doradidae and Auchenipteridae ate them whole in mouthfuls! Species which just don't normally come out in daylight came to the front of the tank and feasted on the pellets, including *Microsynodontis* and *Centromochlus*.

There appears to be little waste, and the only fish which don't relish them are some of the more specialised feeders such as sand-sifting Loricariinae species, although I suspect *Sturisoma* would vacuum them up.



*Orinocodoras eigenmani*

They've been added to the staples list for my fish and will be fed two or three times a week from now on.

## “Three go fishing”

### A Peruvian adventure by Steven Pritchard

Apologies to any freshwater fisherman, we were not going out to the Amazon to catch the monsters of the deep we were more from the ‘try dipping the hook and line in the water to see what we could catch’ school, well I was.

And more times than I would like to say, we were just feeding the fish!

31st July 2011 was declared the start of the fishing season, well it was for us, Ian, Danny and I were on the Rio Nanay a ‘black water’ river that skirts Iquitos, many times we were close enough to see planes flying into Iquitos airport but far enough away not to hear them.

While we were on the Amazon to collect fish, taking a trip in the skiff to the smaller creeks, then wading through the shallows with hand nets, or managing the seine net, circling and area or weed bed to capture most of the fish in an area.



The ‘Nenita’

We spent a lot of time on board the boat, the Nenita, so a rod and line just added to the experience and hopefully some more species that would not appear in the nets.

#### The first casts

I must admit I had rod and line ready as soon as we were tied up, Danny was not far behind, Ian was a little further behind, I’m sure he was taking in the vista, finally being in the home of the catfish that has been so significant in his life way back from those days of *Corydoras pygmaeus* breeding in candy jars on the mantelpiece. I would like to say it was first cast resulting in the first fish, but it was a just a case of feeding the fish for the first few casts.

When the first fish was hooked it was a catfish, a *Callophysus macroptus*, the first of many we were to bring on board.

Once photographed it was released, hook re-baited and the next cast hooked a second catfish, a different species, *Pimelodus blochii*.



*Pimelodus blochii*

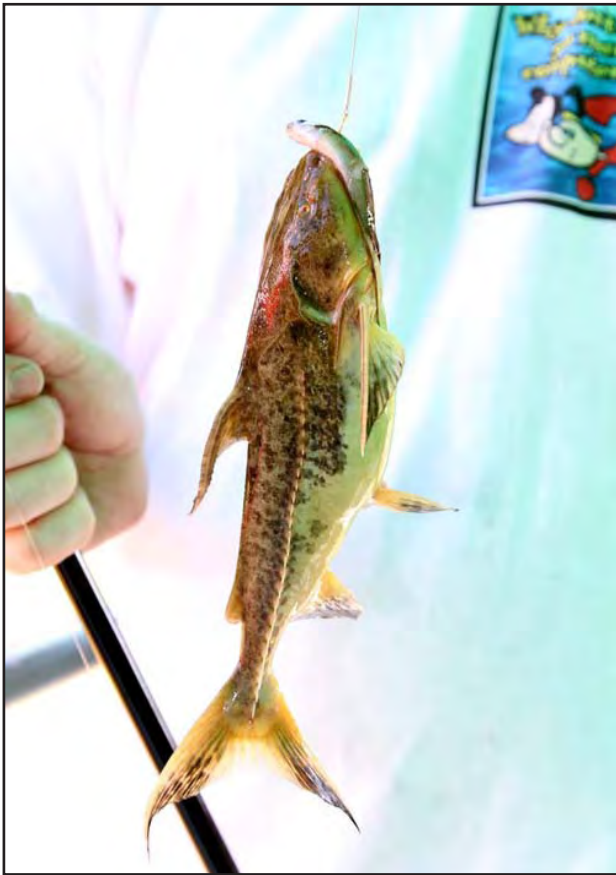


*Pterodoras granulosus*

Third cast, third species, *Pterodoras granulosus*, this was a wonderful start to our trip, I wondered if this could continue. Danny was casting out next to me as we fished from the upper deck of the Nenita across the stern of the boat by this time Ian was tackled up and fishing and the competition was on.

