

CATCHAT

THE JOURNAL OF THE CATFISH STUDY GROUP



Preserving Catfish

Castleford Catfish Show and Auction

Spawning *Corydoras weitzmani*

Spawning *Peckoltia* L211

What's New

Corydoradinae triggers

Breeding Observations

Spawning *Corydoras* CW021

Will the true "Black" Cory please stand up

Otocinclus The ultimate algae control

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Confirmed Diary Dates – 2013

Date	Meeting	Details
September 15th	CSG Show and Auction	At Derwent Hall
October 20th	TBA	Darwen Valley Community Centre
November 17th	Autumn auction	At Derwent Hall
December 10th	Christmas meeting	Darwen Valley Community Centre

Monthly meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month except for the December meeting, which takes place on the second Sunday. Meetings start at 1.00 pm and are held at the

Darwen Valley Community Centre, Sudellside Street, Darwen, Lan’s BB3 3DL

Auctions, Open Show and Spring and Summer Lectures will be held at the

Derwent Hall, George Street, Darwen, BB3 0DQ.

The Annual Convention is held at

The Kilhey Court Hotel, Chorley Road, Standish, Wigan, WN1 2XN.

Contents

Editorial	2
From the Chair – Adrian Taylor.....	3
Castleford AS Catfish and Loach Show – Mark Walters.....	4
Spawning <i>Corydoras weitzmani</i> – Adrian Taylor.....	8
<i>Peckoltia</i> L211 – Mark Walters.....	9
Breeding Observations – Phil Taylor.....	16
Preserving Catfish – Mark Walters.....	18
Spawning <i>Corydoras CW021</i> – Adrian Taylor.....	20
Spawning Triggers – Mark Walters.....	22
What’s New? – Mark Walters	24
Will the true “Black” Cory please stand up – Ian Fuller.....	26
<i>Otocinclus</i> The ultimate algae control – Ian Fuller.....	27

Front cover – *Leporacanthicus* L240, National Catfish Champion 2013
Image by Mark Walters

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*Views expressed within the Journal are those of individual members and not necessarily
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Editorial

This summer we experienced the hottest temperatures in the U.K for 7 years, which presents us with a few challenges as fish-keepers. Whilst most of the population is basking in the heat, we are desperately trying to stabilize temperatures in the fish house, in an attempt to prevent the tank water to overheat and cause fish deaths.

It becomes even trickier when trying to maintain numerous species with quite differing temperature requirements. My cooler tanks, housing *Scleromystax* and Argentinian *Corydoras* species need to be kept below 23C; otherwise the fish start to suffer. I have managed to keep the water cool by keeping doors and windows open throughout the day, and even on some nights.

In addition I have been putting up to a gallon of ice in the tank on the hottest days. This approach seems to work fine and the fish get the benefit of regular cool water changes as the ice melts within 30 minutes. I keep 2 litre ice cream tubs of water in the bottom of the fish house freezer (which is also used for frozen fish food), and add the ice every couple of days.

I have also significantly increased aeration and removed internal power filters from these cooler tanks, the motor will raise the tank temp by a few degrees otherwise. The fluctuating temperatures have actually encouraged many of my *Scleromystax* groups to spawn.



Scleromystax macropterus – Image Mark Walters

Most other tanks' inhabitants enjoy the warmer conditions and ambient air temperature has remained around 28C. The recent storms and low pressure have triggered a few species to spawn including *Corydoras venezuelanus* and *Hypancistrus* L400. The 'Lower Xingu' *Hypancistrus* was a first for me, after I discovered a dozen 4 week old fish under some slates in the tank.



2 month old *Hypancistrus* L400



Subadult *Hypancistrus* L400

I've also had further spawnings of *Peckoltia* L211, a feature in this edition of Catchat.

Some exciting descriptions of catfish species have been announced since the last edition of Catchat. Corydoradinae descriptions seem to be few and far between, on average one every two years in recent times. The latest species (*Corydoras lyrnades*) to be presented looks to belong to the *C. paleatus* lineage and is close to *C. garbei* in appearance.

The second significant species (aquaristically at least) to be described is the dwarf *Panaque* we know as L204, or the 'flash panaque'. A member of the *Panaqolus* genus, it has been described as *P. albivermis*.

In addition to new descriptions, there have been imports of some uncommon species, including *Scleromystax macropterus*, not seen for general sale for over 10 years.

Our Chairman, Adrian Taylor, has put pen to paper and recorded his experiences breeding two beautiful *Corydoras* species which are not so often seen for sale these days. Plus we have a contribution from a longstanding CSG member, Phil Taylor who presents some of his experiences with a few *Corydoras* types.

Mark

From The Chair

During the last few months some of you may have been aware that certain 'Group' meetings have been cancelled for a variety of reasons or replaced with an alternative schedule of events. (as mentioned in the last edition of your Journal). In June, myself Ian Fuller and Brian Walsh were away in Norway flying the CSG flag, where Ian and Brian gave some excellent talks on catfish related subjects. It was nice to see that for the weekend some of the groups members from the North of England and Scotland had made the trip too, and I would like to thank all those in Norway whose generosity, hospitality and friendships made our stay so enjoyable and memorable. Special thanks goes to Morten Ask and his good lady Marte who made us all feel welcome and part of their family for the short time we were there. I even had time to go and have a paddle in a small mountain brook that fed quite a large lake that was home to a family of beavers.

For July it was decided that your club should show support for fellow tropical fish orientated societies – The British Cichlid Association and the Castleford A.S. Catfish and Loach Show and Auction. On the day of these events Ian Fuller and I travelled first to Standish in Lancashire for the BCA's Summer Convention and Auction, where Felipe Cantera from Uruguay gave two excellent talks on Fish collecting and related matters in his home country. The unusual thing about this was that I met Felipe the previous month in Norway. Ian and I did not stay until the auction as we had already planned to travel to Castleford in Yorkshire for their Catfish and Loach show.

