

Livebearer News

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BRITISH LIVEBEARER ASSOCIATION



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A. polylepis Rio Potrero Grande by Kees De Jong's **Editorial** by Paddy Davies

I hope you all have enjoyed the summer, when many people are enjoying sitting outside in the evening by the side of their beautiful koi ponds, I hope our members are all sitting out next to their livebearer vats... as one of the area's in which livebearers are a bit different is that many species will enjoy a summer sojourn outside – even in the delightful weather we had during the summer of 2012, as Greg Roebucks article on Characodon audax explains.

On the downside, another long term livebearer breeder has decided to call it a day. Most of you will know Trevor Williams from various shows, auctions etc which he has supported over the

years, often as auctioneers, I have particularly fond memories of him trying to increase the price of pair of fish – only for him to end up going home with them.

This edition is a bit of a goodeid special, this is mainly because they have been taking up a lot of my time recently, so we have articles on keeping and breeding a *Ilyodon cortesae* and *Skiffia* sp. *Sayula* two species that could be considered good goodeids for beginners. Finally, I hope you all come to the Convention in Kettering on the 12th and 13th of October, I look forward to seeing you all.

I hope you all enjoy reading this edition, please do email your comments, suggestions and offers of articles (?) to me.

Paddyd99@gmail.com

Characodon audax - what I've learned

by Greg Roebuck

At the BLA auction last October (2012) I sold three pairs of *Characodon audax*. After the auction, Paddy, the editor of "Livebearer News", approached me. He asked me if I could write an article about *C. audax* for a future "News". Pleased with the results of the auction, I quickly agreed and only started to regret my decision when I got home

I have been keeping fish for thirty years but I'm not an expert. I don't have a hundred tanks of livebearers, like some members of the BLA, just a dozen tanks which contain mainly *goodeid* livebearers but also cichlids and bitterlings.

What could I write that hasn't already been written? There have been articles about *C. audax* in "Livebearer News" [Issue 18] and also in "Vivaparous" [Issue15], the magazine of the "Livebearer

Information Service". There was an article about *Characodon* In "Tropical Fish Hobbyist" which included a lot about *C. audax* as well. What could I add?

Well here goes.



C. audax don't like it too warm. O.K., this is true of many goodeids, but it seems to be especially true of *C. audax*. The first pair I bought, many years ago, were kept at 24°C. Although they bred, they didn't thrive and the line died out. I now keep *C. audax* in unheated tanks and although my fish-room is well insulated (thanks for the tip about using "Kingspan", Nigel) I don't space heat. The *audax* stopped breeding but continued to feed well even when the temperature stayed at 10 - 11°C for a couple of months during the past winter.

C. audax really do deserve their name "Bold characodon", staying out in the open and showing off.

They really enjoy live / frozen foods. The males develop their lovely salmon-pink sheen over their silver scales when fed bloodworm and brine shrimp.

C. audax do well outside. During the miserable summer of 2012 I introduced three pairs into a planted half-barrel outside my diningroom window. They thrived and bred in there. They basked at the surface on the rare occasions when the sun came out and were

still fine when I brought them back indoors when the temperature dropped to 7°C. [N.B. The filamentous algae from the half-barrel was devoured with gusto when put into a tank of *Ilyodon xantusi*.]

C. audax don't like to be crowded. There was too much aggression with more than three pairs in a 2' tank, and the smallest suffered.

You don't have to isolate a gravid female to guarantee young, but it helps.

The fry are much better off in a tank away from adults; they don't have to hide, get more food and grow much better.

The following is a revision of a paper published in June 1975 by prof. Hubert Halfshalf

A Treatise on the Nomenclature of Aquatic Environments.

We are encouraged to use scientific names for accurate identification. Common names can be misleading as they are open to different interpretation by different people. Use of regional terms can further confuse the matter. A prime example of this is something we all use – Water. There are many types of water, soft, hard, acid , alkaline fresh, sea and tonic. Below are suggested scientific names for the various forms of water.