At every opportunity we would be out there fishing, early in the morning, up before the sun, we were looking to get the sunrise photos and the chance to catch another species was too great an opportunity to miss. More *Callophysus macroptus* were landed with Ian using his gloved hands to secure the fish and remove the hook, then the need for protection from the pin sharp spines passed as we began catching *Pinirampus pinirampu* which have soft spines.

An *Auchenipterichthys* sp similar to the Zamora catfish was another species we began to land too big to take back for the aquarium to small to eat.



*Pterodoras granulosus*



*Pinirampus pirinampu*

This became a regular feature of our very early mornings but it passed the time before Emerson arrived with the coffee. One fishing session saw more red bellied piranha, mostly small 5 to 6 inch fish. As we were coming to an end I hooked something at a distance and as it came to the surface it looked like a large, and very red, red bellied piranha

When on board Ian was ready with his gloved hand ready to remove the hook but caution was not needed as this was another species, a juvenile Black Pacu the vivid red was in such contrast to aquarium specimens we see, it looked unnatural but in reality was most natural.

### The \$500+ fish

After a hot afternoon traveling we anchored by a sandy beach on the bend of the river, once we had finished our evening meal and it was dark we began fishing again, Ian was to my left upstream from my position... Bang! he was into a fish, after playing the fish for few minutes and as it tired he reeled it in and as the quarry came into the beam of a flashlight Ian was into a new species.



The author with a *Brachyplatystoma* sp.

If the fish was landed on deck Ian would be in the lead in the species list competition as the focus remained on landing the *Brachyplatystoma* sp, my rod bent and it was 'game on' as Ian's fish was being taken from the water and mine was following it, we both stood on the deck holding these beauties Ian reckoned on them being at least a \$500 fish if they were in an aquarium store.



Ian displaying the caudal filament of *Brachyplatystoma* sp.

The colour and condition of these fish was far better than any fish I've seen in any aquarium. The crew were very keen to make sure we landed these fish but said they were not that good to eat, so to help us they would have them!



Ian with his *Brachyplatystoma* sp.

Photo's taken they went with Danielo, our chef, to the freezer in the galley.



The author and Ian with their brace of *Brachyplatystoma* sp.

We did not catch anymore *Brachyplatystoma* sp that evening. Next day Ian and I stayed on board the boat while everyone but Danielo went off in the skiff to see what they could net.

Ian and I were fishing, leaving the rods propped against the rail and passing time talking when Ian said "you've got one there", my rod started to bend, Ian looked for a net to land the catch, they were all in the skiff, I managed to bring the fish, another *Brachyplatystoma* sp, to the surface.

Ian went down to the galley window there was no way to get near enough to bring the fish on board Danielo came to our assistance, on shore one of the kayaks was beached next to the boat, no paddles where were the paddles?

Danielo jumped into the kayak and hand paddled around the boat easing his way to where I was holding the fish's head out of water he managed to pick up the fish putting it into the kayak and makes his way back to the shore.

This whole exercise was quite risky because of the strength of the current in these tributaries is not to be underestimated again fish photographed and taken to the freezer.



Ian admiring the largest of the *Brachyplatystoma* sp.

### The great piranha contest

Ian and I were at the front of the boat using the cabin as a shade from the afternoon sun. We were fishing in close to the boat and intermittently pulling the odd small piranha out but we were mainly feeding the fish.

Above us in the wheel room the crew were watching our antics they must of got frustrated watching us because Emerson brought out an old broken rod, probably one left over from previous fishing expeditions, a large piece of meat, much larger than we were using, and a good size piece of lead.

Emerson made his first cast, a bite the line went taught and he was pulling out a very good sized piranha which tuned our heads, Danny came to the front of the boat and saw the catch, Ian and I changed our tackle following the locals 'big is best'.

While we were getting ready Emerson was pulling in large piranha after large piranha, each fish went into the wash basin in the dining room.

Finally I was ready to cast. There was a stretch of river in front of me that showed signs of hiding a hollow of deeper water, my plan was to cast beyond the hollow and let the bait drift in.