After a little difficulty finding the venue we finally arrived, sought refreshment and had a look round, there were some fine specimens on the show bench. It was my first visit to this event and was pleasantly surprised by who their Auctioneer was. It was no other than your Journal editor Mark Walters, a man of hidden talents it seems.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the Summer Lectures and sales meeting in August due to personal reasons. However; I am informed that as word is getting round, the day is attracting more and more people and that the meeting on the whole was a success. So I am already looking forward to next years event.

September will as usual be our Annual Catfish Show and Auction, which again is being held at the Derwent Hall in Darwen. I am sure that this years Show and Auction will again see a wide range of excellent catfish species both on the show bench and through the auction. This is one event that should not be missed in the aquatic calendar. The show itself has 35 classes and 11 special category's which is open to both members and non-members alike and it is FREE to enter and no one goes away empty handed.

You can keep up to date with the latest news, and contribute to the Group's forum throughout the year by visiting: - www.catfishstudygroup.org.

I hope to see you all in Darwen:

Adrian Taylor, Chairman C.S.G.

Send in your Articles!

If you've ever thought you had something to say about your fishkeeping experiences, or an achievement you were proud of, or some research you've done on a fish-shop find, share it with the rest of the Catfish Study Group through the pages of Catchat.

Any information or experience you have could be of real value to another aquarist looking for the correct food, spawning trigger or conditions to suit a certain species. It doesn't matter if you don't have good images to share; we have an extensive catalogue of photos at our disposal to illustrate an article.

Breeding reports are especially interesting and can be supported by photos of mating behaviour, egg deposition, egg development, fry growth – in addition to the wealth of information you could share on maintaining the breeding fish, spawning triggers, feeding regimes and the tricky stages of egg hatching and raising youngsters.

Sharing information will raise your profile in the catfish community and encourage more people to share their experiences and help you further with your efforts. In addition, you can use the material to support a Breeders Award Programme submission and enter into the annual award for the best breeding report published in the journal.

You will see from the range of articles routinely published there is a wide breadth of subjects to base an article around including: Breeding reports; Meet the member articles; New discoveries; Product reviews; Book reviews; Equipment articles, Fish house construction; Show reports; Fish-shop finds; Expedition write-ups; or for that matter, anything relating to furthering the study of catfish.

Send your submissions to the editor@catfishstudygroup.org and enjoy the reward of seeing your efforts featured in future editions.

Castleford Aquarist Catfish and Loach Show and Auction

Mark Walters



Chrysichthis ornatus – one of the many stunning show fish

On the 15th July, Castleford Aquarist Society hosted its fifth annual catfish and loach show and specialist auction. The CSG replaced its normal July meeting with a visit to the show. The standard of show fish was excellent. Highest pointed catfish was awarded to Roy Blackburn for his *Microglanis iheringhi*.



Imparfinis minutus



Microglanis iheringhi



Corydoras longipinnis

The show also hosted the National Catfish Championship, open to any catfish winning Best in Show or achieving 'special' awards at shows in the last 12 months. This years winner a *Leporacanthicus* sp. L240, a very feisty specimen which spent most of the show trying to remove the plastic covering on the tank base.



Hemiancistrus sabaji

Last years' winner, a *Corydoras gracilis* was a close runner-up. The following images show some of the high quality exhibits.



Peckoltia braueri



Aspidoras sp.



Auchenipterichthys coracoides



Bunocephalus aleuropsis



Mystus pulcher



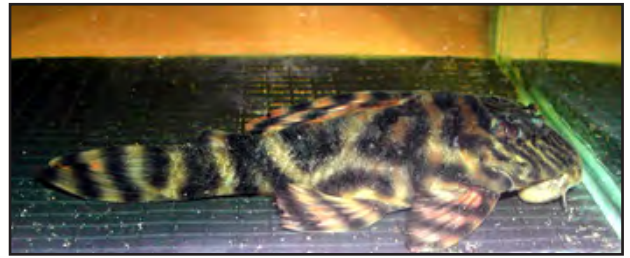
Microsynodontis sp1



Nemadoras tetetzi



Corydoras CW073



Panaqolus sp L02



Mochokiella paynei

Whilst the show fish were being judged, an auction of catfish and loaches was underway. Once again, the range of fish available was outstanding, with many rare species at low prices.

Some highlights included *Hypancistrus* L260 (Queen Arabesque) at £16, the hard to get hold of red striped *Panaqolus* L397 at £40 each and *Leporacanthicus* L07 at £18. The following lists all the fish advertised for sale, many more passed through the auctioneers hands:



Pseudacanthicus sp L065

Pseudacanthicus L065, *Ancistrus* sp. Rio Paraguay, *Panaqolus* sp. LDA01, *Panaqolus maccus*, *Panaqolus* sp. L397, *Peckoltia*, sp L211, *Peckoltia* sp L038, *Corydoras* sp CW024, *Corydoras* C007, *Corydoras venezuelanus* (wild), *Corydoras reticulatus*, *Corydoras schultzei* 'black', *Corydoras orange lazer*, *Corydoras* sp CW009 green lazer, *Corydoras* sp CW010 gold lazer, *Centromochlus perugiae*, *Microsynodontis polli*, *Hypancistrus* L260 (tb), *Anadoras grypus*, *Acanthodoras* sp 'Lechera', *Amblyodoras nauticus*, *Ancistrus* LDA074, *Corydoras sterbai*, L288, L190, L199, *Farlowella* sp, L128, *Hypancistrus contradens*, *Otocinclus* sp, *Baryancistrus beggini*, *Hemiloricaria* sp, L191, *Corydoras julii*, L340, *Trachelyopterus* sp 'Colombia',

Corydoras concolor, *Corydoras eppiphifer*, *Tatia* sp. 'B' adults, *Platystacus cotylephorus*, *Centromochlus reticulata*, *Aspidoras* sp C35 'Black phantom', *Aspidoras* sp CW52, black fin, *Aspidoras* sp C125 gold, *Aspidoras spilotos*, *Corydoras paleatus* black, *Corydoras carlae*, *Corydoras weitzmani*, *Corydoras panda* 'white', *Corydoras boesemani*, *Corydoras araguaiaensis*,



Corydoras araguaiaensis

Corydoras oiapoquensis, *Corydoras* sp C116, *Ancistrus* sp 'Super red', *Loricaria* sp 'Rio Atabapo', *Scleromystax* sp C113 F1, *Scleromystax prionotus* F1, *Corydoras napoensis*, *Corydoras paleatus* albino, *Corydoras* sp CW22.