Rain Water - Aqua Desendus

Tap Water - Aqua Domesticus

Sea Water - Aqua Undulatus

Cold Water - Aqua Icilulus

Hot Water - Aqua Urforitnowus

Aquarium Water - Aqua Varibilus

Pond Water - Aqua Murkia

Drinking Water - Aqua Guinnessi

Soft Water - Aqua Flabbius

Hard Water - Aqua Erectus

Spring Water - Aqua Tensus

Used Water - Aqua Urinus

Special Water - Aqua Brandyii

Tonic Water - Aqua Wherestheginus

I hope that in future discussions the above will be used and be of help.

Prof H. Halfschaft hoped that others would further his work. Please send your contributions to the Portslade Alcoholic Treatment Centre Sussex.⁶

The above was first published in the MSAS Newsletter June 1975.

Keeping Cortes' Splitfin, *Ilyodon Cortesae* By Paddy Davies

Introduction:

Ilyodon cortesae is a beautiful goodeid that is currently available in the UK hobby. It was only scientifically described in 2000 and is the most recently described Ilyodon.

Description:

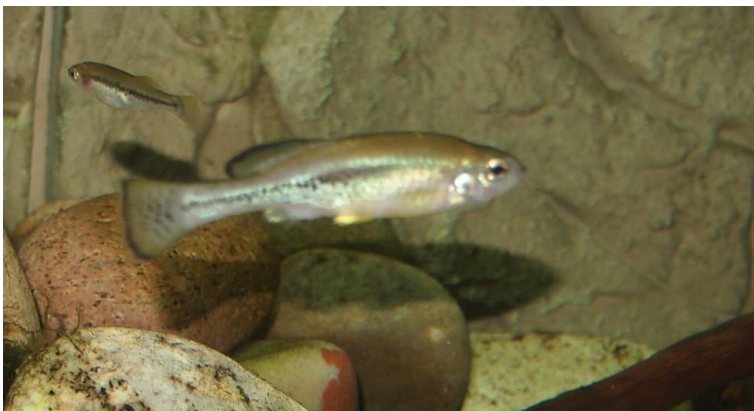
It is a medium sized species of goodeid, growing to about 3" this makes the smallest Ilyodon species and make it an ideal species for those who like them but don't have the space for the larger ones.

The natural habitat are small clearwater springs approx. 4 x6m in diameter and 1 metre deep, the substrate is sand and gravel, plants are *Potamogen sp* (basically a standard oxygenator type of plant) and filamentous algae (good old blanketweed) The pH is 7.5 and about 20 degrees C. It shares this environment with a Mexican shiner *Notropis boucardi*.

UK History:

It has been in the UK hobby for a few years, I first saw some in Dai Jones fishroom in about 2008 I think, and was always tempted but never had the space, also I think I was put off them by the size of the bigger *Ilyodon's*, not realising it was smaller at that time. I finally acquired some from Gary Randall in Summer 2012, and I realised I have been missing out on a cracking fish for years.

This is a very colourful species that has to be seen in the flesh to truly appreciate, the body is silvery with a slight gold/silver shiny overlaying effect, they have small dark chocolate spots on the body, which are denser at the rear of the fish, the fins are yellow with spots, the dorsal and caudal fins have a black edging to them. The pelvic fins are brighter than the others and catch the eye very nicely indeed, not a dull Mexican puddlefish!



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This species is being bred by a few people in

the uk, but it is in need of more captive breeding, according to the Goodeid working group website it has been found in three nearby locations in the Tacámbaro River drainage in the upper Balsas River basin, the population in captivity is from Cutzaróndiro spring.

There is a little bit of concern that it is a population of *I. whitei* and not a separate species, despite this it should be maintained as a pure population and should be passed on as *I. cortesae* with the correct location details until such time as this is resolved.

Keeping and Maintenance:

In the aquarium this species is very forgiving in almost all respects, it can be kept and bred in a variety of set ups, this is fantastic as it is a fish that will suit most keepers.

The following is a short section on set ups I have used for this species.

Set up 1: Clinical set up:

Size; 24x 12x15 for a small group of 5 adults.

