

Livebearer News

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BRITISH LIVEBEARER ASSOCIATION



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Editorial

Welcome to issue 45 of "Livebearer News". Paddy has been very busy with work recently and so I volunteered to help to produce this issue. Every editor of every hobby magazine that I have seen has always issued a plea for articles from his/her readers – and I am no exception. Please send me any articles that you can about species that you keep or would like to keep; visits made or expeditions to collect fish in the field. If

you want to send me articles on paper I will type them up or if you want to email anything to me my email address is at the back of this issue. I hope you enjoy this issue and any feedback that you can send will be gratefully received.

Report on the 2015 BLA Autumn Convention

The BLA's 2015 autumn convention was held on 10th/11th October in Kettering, in conjunction with Fancy Guppies UK's round of the 2015 Guppy League. On the Saturday there were five lectures. Dave McAlister talked about the design of his fish-house and his (considerable) experiences in keeping livebearers; Nigel Hunter talked about keeping livebearing fish outdoors; Paul Stewart gave a report on the World Guppy Championship in Florida and Dr David Pool gave two lectures. His first, "What is wrong with my fish?", on fish diseases and their prevention and the second on fish nutrition and health, with a Q & A session. The BLA would like to thank all four speakers. The annual awards dinner was held on the Saturday evening.

I could only attend on the Sunday. I do not keep guppies but I could not fail to be impressed by the guppies that were in the show. They were stunning examples of the breeder's art. I must admit that I was tempted to bid for a pair or two and try to make room in my tanks when I got home. Some of the prize-winning pairs fetched high prices in the auction but other pairs, equally attractive to my eyes, went for just £3 a pair.

There were real bargains to be had in the BLA's section of the auction also. There were several species sold that I had never seen before, e.g. *Scolichthys greenwayi*, *Scolichthys iota* and *Goodea atripinnis*. Also sold were several of the rarer *Xiphophorus*, a *Brachyraphis* species, a *Poeciopsis* species, *Phaloceros caudimaculatus*, *Girardinus uninotatus* and *Heterandria Formosa*. One bag of thirteen of this last species went for the equivalent of 30p a fish. Some very nice *Characodon audax* went for very reasonable prices while a couple of pairs of *Characodon lateralis* went for much higher prices. I could have filled all my tanks over again but restricted myself to a couple of pairs of *Skiffia multipunctata*.

Next Event

The next BLA event will be an auction in late March of 2016. The venue has yet to be finalised, but will probably be in South Yorkshire.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are now due for 2016.

E-member - UK or Overseas £12.00 To receive Magazines by e-mail only

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Subs can be paid using Paypal via the BLA website or if you prefer to pay by cheque, please send the requisite amount to the BLA treasurer :-

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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.

Snippets – 1 :- *Girardinichthys viviparous*

A pair of *Girardinichthys viviparous* were in the 2013 auction in Kettering. It was never my intention to bid for them, due to their reputation as being difficult to keep [See “Livebearer News” , Issue 43, page 17], but no-one else wanted them and I acquired them for just £3. The pair sulked for months in their new home but eventually the female dropped a brood of 1 male and 4 females; she died soon after. Since then I have slowly built up a group of the species and split them between four tanks, bearing their reputation in mind. All broods have had a marked sex imbalance; two or three females to every male. I thought this was due to either the temperature or hardness/pH of the water. However, searching the internet, I found a research paper : “Occurrence of the fish *Girardinichthys viviparous* (Cyprinidontiformes : Goodeidae) in an urban lake in Mexico City”, by J.L. Gómez-Márquez et al, which stated a sex ration in the lake of 2.38 females to every male. It looks like the sex imbalance is just nature and not my fault.

Snippets – 2 :- *Skiffia “V188 sayula”*

What is the identity of *Skiffia “V188 sayula”*? They look very similar to *Skiffia multipunctata* but genetically they are much closer to *Skiffia francesae* (info from Nigel Hunter). I have kept both *V188 sayula* and *francesae* and found them to be like chalk and cheese. The *francesae* were always very shy and hid whenever I was in my fish-room, but the *V188 sayula* are bold and don't mind me moving in front of their tank. The

francesae were never very prolific, dropping few fry at large intervals and preying on any fry that were dropped. The V188 *sayula* are some of the most prolific Goodeids I have ever kept, never predated their fry, and I had to euthanize dozens earlier this year. *Francesae* seem to need hard water but V188 *sayula* thrive in my normal tap water [10° hardness] or when used as dither fish for my West African cichlids at 0° hardness. If anyone can enlighten me as to the true identity of *Skiffia* V188 *sayula* I will be grateful.