Corydoras CW022

Corydoras elegans, *Ancistrus* sp 1, *Rineloricaria* sp 'Chocolate whiptails', *Rineloricaria* sp 'Red Lizards' Wild whiptails, *Hemiloricaria parva* F1, *Sturisoma panamense*.



Show Results			
National Catfish Champion			
Position	Name	Club	Points
1	Mark Walters	CAS	87 **
2	Mark Walters	CAS	86
3	Jim Howarth	CAS	85
4	Roy Blackburn	CAS	84
Open Show Results			
Aspidoras			
1	J. Hetherington	Workington	83.5
2	J. Hetherington	Workington	83
3	J. Hetherington	Workington	82
Corydoras up to 5.5cm			
1	D&L Speed	CSG	83.5
2	J. Hetherington	Workington	83
3	Mark Walters	CAS	82.5
Corydoras over 5.5cm			
1	Mike Kirkham	AAGB	83
2	J. Hetherington	Workington	82.5
3	Mike Kirkham	AAGB	82
Loricariids up to 15cm			
1	Mark Walters	AAGB	86
2	Mike Kirkham	AAGB	84
3	Roy Blackburn	CAS	82.5
Loricariids over 15cm			
1	D&L Speed	CSG	84
2	Craig Dixon	CAS	77
Pimelodids			
1	Roy Blackburn	CAS	87 ***
2	D&L Speed	CSG	83.5
3	Mike Kirkham	AAGB	82.5
Aspredinids			
1	Steve Grant	CAS	86.5
2	Steve Grant	CAS	85
3	Steve Grant	CAS	83.5
Mochokids			
1	Mike Kirkham	AAGB	85.5
2	Mark Walters	AAGB	84
3	Jim Howarth	CAS	81.5

Dorads			
1	Roy Blackburn	CAS	93
2	Mark Walters	CAS	82
3	Jim Howarth	CAS	81
Auchenipterids			
1	Roy Blackburn	CAS	84
2	J. Hetherington	Workington	83
AOV Catfish			
1	Roy Blackburn	CAS	84
2	Jim Howarth	CAS	83
3	Mike Kirkham	AAGB	81

Breeders Corydoradinae			
1	Steve Bishop	SVAS	84
2	Steve Bishop	SVAS	83
Breeders other catfish			
1	Mark Walters	CAS	84
Pairs			
1	Roy Blackburn	CAS	86
2	Craig Dixon	CAS	85
3	B. O'Neil	Rydale A S	83

** National Catfish Champion - Mark Walters

*** Best in Show - Roy Blackburn

Images of show fish by Steven Grant, other images by Mark Walters

CSG Convention 2014

Ian Fuller Convetion Manager

Everything is now in place in readiness for the next CSG annual convention, this will be the groups 35 of which the last eight have been full weekend affairs. The 2014 event will take place on the 14th, 15th and 16th of March 2014.

Once again we have a strong international speaker line up that I am sure will keep us all well entertained over the whole event

Hans-Georg Evers - Hamburg, Germany

Barbie Florentino - Spokane, Washington, USA

Brian Perkins - Florida, USA

Allan James - Dunoon, Scotland

Haaken Haagensen - Bergen, Norway

Mark Duffill - Great Ayton, North Yorkshire, England

Our non Catfish speaker will be Mark Duffill talking on keeping and breeding Loaches. Mark was originally scheduled to talk at this yeas event, but unfortunately had to withdraw through ill health. Mark has now fully recovered should be fully fit and rearing to go in March.

We will see the return of regular favourite Hans-Georg Evers, who never fails the enthral us with tales from his many collecting trips as well as giving us the benifit of his vast knowledge of all things Catfish.

Allan James from Dunoon in Scotland will be giving the events CSG member talk.

The furthest travelled speaker at the convention will be Barbie Florentino from Spokane, Washington state, USA.

Barbie has been keeping and breeding L-number pleco's for a number of years and will imparting some of the things she has learned over the years about these fascinating fish.

Not far behind Barbie in terms of travelling distance is Brian Perkins from Florida, USA is owner of Wild Peru. The company not only collects fisf for the aquarium trade, but also organises collecting trips for enthusiastic hobbyists. Brian will be talking about his experiences.

Last but by no means least on the list is Haaken Haagensen from Bergen on the West coast of Norway. Haaken is another Loricariidae enthusiast with a great passion for species conservation.

I will be anouncing the full event programme in the next issue including titles for all the presentations as well as everything else we have planned.

For those that are interested in attending there are booking forms down loadable on the CSG web site – http://www.catfishstudygroup.org/core/convention_2014.htm

The Kilhey Court Hotel, Standish is the same superb venue we have used for the last two years, with superb facilities, but we are limited to the number of rooms available. So not to be disapointed book your place as early as possible, it only takes a £50.00 deposit to secure your place.

looking forward to seeing many of you there.

Ian

Spawning *Corydoras weitzmani*. Nijssen, 1971

By A W Taylor. F.N.A.S. Dip; MB.



It was during the spring of 2010 that I acquired a small group of five young *Corydoras weitzmani* from fellow C.S.G. member Colin Eveson; whom had exhibited them on the C.S.G. Breeders Award Programme live display stand, during that years Catfish Convention.