While not a massive fan off this type of environment, sometimes they prove easiest to maintain, especially when raising fry as you can easily syphon off waste from the floor of the aquarium and observe the health of the fish easily. This species certainly is one of those that will thrive in this type of set up. At its most basic it can be a bare aquarium with a filter although many people will add a thin layer of substrate and cover the back and sides to offer more privacy, I do not feel this is required with this species. This aquarium is maintained at room temperature (18-20 degrees C), lighting is via a single T5 bulb on for 10 hours a day, this helps to

provide some algae growth, although this is not really the filamentous type that they would encounter in the wild.

Set up 2; Display Aquarium:

60" x 24 x 18"

This is a fairly basic low energy planted set up, consisting of a gravel substrate, pebble and some Amazon Swords, Cyptocorynes, anubias and crinum plants. Much prettier than the previous set up and with more space, which they seem to appreciate as they cruise about using all the open water areas of the tank. The advantage of this tank is mainly aesthetic as the lighting in this aquarium brings out the colours. This disadvantage in this set up is in removing gravid females, this is required as this aquarium contains other species that may eat the fry. The temperature in this set up is a little higher at 24 degrees C as I have some tropical species with them, this does not appear to have had any ill effects, I may consider cooling them down in the winter, as prolonged exposure to high temperatures can

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stop breeding success with a number of goodeid species. **8 Biotope Set up:**

I would love to try a biotope set up for this species, something along the following lines would be great:

Aquarium 120cm x 18cm x 15cm

Substrate: Aquarium Sand, and mixed grades of natural aquarium gravel.

Fish:

8 x *Ilyodon cortesae* a ration of 3:5 would be great, although the males are not too hard on the females in my experience.

6 x *Notropis chysanotus* – Rainbow shiners – this North American species is available in the UK and would be a great substitute for the Mexican shiner it is found with.

Temp; 18-22

Planting: *Potamogeton natans* (easily available from pond plant suppliers)

Breeding:

Again, very straight forward – gestation is approx 8 weeks and the babies are pretty large when born about 8mm or so. A perfect species for flock breeding, they very rarely eat their own babies even in a bare tank, however I do tend to remove the female when giving birth to maximise fry survival and avoid her being too harassed, although again this is not a massive problem in this species. After birth I place the female back in the main colony tank immediately.

Summary:

- Fairly peaceful, avoid keeping with slow moving fish with long fins
- Very flexible in terms of water parameters and size of aquarium
- Simple to breed
- Incredibly pretty
- Aquarium populations are not hybridised
- In need of captive breeding

A truly great Goodeid for both the experienced keeper and the beginner, this species should be made more available to all.

If you would like to obtain stocks of this species, please contact either myself or Nigel Hunter

I would like to thank the Goodeid Working Group for their help in supplying extra information for this article.



G.W.G. 2012



GWG 2012

By Nigel Hunters

In September 2012 I attended the 3rd Goodeid Working Group meeting in Vienna's [Haus des Meeres](#) , so I found a hotel close by and had a short city break in Vienna
After a couple of days exploring it was time to meet up for the start of a great weekend



We met on the steps of University of Vienna at 18.00 hrs and then the adventure began Michael Koeck our host very bravely led a group of foreigners across Vienna on foot then on the underground then finally onto a bus taking us far from the city ending up at a famous Austrian tavern, the [Mayer am Pfarrplatz](#).



It is a so called "[Heuriger](#)", situated in [Grinzing](#), a very old part of the 19th district. This Heuriger is located in the historical "[Beethovenhaus](#)", where [Ludwig van Beethoven](#) lived during summer 1817. The [vineyard](#) Mayer is pressing one of the best Austrian wines and is serving it in its tavern. Everyone made it there and back to our respective hotels without a problem

Saturday morning we all arrived at the [Haus des Meeres](#) for the main event after greeting was over we had our first talk from

[Juan Miguel Artigas Azas](#). The famous appreciator of Mexican habitats talked about the easternmost habitats of Goodeids this was followed by [Shawn Goodchild](#) from the North Dakota State University is studying the genera *Crenichthys* and *Empetrichthys* for more than a decade now. As a specialist on the only known egg-laying Goodeids, he gave us a profound overview, shared with us his latest scientific results and answered our

questions concerning these - for Europeans - quite unknown but desired genera.