Czech Visit By Paddy Davies

This is a continuation of the article that I wrote for the last issue.
On we continued, looking in basements for amazing fish...

After lunch at a great Mexican restaurant, during which the exporter went through the list of available fish with us, drawing our attention to those that were particularly good that week.

The attention to detail and the genuine care for the fish was very apparent, especially as he explained that some species of Tanganyika cichlids were not available that week – the reason being that the breeder was going on holiday and would have to bag up the fish a day earlier than normal, he thought this was unacceptable, so his fish were not on offer.

The next breeder was Radek, a specialist in just a few species, mainly Cardinals, neons, serpae tetras, cherry barbs and a few corydoras. While he may specialise on only a few



fish, his set up was immaculate, spotlessly clean and a really pleasant space to set down in and relax.

In the photo's below and on the next page you can see his set up, this was housed in the basement of a residential block of flats.

Like most breeders here, all filtration was via basic sponge filters or Hamburger Matten variations.



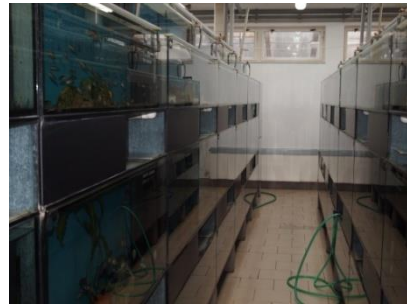


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The Final Breeder was Hynek of HD Cichlids. This is the biggest breeder by far and a serious commercial set up with hundreds of tanks. Hynek does employ some staff to clean the tanks, but he is still the main person involved here. It is filled with several hundred tanks and while it may bore the pants off a dedicated livebearer-ista, it is an awe inspiring set up, full of ideas for the next fish house!



Pseudotropheus demasoni





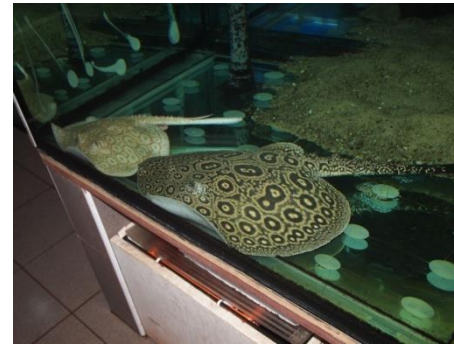
Tropheops sp mauve

Pseudotropheus saulosi

Altolamprologus calvus 'White Chitika'



Labidochromis sp mbweca



This set up mostly consists of Rift lake cichlids, but also a few very special other fish including zebra plecs, albino stingrays and some marine species

We were due to go to a goodeid breeder as our last stop, but unfortunately the car broke down. In order to keep our flight we had to get a train back into Prague and missed this appointment. I hope you enjoyed this article despite the lack of livebearers.



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Gambusia regani HUBBS, 1926

N.B. This article first appeared in issue 22 of "Viviparous", the magazine of the Livebearer Information Service, in 1993 and is reproduced here with the kind permission of Pat Lambert.

Family :- Poeciliidae GARMAN, 1895

Synonyms :- None.

Common Name :- Regan's mosquitofish

Range :- Rio Panuco system, Atlantic drainage of Mexico. The type locality was the Rio Forlon, Forlon, Tamaulipas state, Mexico. In this area the fish are usually found in swampy marshes and small inlets rather than in the main current.

Dorsal Fin Ray Count :- 7

Size :- Males 3cm; Females 4cm

Introduction to the U.K. :- First imported to Europe by Dr Radda in 1979. It was later imported to the U.K. by Ivan Dibble and has since become well established. However, it has never had the popularity it deserves because people have assumed it is aggressive because it is a Gambusia species.

Description :- The fish pictured is a mature female from the Rio Forlon population.

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Males of this species have a very slender body, pale yellow in colouration, with a strong lateral stripe running from the eye to the caudal peduncle. The gonopodium is relatively small.