Upon arriving home I placed the young catfish in a small tank of their own, which had a sand substrate and was filtered using a air powered corner box filter, where they stayed for a over a year, gaining size on a diet consisting mainly of live foods, such as grindal worms, bloodworms and daphnia, with a couple of commercial food tablets thrown in to supplement their diet about once a week.

It was in late May of 2011 when I decided that I should move them into a nice clean 100 litre empty aquarium that I had available with a view to not only giving them more room, but I had set this tank up with the idea that I would make it a small characin aquarium and these catfish would make ideal tank companions.

It turned out that whilst moving them I found that they were easy to sex, using the same method of sexing that pertains to quite a lot of *Corydoras* species as they had grown to around 40mm standard length; it turned out that the group were made up of two males and three females. I put a fresh substrate of sand in the tank along with a clump or two of java moss, some broadleaved plants (Amazon sword) and a small piece of bogwood that had some java fern growing on it.

Into this I added nearly all of the water from the tank that housed the *C weitzmani* and then transferred them into it; along with adding an air-stone in order to provide aeration and circulation of the water. Over the next 30 hours I gradually filled the aquarium up using aged, clean water of the around the same temperature and the following day I added filtration in the form of a small external power filter.

I did nothing more to this aquarium other than feeding them the same diet as before and carrying out 20% water changes every week.

A few weeks later whilst opening up my fish house in the morning I noticed some slightly opaque eggs of around 2mm^o and these appeared to be laid singularly along the front of the tank. At no time even on future spawning's did I observe any mating or spawning activity and it was only in the morning after I had opened up my fish house that I found freshly laid eggs on the aquarium glass. The water parameters were taken with the following readings noted: Temperature 21°C (70°F), pH 6.5, conductivity 180 µS cm, KH 0, dGH 3. The eggs were removed from the tank and placed in a small plastic food container and aerated



Fry at 10 days.

The fry hatched some 30 hours later and took 24 hours to become free swimming; 30% of the eggs proved to be infertile and did not develop or hatch. These fry was fed on pre-soaked powdered fry powder and fed sparingly twice daily via a small pipette for the next five days; during this time the hatching tray had a 50% water change every evening.

After this the fry were moved to a 'hang on external' air operated fry tank of the type where the water from the main tank is circulated by an air powered up lift tube into the 'hang on tank'. In this tank the fry was still fed on pre-soaked fry powder but this was supplemented with small amounts of banana worm.



Fry at 1month.

After a further 2 weeks I moved the fry into a tank of their own having similar water conditions as the water they had been living in and over a short period

of time I gradually changed the feeding regime to an alternating diet of crushed flake, microworms and sifted live daphnia at a frequency of twice daily with 20% water changes being made, on average every 5 days.

The fry continued to do well and after 3 months were of such a size where I could pass them onto other fish keepers. The one thing that I believe that I should mention is that *Corydoras weitzmani* especially the fry, seem not to tolerate long periods of high tank temperatures and they appear more comfortable at temperatures around 20-22°C.

All images by Adrian Taylor

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Breeding *Peckoltia* sp L211

Mark Walters



Adult *Peckoltia* L211

I have maintained numerous species of the South American Loricariid genus *Peckoltia* over the years, and took the chance to add to my collection during a visit to an aquatic retailer in South Yorkshire during 2010.

In addition to the subject of this article, I picked up a pair of *Peckoltia* sp. L038 and a group of *Peckoltia* / *Sophiancistrus bachi*. The latter being the subject of various descriptions depending on your source of information.



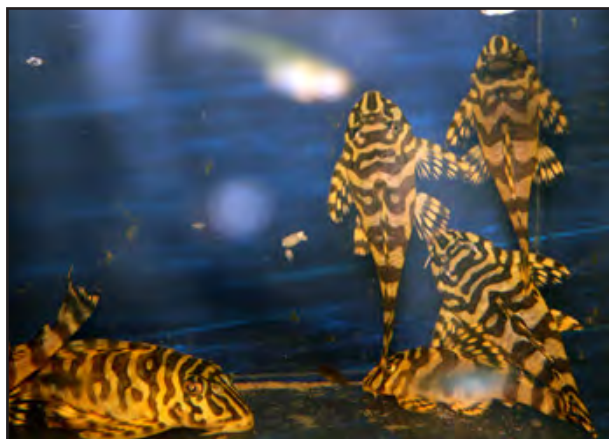
Sophiancistrus bachi



Sophiancistrus bachi

For a couple of years, the species were housed in Loricariid communities with other species. In 2012, I provided my pair of L211 with their own 24x15x15 tank, part of a 200 gallon centralised system.

Tank décor was pretty basic – a couple of clay caves a piece of bogwood and no substrate. I didn't have any specific plans to breed this species, with my attentions on other more desirable *Peckoltia*, such as my group of *P. compta* (still no success!).



Peckoltia compta

Earlier in the year I had been successful with the pair of *P. sp* L038 and had raised 20 or 30 youngsters from a couple of spawnings. This gave me some confidence in the set-up I had provided and relative temperature and water conditions available.

I witnessed a few attempts by the male, who had developed an impressive odontodal growth down his flanks, to trap the female in one of the caves, but didn't pay too much attention considering the numerous 'blanks' from other species when it comes to males trapping females. I paid more attention, however, when in December 2012, the male remained in his cave after a day of trapping and refused to budge. It soon became apparent he had coaxed the female to spawn and was actively brooding a clutch of eggs. I hadn't done anything special to encourage the spawning, although they had received a feed of frozen bloodworm a day or

two previously, to supplement the feeds of pleco wafers and pellets.



Peckoltia L038 male with eggs

The only thing I had to decide now was should I leave the eggs or remove them to hatch artificially? In an ideal world, the male will brood the eggs and raise them past the critical egg-sac stage, reducing the amount of intervention required by the aquarist.

Many species can be relied on to do a great job of rearing their young, especially *Ancistrus* and *Hypancistrus*, in my experience. I have had poor success, however, leaving the eggs with other genus such as *Panaqolus*, where the male will brood for a day, before devouring the eggs. My experience with the *Peckoltia* L038 had been positive with good brood care by the male, but I didn't want to take a risk with this new species so I removed the eggs.