The cast was executed to perfection, if it had not been for the branch of the bloody great tree in front of me Slap, the bait hit the branch and stayed there, oh how the crew laughed, a few deft, or should I say

desperate, manoeuvres with the rod and the tree released its grasp, plop! time to rewind and try again.

Second time was much better, missed the tree altogether and the bait followed the flow into the hollow with a slap the line went taught, I've got a piranha I thought but when it came out of the depths it was not a piranha, far too thin, it was a cichlid, a nice sized pike cichlid with a beautiful green sheen.

Further casts did not bring in any additional cichlids only more piranha. At the back of the boat Danny had the deck to himself. He followed Emerson's method and hooked a monster it took the line downstream and the fight was on.

Danny was pulling as much as he dare before releasing a reeling in the slack line eventually the fish broke the surface, wow this was the 'daddy' of the piranhas we landed that day, it even seemed to impress the crew.



Josh in the battle against the mozzies



Dinner in waiting

All these piranha were sent to the galley and a day later Danielo had cleaved the fish in two, cooked and served them for our evening meal, nice flesh shame about the bones.

After a couple of nights in a Hotel in Iquitos a look around the exporters we were back on the boat for the next stage of the fishing contest.

This, our second week, was a trip up river with a target of getting onto the Rio Tigre while sampling the tributaries on the way into white water area where the mosquitoes were far more abundant we were joined by another fisherman this week Josh who was well prepared for the challenge head to toe in protective clothing screen over his hat that draped down over his face he was not going to get bitten.

It would not be fair to include Josh in the contest as he had missed the first week, but he maintained a like for like count during the week he was on the river increasing the numbers of specimens but not species. Josh did take the record for the largest *Pinirampus pinirampu*.

### The one that got away

Ian's rod bent under the strain of the taught line "it's only 6lb line!" Ian expounded as he struck on the bites that had been worrying the bait. This was no ordinary fish, nor was it the bottom, or drift wood that we had caught many times before.

After some time trying to raise the beast it began to move. Ian let out some line hoping to tire the beast and reel it in, then it turned and came back towards the boat. By this time Ian had the deck to himself no other rods in the way it was man verses the beast! Reeling in the slack line Ian realised the next problem if it went under the boat it would stand a better chance of breaking the line and escaping.

The fish came closer and closer until it went under the boat. Ping! the line went slack and it was over, it was the one that got away!

### One to miss

Ian won the contest by one species. One catfish that I was glad to miss out on. It was the very first fish I caught back in 1998 and have tried to avoid ever since. My fish took the hook right in so I tried to use a disgorger pushing it into the open mouth which it grasped and tried to eat, the slime was everywhere making it harder to hold to release the hook. The story ended with the fish becoming bait, a bait that nothing would touch that evening.

Nature's wonderful evolution has adapted the *Cetopsis* to a niche that serves it well but I try to avoid them at all times and now Ian knows why.





*Cetopsis* sp.



The business end to the *Cetopsis*



I hope you enjoyed this review of our fishing contest it is a pre amble to more 'tales from the river bank' that will be appearing in future editions of CATCHAT.

Thanks to Ian and Danny for the photos in this article and their companionship on this trip.

# AQUALIFE

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## What's New

### Mark Walters

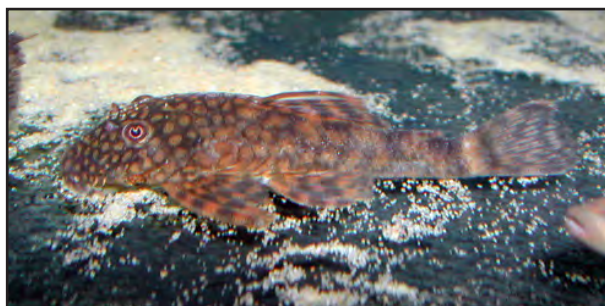
There have been numerous sightings of new and unusual catfish over the last few months. The convention brought top breeders together to exchange tank bred fish including: *Corydoras parallelus*, *C. boesmani*, *C. gracilis*, *C. eques*, C09, CW049, CW051, CW052, *Hemiancistrus snethlagae*, *Pseudacanthicus* L065, *Panaqolus* L397 and *Hypancistrus* L136 to name a few.