The fins are pale yellow becoming grey towards the edges. There are a few black spots in all the fins which are often arranged in rows.

Females have a somewhat more robust body shape but it is still slender for a Gambusia species. The body colouration is similar to the males and an iridescent sheen suffuses the body, particularly near the lateral stripe, when the fish is in good condition.

Temperament and Care :- This is a peaceful species of Gambusia which can be kept with other fish of a similar size. They prefer a well planted tank but will live happily in a bare aquarium. They adapt well to most water temperatures but 75°F [24°C] seems to suit them best. Whilst most Gambusia

are primarily carnivorous this species does well on a mixed diet of live, flake and vegetable foods.

Fry are born on a monthly cycle and broods are quite small with only 10 fry being the average. However, the fry are large at birth. The babies eat all foods, but do best on live baby brine shrimp fed at least twice a day. If well fed they will be sexually mature at only 3 months old and will be full grown by 8 months. This is a fairly short lived species which should be bred whilst still young.

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Gambusia regain

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Xiphophorus pygmaeus HUBBS & GORDON, 1943

N.B. This article first appeared in issue 27 of "Viviparous", the magazine of the Livebearer Information Service and is reproduced here with the kind permission of Pat Lambert.

Family :- Poeciliidae, GARMAN, 1895

Synonyms :- Xiphophorus pygmaeus pygmaeus ROSEN, 1960.

Range :- Rio Axtla system, Rio Panuco drainage, San Luis Potosi state, Mexico. This species is most abundant in the Rio Huichihuayan, less common in the lower 9km of the Rio Tancuilin and upper 5 km of the Rio Axtla; absent elsewhere.

Common Name :- Slender Pygmy Swordtail.

Size :- Males 3cm, Females 4cm

Introduction to the U.K. :- This species was first introduced to the U.K. in the late 1970s when it was widely distributed by Dave Cheswright. Unfortunately this strain died out in the U.K. by the early 1980s and had to be re-imported from Germany in the late 1980s. The most common strain in the hobby today is the 1983 collection from the Rio Huichihuayan by the town of Huichihuayan. This collection has been selectively bred so that it breeds true for the gold form of this species. More recently the normal colour form of grey (sometimes called blue) has been distributed in the hobby.

Description :- The male pictured is a young male of the Gold form from Huichihuayan. This is a small slender species of swordtail in which most males develop only a very short sword of less than 2mm. However, rarely males with swords as long as 8mm have been found. A single dense mid-lateral stripe extends from the nose to the caudal peduncle. This is present at birth and is most noticeable on males before they become sexually active. As males of the gold form mature the yellow colouration becomes deeper and turns almost orange on well coloured specimens. Another colour form exists in which the males have a yellow caudal fin only and averages a slightly larger size than the other two colour forms. Females are greyish-brown with a white stomach and a black mid-lateral stripe similar to the males.

If in doubt about the identity of a female supposedly of this species, a close examination of the caudal peduncle should help in clarifying the situation. In the other pygmy swordtails this is deeper than in the Slender Pygmy Swordtail and in *Xiphophorus multilineatus* a dark vertical

marking may be present. This colouration is never present in *Xiphophorus pygmaeus*.

Temperament and Care :- This is a shy, timid species which needs to be in a species tank for best results. The aquarium should have heavy plant cover on the bottom and some cover at the surface where the young fry will spend much of their time. They will eat all small foods but live baby brine shrimp and sieved daphnia produces the quickest

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growth rates and largest broods. The aquarium needs regular water changes and some filtration but power filters should be avoided since these small fish find it difficult to fight against the strong current. In the wild they can be found in large rivers but are usually found in the quiet backwater areas with minimal water current.

Broods are born on a monthly cycle but only number up to 10 (usually 4 – 8). Providing the adults are well fed they will not harm the fry and the colony will soon build up to quite large numbers which will need thinning out on a regular basis. Since skewed sex ratios are quite common, it is wise to maintain your colony with at least 30 fish of varying age, preferably with a greater number of females than males.

Preventing hybrids :- It is essential to maintain all *Xiphophorus* species separate at all times.

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Xiphophorus pygmaeus HUBBS & GORDON, 1943

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