The eggs were initially placed in a 3 litre plastic tub, suspended in the tank with strong aeration. Up to this point, I hadn't been 100% confident in the identity of the species and had assumed they were close to *Peckoltia lineola* (Armbruster 2011) or L202 (could be *P. lineola* anyway).



Peckoltia L211 female

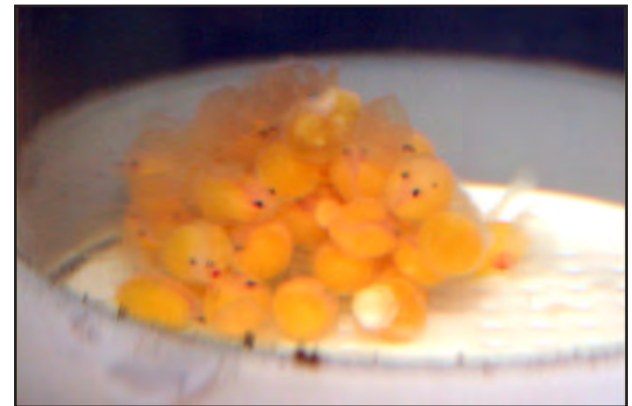
With the successful spawning, I was keen to get as positive I.D. as possible and through postings on

aquatic forums received as close an identification as may be possible from my friend Steve Grant. He indicated that L211 was a good candidate, considering the probable origin of the species prior to import by the retailer. My specimens are a good match for this species.

Whilst researching the identity of the species, the spawning generated a fair amount of interest from other aquarists online and discussions ensued around hatching containers. Following some useful advice, I moved the eggs to an egg tumbler, to ensure a constant supply of highly oxygenated water

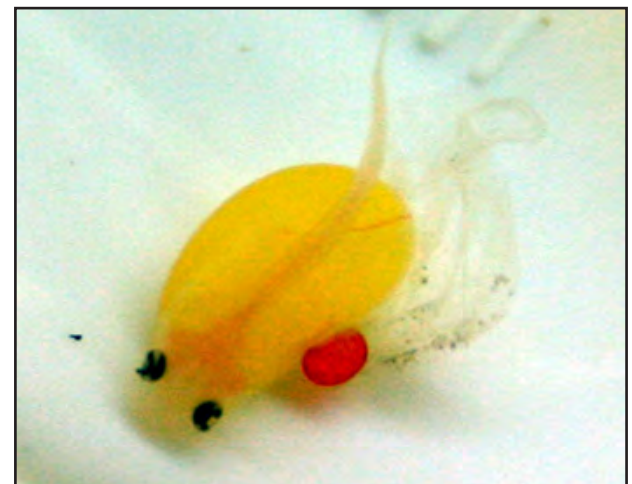


P. lineola

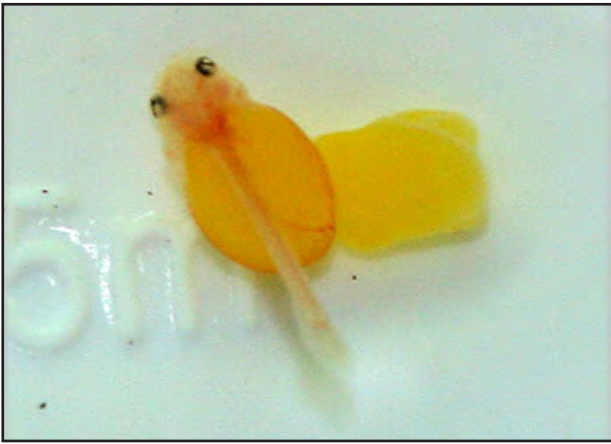


Egg clump in egg tumbler

I hadn't used this method for Loricariid eggs before and wasn't totally convinced with the results. I suspect a certain amount of damage occurred to some of the eggs during the process leading to some eggs failing. Out of around 20 eggs, about a dozen remained viable prior to hatching.



1 day old fry with blood spot



1 day old fry with ruptured yolk sac

After day 5, the eggs started to hatch and I recorded development in the series of photographs below.



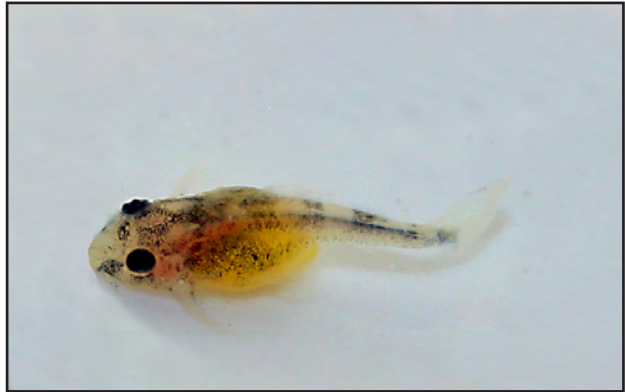
1 day old fry



2 day old fry



3 day old fry



4 day old fry



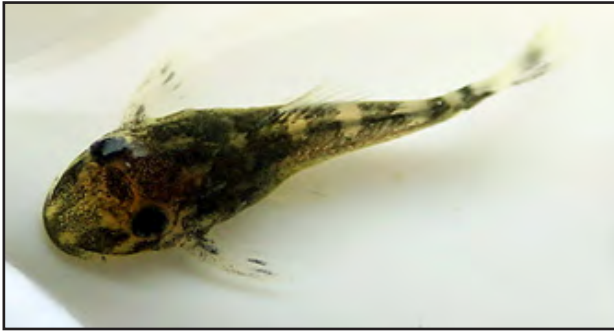
5 day old



6 day old



7 day old



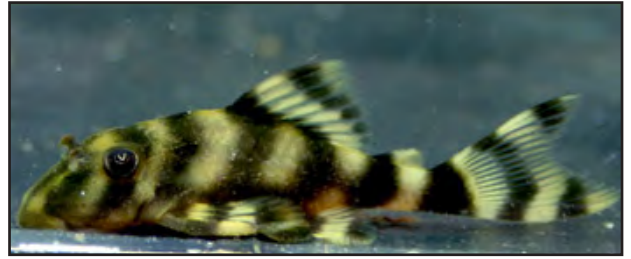
8 day old

The young had fully assimilated their egg sac after around 8-10 days. At this point I started offering small pieces of pleco wafer, crushed peas and small quantities of newly hatched Artemia.