The opportunity to visit some of the convention sponsors, including Aqualife in Leyland and Pier Aquatics in Wigan, yielded more great fish including *Scleromystax* sp. C113, *S. lacerdai*, *S. kronei*, *S. barbatus*, *Corydoras ornatus*, C133, *Hisonotus aky*, *Ancistrus* sp. Rio Paraguay, *Centromochlus schultzi*, *Peckoltia brevis*, *Leporacanthicus* L240, L. sp. L263 and L. sp. L091. Relaxation over the export of fishes from Brazil has meant appearances for some old favourites including *Pseudacanthicus* sp L025, and L273, *P. leopardus*, *P. spinosus*, *Hypancistrus* L333 and L260. A few blue-eyed Panaque have been seen also.

#### Some of the amazing catfish on offer at Pier Aquatics – All images by Steven Grant



*Pseudacanthicus spinosus*



*Ancistrus* sp. Rio Paraguay



*Pseudacanthicus* sp. L273



*Hypostomus luteus*



*Leporacanthicus* sp. L263



*Hisonotus aky*



*Centromochlus schultzi*

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## New Descriptions

### Ecuadorian Suckermouth Catfish

A new species of Loricariid catfish, akin to *Chaetostoma*, has been described. *Cordylancistrus santarosensis* is described based on five specimens from the Río Santa Rosa, Ecuador. This species can be distinguished from all other members of the *Chaetostoma* group by having plates on the tip of the snout (except for a central region at the extreme anterior edge), but lacking plates laterally on the head. This snout plating condition is inter-mediate between the fully plated snout of other *Cordylancistrus* and the unplated snout of *Chaetostoma*.

It would be unlikely if we could ever see this fish in the hobby, considering the lack of collecting in the type locality.

Full details can be sourced in the paper: ***Cordylancistrus santarosensis* (Siluriformes: Loricariidae), a new species with unique snout deplation from the Río Santa Rosa, Ecuador** MILTON TAN1 & JONATHAN W. ARMBRUSTER1 *Zootaxa* 3243: 52–58 (2012)

### Discovery of new Erithistoides in Myanmar

The presence of the sisorid catfish genus *Erethistoides* in Myanmar, represented by three new species, is recorded for the first time. The discovery from the Irrawaddy and Sittang river drainages from central Myanmar and the Ann Chaung River drainage in western Myanmar extends the documented range of the genus beyond the Ganges/Brahmaputra River basin.

The three species are described as *Erethistoides longispinis*, *Erethistoides luteolus* and *Erethistoides vesculus*. Full details of the discovery can be found in the paper:

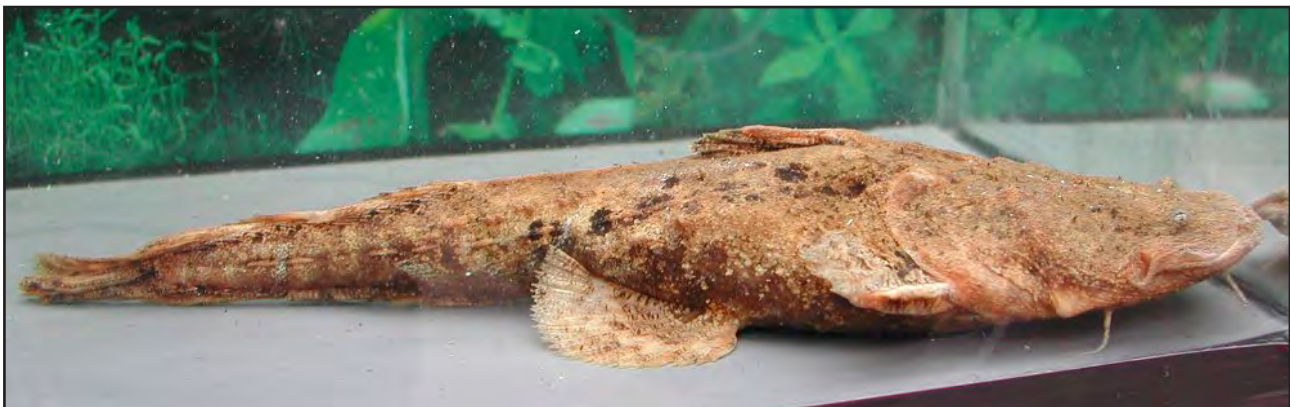
**The catfish genus *Erethistoides* (Siluriformes: Sisoridae) in Myanmar, with descriptions of three new species** HEOK HEE NG1, CARL J. FERRARIS, JR.2 & DAVID A. NEELY3 *Zootaxa* 3254: 55–68 (2012)