Lunch break was for the best [Wiener Schnitzels](#) in Vienna, and - I have to confess - the biggest ones

Next was [Diushi K'eri Corona Santiago](#). Studying at the university of Morelia, the young scientist is a specialist on the genus *Allotoca*. As the genera *Allotoca* and *Neophorus* are often neglected in breeding programs and maintained very rarely, Diushi shed some light into their lifehistory, systematics, threats and maintainancy of

these quite unknown, but extremely endangered taxonomical unit within the Goodeid family.

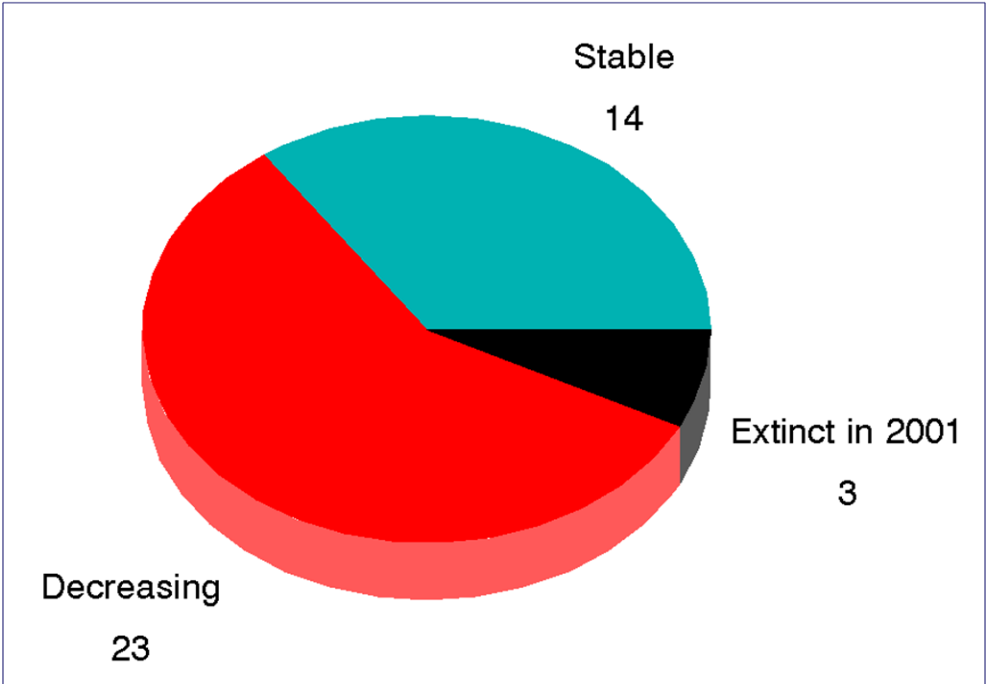
And finally we had a double act from John Lyons and Kyle Piller

John Lyons His Goodeid conservationstatus and trend-table is legendary, and a very important instrument in recognition of threats in Goodeids. His talking point was: "Will Mexican Goodeids survive the 21st century? The alarming decline and precarious future of wild goodeid populations in Mexico."

Kyle Piller is an US-Goodeid-top-phylogenetic and presented "Phylogeography and population structure of the imperiled Redtail Splitfin, *Xenotoca eiseni*, implications for conservation". As both speeches were somehow interwoven, these 2 top-speakers combined their talks.

We also had the Mexican ambassador pay us a visit and see why and what we were doing with the Goodeids.

The outcome is that the Goodeids are in worse peril than we thought with many populations already lost, so the need for captive breeding and supporting the Fish ark project is more important than Ever.



The evening finished with another night of food and drink at a small brewery [Stiegl Ambulanz](#) on the campus of the [old AKH](#), the area of the former Vienna hospital.

Sunday morning we met at the entrance to [Vienna Zoo](#).

We were met by a member of their staff who gave us a guided tour backstage at the aquarium where they have a large Aphanis (another fish that is in need of protection) breeding programme.