1 month old

The fry developed nicely and after 8 weeks I returned them to the breeding tank.



3 month old

Interestingly, a couple of fry must have escaped from the raising container and were later found in the main tank. These fry had grown bigger than the artificially raised fry, probably as a consequence of constantly grazing amongst the tank debris.



Fry in tank

Title image by Steven Grant, all other images by Mark Walters.



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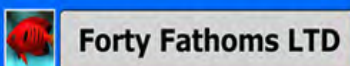
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Breeding Observations

Phil Taylor (CSG Member No 76)

Here are a few notes on my recent projects, none of them at all ground-breaking!

***Corydoras paleatus* 'Hi-fin albino'**

I saw these in Abacus Aquatics in February 2011 and bought all of the 7 fishes there. The males have considerably lengthened first rays on the dorsal and pectoral fins. The females have normal fins as far as I can see. A later shipment to the same shop included a male with even longer and wavy first rays, to me more of a deformity than a desirable feature.

My specimens are in a square tank about 50 cm each way. There are no other catfish there but a population of purple platy *Xiphophorus xiphidium* which produce regular fry. By July 27 the Corys were laying eggs only on the glass. I scrape them off with my fingernail and put them in a small fry tank 25x15 cm and 5 cm deep with an air stone. The temperature in my little fish room never drops below 20 C but can get warm in summer.

Here is a brief time table;

16/10/11 eggs;

25/10/11 fry seen;

2/11/11 fry eating chopped Tubifex (fry powder before that).

17/17/11 moved to larger tank.

On 28/11/11 I cleaned the internal filter and found 5 dead juveniles presumably sucked in. I now only use air lines even with quite large fry. Since then I have raised 3 broods with no losses at all. The hatch time is always 7 to 8 days and the fry grow fast. I change nearly all the water in the little fry tank at least every 2 days, and micro worms, boiled and crushed peas and frozen *Cyclops* are also fed. The new generation seem to be less 'hi fin' than the old. Presumably it is a recessive gene so the 'hi fin' males should be separated.

Corydoras schultzei

There are many variations on this fish around. Jim Humphries gave me these and they have a straight narrow gold line, a darker body colour than the usual 'bronze' with a paler belly. Mine were in a small 50 cm tank, again with livebearers, and a water change usually stimulated spawning on the glass. None of the eggs hatched until they began to lay additionally on *Cryptocoryne* leaves. When I cut these leaves off and transferred them to the fry tank I had success, the eggs hatching after 4 or 5 days and given the

same treatment as above.

The juveniles are very colourful and with long dorsals. The gold line is visible at two months.

Scleromystax barbatus

Only frustration to report here. I have 8 of these, all bred by me about 4 years ago. They frequently lay large batches of eggs on the front glass of two different tanks and although the eggs are sometimes a healthy looking gold colour none of them ever hatch.



C. schultzei & *S. barbatus* image by Vincent Milne

***Corydoras diphyes?* (*naterreri*)**

On 28/9/11 I bought 6 unknown *Corydoras* at a shop in Essex, labelled '*pastazensis*' but bearing no resemblance to this long-nosed species—the real thing was available at Wholesale Tropicals at the time of writing. Mine were pale with fine dots and a fairly high dorsal fin, rather slender and delicate looking.



C. naterreri image by Vincent Milne

They may not be *C. diphyes* but I have no better ideas (Editor note: look like *C. naterreri*).

I only mention them because when moving them to a new tank a single baby perhaps 6 weeks was found so I added it to a brood of 'schultzei'. Fingers crossed!

Akysis prashadi

Final remarks on this little Akysid catfish from India. In July 2006 I bought 3 from Wholesale tropicals. They spent most of the time buried in the sand but came out to feed heavily on bloodworm and Tubifex (maybe a bad idea with hindsight) and grew visibly. By the end of August I had lost them all but the last one was a female that measured 38 mm standard

length with her belly full of PALE GREEN EGGS! Definitely worth another try.



Akysis prashadi image by Ian Fuller

Some Observations on Ancistrus sp 'L255'

Danny Blundell

Back in early 2012 I purchased five Ancistrus sp. L255 from Pier Aquatics, hopefully two males and three females. Sexing young fish is not that easy as both sexes develop barbels, below is a dorsal view of a mature male, taken in a photo tank.



The fish were housed in a 24x24x12h inch tank, at 28 degC with a full width 'Hamburg' filter powered by a 600 litre/hour power head and a pair of Sturisoma panamense for company. The fish are very secretive, living in the caves provided, but will occasionally sit in full view on top of a cave, under an arching piece of bogwood. This behaviour is shown below.



Feeding was my main worry. Due to their secretive nature they will only feed at night with the lights off and hence I could not observe them. As I have had these fish for eighteen months, and they are still alive they must be eating the foods provided. The two species of Lorycaridae are fed a diet of:-

- Cucumber or Corgette,
- Tetra Prima,
- New Era Catfish Pellets,
- Aquarian Flake,
- Spirulina tabs,
- Various Pleco wafers,
- Frozen Blood Worms or
- Shredded prawns.

Early one morning, I went into the fish room to check on the egg development of the Sturisoma, only to find the eggs being eaten by an L255, who actually looked guilty. Below is the pictorial evidence.



Hopefully in time I can report on more than just their diet.

Imaged by Danny Blundell

Preserving Catfish Specimens

Mark Walters



If you've had the dilemma of what to do with a prized or rare species which has met an untimely demise, maybe you should consider preserving and even displaying the specimen for future reference.