### New Frogmouth Catfish

A new species of frogmouth catfish *Chaca serica*, has been described from the Kahayan, Kapuas and Mentaya river drainages in southern Borneo. It can be distinguished from congeners (*C. chaca*, *C. bankanensis* and *C. burmensis*) from a number of morphological characteristics described fully in the paper.

If you want more details, refer to the full description in the following paper:

***Chaca serica*, a new species of frogmouth catfish (Teleostei: Siluriformes) from southern Borneo** HEOK HEE NG1 & MAURICE KOTTELAT2



*Chaca chaca* - The 'common' frog mouth catfish, Image by Steven Grant

## Dietary Requirements of Sucker Mouth Catfish

Ian Fuller



*Pseudacanthicus L025* – image by Steven Grant

The reason I felt this article needed to be written was the fact that on several occasions while visiting aquatic shops I have seen a variety of so called “Peco’s” labelled as “algae eaters” and with some of the species advertised as such now costing as much as £120 each. I did mention to one member of staff at one establishment that “Zebra Plecs” were not “good algae eaters” as they had advertised on the tank, only to be told to mind my own business. The fact here is that there are places where we buy our fish from where some members of the staff actually know very little about them and the advice they give can be totally opposite to what is actually required.



*Apistoloricaria ommation* - image by Mark Walters

The truth of the matter is they all have their own individual dietary needs and to lump them all into one category can be a fatal mistake both for the fish and your wallet. Some species have greatly exaggerated lower mouthparts, which are nothing to do with feeding, but are used in the breeding process to shield or even carry eggs.



*Parotocinclus maculicauda* - image by Mark Walters

It is a common misconception that all so called Pleco’s are vegetarians. They all belong to the family known as Loricariidae and all have a under slung sucker shaped mouth, the family consists of somewhere in the region of one hundred genera and because of their sucker shaped mouths, many people presume that it is used to attach themselves to objects so they can eat the algae there on.



Juvenile *Ancistrus cf. cirrhosus* - image by Mark Walters

To a certain degree all do consume some vegetable matter, but it comes as a by-product in the search for their preferred food. It is true to say that few are pure vegetarian; many are in fact omnivores eating

a variety of foodstuffs, which would include insect larvae, fruit, seeds, leaves as well as the zooplankton that lives in the biofilm that forms on the surface of all submerged objects. Then there are those that are classed as carnivore having a diet consisting of zooplankton, insect larvae, shrimps, snails, muscles as well as fish. The third group are probably the most specialised of all Loricariids and have a staple diet of soft wood.



*Sturisoma aureum* - image by Mark Walters

So how do we know which species eat which foods, the answer to that is with great difficulty? In recent years there has been an ever-growing interest in this group of fishes and a lot of knowledge has been gained and many articles have been written, but information on species natural diet is still very sparse.

With more than one hundred genera covering several hundreds of species, to list and cover every known Loricariid species would be impossible. The German Aquarium magazine Datz has published a special book called 'L-Numbers' which features L Number species up to L387, this is a list that is constantly growing. In this book there is a section covering the nutrition and diet of thirty-seven genera of loricariids.