The backstage area was bigger than the display area and breeding of many species are undertaken showing the commitment to conservation.

The rest of the day was spent strolling through one of the oldest zoos in the world with lunch in the



[Tirolergarten tavern](#) a traditional Tyrolean farmhouse from the 1700's that was dismantled and reassembled in the zoo grounds.

The weather and company were great and it made for a very special meeting , bring on the GWG 4th meeting in the Netherlands 2013 held in Asperen.

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All views expressed herein are the opinions of the contributor and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the BLA.

The print date for the next issue is 18th October 2013, could all contributors please ensure that articles are provided to the Editor by the 11th of October 2013.

Fancy Guppies UK
International Guppy Show and European
Championship (pairs)

&

British Livebearer Association

Autumn Convention



10th October 2013- 13th October 2013

(Thursday-Sunday)

Saturday will have the guppy display open to the public and a day of lectures.

Sunday will include the auction of wild type livebearers, and the auction of the guppy show entries

**Best Western
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Northants
NN16 0AN**



5 minutes walk from the mainline railway station,
easy access to the A14 and airports.
For further details and booking arrangements contact
Stephen.elliott1@virgin.net

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Keeping *Skiffia* sp. *Sayula* By Paddy Davies

Introduction:

This fish was originally collected in 2007 in the Sayula Valley, Jalisco state, Western Mexico. It is superficially very similar to the better known species *Skiffia francesae*. *S.francesae* is considered extinct in the wild, unfortunately it seems that this *Skiffia* sp. *Sayula* is also now extinct in the wild as an investigation by Omar Dominguez in 2011., reported that the habitat was dried out and no fish could be found.

This is increasingly the main threat for goodeids, the natural spring systems that the live in are used for irrigation and general needs of the local population, as the demand for water increases so does the risk of entire habitats drying out.

Some people have speculated that both *S.francesae* and *S.sp sayula* are the same species from different populations, but it is unclear whether this is the case or not. This uncertainty means that these populations must be kept separate from each other, to the extent that several people I have spoken to will not keep the two, to avoid any risk of confusion.

Description:

Males are bright gold with some greyish speckling on the body, breeding males show grey borders to the fins. Females and juveniles are more greyish with black speckling, The fins are clear and the base of the caudal peduncle has got a small black crescent.

UK History:

As far as I can gather the first import into the UK was in 2009, originally it was with a bit of trepidation that people took on this species as *Skiffia francescae* was not always very easy to establish new colonies with. However, this one was

different, and very quickly several breeders were offering this fish at specialist auctions with prices very quickly coming down from £30 + for a pair to less than £10.

This means it is currently available to all who wish to try it, but we may need to be cautious as a fish that is cheap sometimes gets thought of as common, this is not the case with this species and if one of two people stopped working with this species it could be lost to the UK within a couple of years (this is happening with *Allotoca zacapuensis* at the moment)

Keeping and Maintenance:

Due to the rarity of this fish it is best to try to actively breed this fish rather than as a general community fish, although it would probably be easy to keep with other species in a suitably cool tank with peaceful species.

I have sometimes kept it with other livebearers when growing up babies or waiting for fish to mature, occasionally I keep them with *Corydoras* catfish and a few other species. The important thing is that other species must not be too aggressive, predatory or pose the risk of interbreeding. Providing you can ensure this, they may be mixed with others, although pregnant females will probably need to be removed before they give birth, in order to give the fry a chance of surviving, even *Corydoras* have been known to eat *Goodeid* fry!

General set up:

Being a small species they can be kept in tanks from 45 litres successfully. If you are intending on keeping a self breeding colony I would recommend a tank of 60-100 liters to be able to maintain a decent number of adults and fry together while maintaining stable water conditions.

Water conditions are quite easy to provide, ammonia 0 nitrite 0 and nitrate less than 50ppm (ideally less, but my tap water is 40ppm and I have had no problems with higher levels) the water should be cool, anywhere from 16-24 degrees is fine, these species is probably not quite as cold hardy as some *Goodeids* however, so do not feel you have to go to extremes to ensure they are cool, in the summer my *Sayula* tanks have been known to go to 28 degrees for short periods with no issues (although long periods of high temps may lead to breeding being stopped. I generally keep them without heat, using ambient room temperature, if concerned use a heater set to it's lowest setting.