Over the years I have popped a dead fish in a bag and into the freezer, not quite knowing what to do with the body. More recently I had put a few specimens in a vial with some clear nail-varnish remover (acetone) for a more permanent fix. Both methods of preservation are a useful option to keep a specimen for future study, but I decided I wanted to put a few specimens on display.



Hypancistrus zebra

Whilst my study hardly classed as a grand library, I thought a few jars of catfish wouldn't look too out of place.

I mentioned the idea to my wife and was pleased to receive some preserve jars on my Birthday – a bit of an odd present but we fishkeepers know no bounds when it comes to strange purchases. In fact, the jars were from A DIY store and only cost £2 each.

Since then, I'd collected a few coffee jars which are the same dimensions as the preserve jars, with a similar air-tight lid closure.

A friend runs a beauty business and I'd asked if she could get hold of larger quantities of Acetone. £15 for 5 litres seemed reasonable enough and a container arrived a few days later. Acetone dessicates the specimen, replacing the water in the body tissues with the solvent.



Scleromystax CW042 in a vial of acetone

I had recently installed a bookcase in my study and recalled images of Victorian libraries with jars of preserved specimens.



Preserving jars, coffee jar on left



Scleromystax CW042 in preserving jar



Acetone

Despite reading accounts of laboratory methods to preserve specimens, I simply placed the dead fish straight into the acetone and sealed the jar. Even frozen specimens have gone straight into solution without defrosting, which I assumed could lead to degradation.



H. zebra preserved

After sealing the jars, I have added a label describing the species, its origin and date of preservation. Hopefully the scent of acetone won't distract me too much in my study.



H. zebra preserved



Pride of place on my bookcase

Useful Reference

A recent paper was published detailing the collection, recording, photographing, examination and preservation of fish in exact detail. This is an essential reference for the correct procedures to preserve specimens.

Motomura, H & S Ishikawa (eds.), 2013. Fish collection building and procedures manual. The Kagoshima University Museum, Kagoshima and the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, Kyoto. 70 pp.

Spawning *Corydoras* species CW021.

By A W Taylor. F.N.A.S. Dip; MB.



CW021 adult female image by Ian Fuller

It was during the groups' autumn auction in 2011 that I managed at little cost to purchase two males and one female *Corydoras* species CW021, these small Corydoradinae catfishes originated from Columbia, although there is at present no exact catchments location area available.

This Cory is very similar in both patterning and colouration to *Corydoras axelrodi*; Rössel, 1962. In the book 'Identifying Corydoradinae catfish' Fuller & Evers, 2011. It was commented that *Corydoras* species CW021 might well prove to be a regional variation of *Corydoras axelrodi*. However, for the present time we still refer to this Columbian type as *Corydoras* species CW021.

Upon arriving home I placed them in a small 'hospital tank' which was filtered by an small air operated sponge filter and for the first couple of months I fed them on an alternating diet of grindal worms, frozen bloodworm's and commercial food tablets.

Over the Christmas holidays of the same year I moved the trio of CW021 into an tank measuring 26cm x 38cm x 38cm which contained aged water, a sand substrate along with a small piece of bog wood and a artificial spawning mop; the filtration was provided by a air powered corner box filter.

I also changed their diet slightly and altered the feeding regime to twice daily with food added once in the morning and once in the evening. The food being offered was live grindal worm, daphnia and *Cyclops*; all of which was available to me through my own cultures, along with a commercial tablet feed. In the mornings I fed them the tablet food and in the evenings I alternated the live food being fed.

During mid January and on a day after I had undertaken a 30% water change using only slightly cooler water, I noticed that the female was swimming up and down the side of the glass in one corner with both males in close attendance, observing this behavior I settled down to watch this activity in the hope that I could witness them actually mating and spawning, a process that no matter how many times I see it, always fascinates me. After some 20 minutes or so I saw the female and one of the males peel away and commence to During mid January and on a day after I had undertaken a 30% water change using only slightly cooler water, I noticed that the female was swimming up and down the side of the glass in one corner with both males in close attendance, observing this behavior I settled down to watch this activity in the hope that I could witness them actually mating and spawning, a process that no matter how many times I see it, always fascinates me. After some 20 minutes or so I saw the female and one of the males peel away and commence to mate in the typical 'T' spawning embrace.



Fry at 10 days image by Adrian Taylor

The following morning having not seen any more signs of courtship or mating behavior I moved the eggs into a hatching tray, using water that was taken from the tank containing the adults, I added an alder cone and aerated.

When the eggs hatched some 24 hours later I removed the Alder cone and carried out a 50% water change. The fry became free swimming again some 24 hours later, they were then moved to a hatching tank of the type, that although circulates the water from the host tank, actually hangs on the outside of the tank similar to the old air powered external filter, which likewise is air operated.



Fry at 2 months image by Adrian Taylor

These 15 young soon developed to a stage where they became small replicas of their parents. One last thing I think is worth noting in the spawning tank there were two small royal whiptails, at no time did I see visually or see an indication that these royal whiptails had predated upon the eggs.



Fry at 1 month image by Adrian Taylor

The fry whilst they were in the hatching tray were fed upon a mixture of powdered flake that had been soaked in 'green water' for 30 minutes and 50% daily water changes were undertaken. When the fry were 18 days old I moved them from the 'hanging' container and released them into the tank that the 'hanging' container was coupled to.

It was at this time that I started to feed a more varied diet; which consisted of live baby brine shrimp, milliworms, soaked crushed flake and the occasional tablet food. Out of the original 21 eggs only 15 actually hatched with the other eggs seemingly being infertile.



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Spawning Triggers

Mark Walters

I want to share what is not a well kept secret amongst fish breeders. Changing their environmental conditions often triggers species to spawn. Yes we know that I can hear you all say, but the simple process I often use does not require a great understanding of water chemistry, or specific and controlled changes in temperature, hardness or pH.