Here I do not have the space or in fact the knowledge to cover more than a few of the more commonly encountered Pleco species. The most common of these has to be the humble "Bristle nose"; these belong to the family *Ancistrus* and get their common name from the soft tentacles that are present on the head, usually elongated and branched on males. In general they do not grow very large, 15 cm total length, however identifying the various species is another matter and something to discuss another day.

As for diet *Ancistrus* are quite easy to please and are relatively good aquarium algae controllers, especially the smaller juveniles. They will readily accept most of the commercially prepared flake, tablet, and granular foods as well as live or frozen insect larvae.



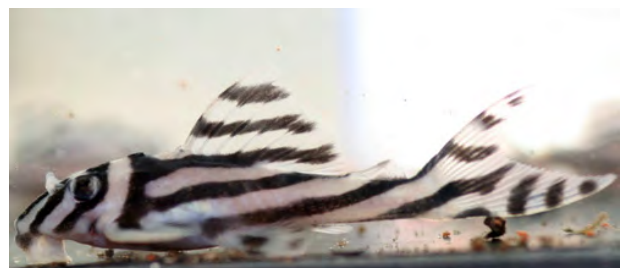
Adult male *Ancistrus* cf. *cirrhosus*, gold form - image by Mark Walters

They are also wood grazers and the addition of a piece of soft bogwood to their aquarium is a necessity.



*Ancistrus* sp. 4 - image by Mark Walters

Other genera that would fall into this category are *Acanthicus*, which grow considerably larger reaching up to 100 cm and are a fish for the experienced or specialist aquarist. *Peckoltia*, are similar in size to *Ancistrus*, but are a little more aggressive or should I say have a stronger character, if they want a space they take it no matter what, they also have more diverse colour patterns.



*Hypancistrus zebra* - image by Mark Walters

Moving on to wood eaters, there a quite a number of genera that fall into this category, including *Panaque*, *Panaeolus* and *Cochliodon* and many others with species that also have the ability and possible need to digest wood.



*Panaeolus maccus* - image by Mark Walters

They all require a supply of soft wood to sustain them, fortunately there has for many years been an adequate supply of soft bogwood within the aquarium trade. In more recent years other hard/petrified wood has been available, mainly for use as aquarium decoration and as far as I am aware is not suitable as a food source for loricariids.

Like *Acanthicus*, *Panaeolus* are reasonably large fish growing to 40 cm or more and are only really suitable for the dedicated specialist, *Panaeolus* being physically the smallest of the three, reaching sizes up to 15 cm and *Cochliodon* to around 30 cm.



*Panaeolus bathyphilus* – image by Steven Grant

When it comes to pure carnivores we are looking at *Loricaria*, commonly called “Whiptail Catfish”, reach moderate sizes up to 25 cm and require a diet containing insect larvae, zooplankton and shrimps.



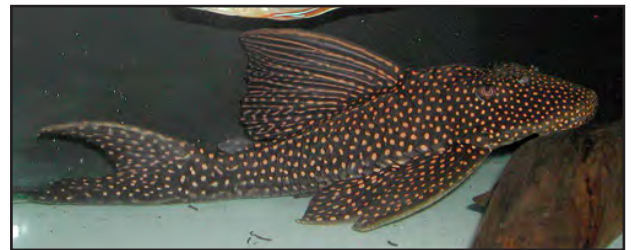
*Pseudacanthicus leopardus* – image by Steven Grant

Finally we come to the true herbivores contained in Genera not so commonly encountered in the hobby, *Harttia*, is possibly the largest at up to 35 cm with *Hopliancistrus* and *Lasiancistrus*, up to about 18 cm. Some species from these genera will again be fish that only the experienced aquarist should attempt to keep and none should be considered as the way to keep the algae in their aquarium at bay, they all need a vegetable based diet with the addition of insect larvae, zooplankton and soft wood.