Filtration options are many and varied, I currently use internal power filters at the moment, these are great as long as they are not too powerful, previously I have used several different types of air powered sponge filters, all with success. I

have found that while not as sensitive as some Goodeids, this species does benefit from regular water changes, I have had several regimes in the past, from monthly to every two days, at the moment they get weekly 25 percent changes and the fish seem bright lively and growth rate is good. I use tap water with a dechlorinator

Breeding:

When first establishing my colony from a single pair, I removed the male from the tank so the female could give birth in peace, after birth I put the female back in with the male, I do this as it seems that many female goodeids are more receptive shortly after giving birth, this should only be done if the female is strong enough to withstand the males attention.

As mentioned, this species will colony breed and the parents will not normally eat the fry, to be on the safe side I removed the parents with the first batch of fry and grew them on for 3 weeks before introducing them again, since this the colony has thrived and new fry are not eaten.

Gestation period is approximately 8 weeks, in my experience this is one of the easiest goodeids in which to spot when the females are ready to give birth. The females get visibly bigger in girth and they square off when getting close, sometimes they seem to hold on for ages, just be patient and they will drop. Young females Average broods number about 20 fry.

Male and Female photo P..Davies



Summary:

Fortunately this species is relatively easy to maintain in captivity, with many keepers considering it to be easier than other *Skiffia* species.

This is a beautiful and interesting species to keep in its own right, a great fish to keep if your only experience with goodeids has been with the often brutish Orange Tailed Goodeid (*X.eiseni*), like most goodeids it prefers cool water and is best maintained at room temperature, meaning the cost of keeping is low, and as it is a colony breeding species, you can make a contribution to the conservation of this species with a single 60cm tank.

Currently the population is healthy in the UK and Europe, however complacency is our biggest risk, as it is very easy to forget how rare it is and that we must do everything to preserve stocks, even if it appears common in the hobby as it is irreplaceable. Eventually captive bred stocks may be used in re-introduction programmes.

If you would like to obtain stocks of this species, please contact either myself or Nigel Hunter.

I would like to thank the Goodeid Working Group for their help in supplying extra information for this article.



Members sales and wanted:

Greg Roebuck:

Wanted Fish:

Ataniobius toweri Rio Verde females wanted

Allotoca zacapuensis – Males wanted

Email; gjrsrr12@googlemail.com

Clive Hawkins, Bristol:

Available fish:

Poeciliopsis gracilis media luna,

Xiphophorus helleri 'Golden Stream, Belize'

Ameca splendens Wild

Guppies **Wanted:**

Pair or Trio *Phallichthys amates amates*

male *Brachyrhaphis terrabensis* Pair or

Trio *Belesonox belizianus* Pair or Trio

Xiphophorus nezahuacotyl pair or trio

Xiphophorus variatus pair or trio

Xiphophorus maculatus

Email: clivehawkins52@yahoo.co.uk or mobile 07900218170 home 01179638478

Clive Walker:

Available fish:

Ilyodon xantusi, *I. Whitei*, *Chapalichthys pardalis*, *Xenotoca Vairiata* (Marie San Loais Potosi) *Xiphohorus cortezi*, Wild type Guppies

Email: clivewalker076@gmail.com or call 07780 996557.

Alan Dunne:

Available fish:

:Skiffia sp Sayula £5 sexed pair's or 6 fry

Xenotoca variata £8 sexed pair's

Girardinichthys viviparus £10 sexed pair's

Email: alan@livingfish.co.uk

07966581811

Collection from Bournemouth (BH10)

Delivery £14 (upto 2kg)

Paddy Davies

Available;

Chapalichthys peraticus – Group of 6 fry **Wanted:**

Any Brachyraphis species

Paddyd99@gmail.com



Neotoca bilineata

2007
Rio Querendaro

Female

Kees de Jong's