*Lasiancistrus* cf. *caucanus* – image by Steven Grant

Up until now and not including the already aforementioned Bristle nose *Ancistrus* I have avoided the commonly available genera/species that are offered to us as tank cleaners/algae eaters, which in all honesty they are not, except when very small and young. The two most common of these are *Hypostomus*, which probably accounts for more than fifty percent of all the so call Pleco species imported into the hobby and has many species that can reach 30 cm or more. *Glyptoperichthys* are commonly known as Sail fin Plecos, with species in this group reaching 50 cm. The commonest and most frequently imported of this genus being *G. gibbiceps*. As I have already mentioned these are excellent algae eaters when young, but they grow very quickly and can soon outgrow the average aquarium.



*Hypostomus margaritifer* – image by Steven Grant

In the last few years many manufacturers have realised the popularity of sucker mouth catfish is continually growing and are now producing specialist ranges of foods to suit almost every requirement, from algae wafers to tablet and granulated pellets, all of which help to provide the right kind of nutrition, so with these, a variety of frozen insect larvae and a nice piece of bogwood our Plecos have never had it so good.

#### Note.

For the purpose of this article the genera and species I have referred to, follow Isbrücker 2001, Nomenclature of the 108 genera with 692 species of mailed catfishes, family Loricariidae Rafinesque, 1815 (Teleostei Ostariophysi)<sup>1</sup> However in a more recent paper by Armbruster 2004, Phylogenetic relationships of suckermouth armoured catfishes (Loricariidae) with an emphasis on the Hypostominae and Ancistrinae, generic changes have been made, which will take a quite a while to digest. So I am not going to try and explain these changes here, but to just say the species names will remain as they are, so your ‘*Gibbiceps*’ is still your ‘*Gibbiceps*’.

## A new arrival in the hobby

### *Rhamdella leptosoma* Fowler, 1914



*Rhamdella leptosoma*

image Ian Fuller

Fowler, first described this rarely seen in the hobby species of Heptapteridae, in 1914 the type locality being reported as the Rupununi River in British Guiana.

However in the middle of 2009 I received a small shipment of fishes from a colleague based in Leticia, Colombia. My colleague had personally collected many of the fish in the shipment and had the location details for all his catches, which were fairly local to Leticia. Included amongst the shipment were what at the time I thought were two distinctly new catfish species, well, to the hobby at least. One was most certainly a *Brachyrhamdia* species and resembled *Corydoras arcuatus* Elwin, 1939. The second species and the one I want to deal with here, looked to be a *Pimelodella* or closely related species and after much searching and delving into the archives of several museum records I came up with the name *Rhamdella leptosoma*, after further study of the available images of preserved specimens I concluded that this was the species I had.

I retained just two of the four specimens that arrived, they were in great condition and a reasonable size, or so I thought, according to the description, the holotype ? (ANSP39340-41) measures just 60.3 mm my two fish measured 58.0 mm SL. It was not very long before I realised the preserved fishes must surely be juvenile or at least very young adults. My two fishes were growing at an alarming rate and after just six months grown very well and had reached 95.0 mm SL. The real interesting factor that also emerged was that one of the two specimens had developed a greatly extended upper caudal lode and was generally slimmer; this I determined was a male. In the other fish the upper lode was the same length but broader than the lower lode, the body was also considerably plumper, which I thought was almost certainly a female.

By September 2010 both fish had continued to grow and had reached a standard length of 110.0 mm.

By September 2010 both fish had continued to grow and had reached a standard length of 110.0 mm. The male fish was exhibited at the CSG Open Show that year to see if any of the judges present could shed any light in its true identity. Unfortunately no one could, so I was left with the task of identifying it myself.

Since the show in September 2010 both specimens seemed to have stopped growing and were looking very close to a possible breeding, the female had become quite plump and was very agitated, but when I thought I was about to witness a possible spawning they contracted a viral infection and were lost, however although sad all was not lost, because a little later in the year (August 2011), I received larger batch of 60.0 mm SL. specimens in another shipment from Colombia. This time I have kept a group of six to grow on and monitor to see how they develop.

The one thing that may concerns me about being 100% certain of the species identity is the original type locality being so far from the Colombian border area where my specimens were collected. From the information received this species is fairly widespread in the Colombian/Brazilian border areas. Perhaps a little more research is needed to be certain. The large black dorsal blotch is certainly a major character as there are few known species in this group having this feature.