The reason I decided to document this experience was following another successful spawning of a species following a move to a new tank. In this case I moved the fish to encourage a spawning event based on previous experience, but the quick result surprised me and helped to reinforce that this is a proven method to breed fish.

The species in question is relatively common in the hobby, and may be frowned upon by some hardened specialists, but I keep and breed black *Corydoras aeneus*. The exact origin of the species has been disputed, but it is believed to come from a strain of the 'schultzei' type of *aeneus* developed in Germany in the 1990's. The species is commonly encountered in shops in the U.K. either from hobbyist breeders or from the Czech Republic, where it is bred more extensively.

Corydoras schultzei (Holly 1940), although not fully accepted as a species in its own right, is widely regarded as distinct form *C. aeneus*. The black Cory has also been confused with another "Aeneus" species from the wet lands of the Llanos in Venezuela know in the hobby as *Corydoras venezuelanus* (ref: Planet Catfish discussion, Dec. 2010), distinct from the man-made form.

I have bred and raised many youngsters over the years from different parent stock and they always breed true. The young are a popular auction fish and help to pay the bills! My current breeding tank had become overrun with young fish and the 5 adults had stopped spawning. I have found this to be a common problem with many catfish, the presence of youngsters can reduce the frequency for a species to spawn.



Corydoras aeneus 'black' youngsters

In the case of my black Cory's, it was apparent that a hundred babies, plus a group of Ancistrus in the same tank was just too much commotion to encourage spawning behaviour. This was despite regular cool water changes, which might otherwise encourage a species to spawn.

After a good look around the fish house, I decided to move a group of orange lazer Corydoras, which had shown no signs of spawning, and free up the tank for the adult black Corydoras. After giving the sponge and internal power filters a good clean, I introduced the 5 fish – 1 female and 4 males (1400hrs).

The new tank was a bit warmer than their previous accommodation, so 2 hours after introduction I siphoned out 50% of the water and replaced it with cool rainwater. The tank also had a couple of woollen mops and a piece of bogwood.



Corydoras aeneus 'black' spawning

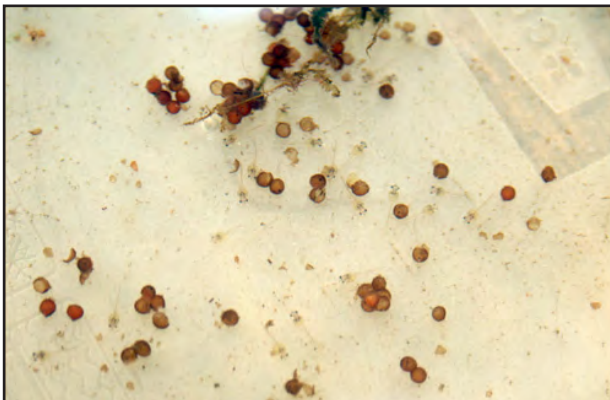


Masses of *Corydoras* eggs

After the fish had settled down, they had an evening feed of *artemia* nauplii. The next morning (0800 hrs) two males were actively swimming up and down the tank sides and on another inspection at 1030hrs, the tank sides were covered with eggs, less than 20 hours since introduction.



Some were deposited on a spawning mop



After collection

I have no doubt that the change in environment provided the trigger for spawning, after a pause in their normal spawning habits of nearly a month. I have experienced similar results with numerous other Corydoradinae, in particular *Corydoras* sp 'CW024' which spawned recently after a tank move following 3 years of relative inactivity.



Corydoras CW024

My *Corydoras ehrhardti* also produced masses of eggs and regular spawnings shortly after a move to a new tank. In both of these cases the species had been in mixed species tanks prior to the move.



Corydoras ehrhardti

I am sure a combination of new tank, new habitat and reduced interaction with other species acts as a strong spawning trigger and is worth employing if a species has stopped its usual spawning routine.

A similar response has been noticed with other catfish species including *Peckoltia*, *Centromochlus* and *Ancistrus* which have all responded positively to a new tank and reduced interaction with other species or youngsters of the same species.



Centromochlus romani

In summary, if you have a species which has bred before, but now stopped, try moving the group to a new single-species tank and see what happens!



End results

Key Points

1. Single species tanks work best for breeding catfish
2. The presence of youngsters can reduce the frequency of spawnings in adult groups
3. Moving the group to a new, but established, tank can trigger the species to spawn
4. Combine the move to a new tank with water changes of cooler, softer water
5. Don't expect instant results, in my experience if a species has bred in the past but stopped for a few months a new tank change can encourage them to start again
6. Check your selected species isn't a rigid seasonal spawner – no amount of triggering can shift some species from their natural behaviour
7. If you don't have the luxury of a new tank to move your fish to try removing other species, rearrange the tank decor, add power filtration or strong aeration and do a series of water changes.
8. Keeping a future breeding group in unfavourable conditions can improve the chance of breeding success when moved to a more suitable tank.



Peckoltia sp L038 babies

All images by Mark Walters



What's New?

Mark Walters



Scleromystax macropterus

There is nothing quite like the buzz of hearing about the availability of new species, particularly ones which haven't been seen in the hobby for at least 10 years.

Once again, Pier Aquatics surprised even the most unflappable aquarists with the announcement that they had imported one of the most desirable *Corydoradinae* species to be seen for a long time. *Scleromystax macropterus* originated from Southern Brazil from forests emerging from what is left of the Mata Atlantica rain forests.

It used to be imported occasionally and I was lucky to pick up a trio around 8 years ago in a CSG auction, from a club member who had kept them for a long time. Those specimens were past their best and certainly not suitable for a breeding project.

Other aquarists in the USA and Germany have maintained populations and Carsten Goll has reported spawning, but no success with hatching or rearing.



One of the older specimens of *S. macropterus* I used to keep

The young specimens imported by Pier present a real opportunity for a hobbyist in the U.K. to have a go at being the first to spawn and hatch eggs of these fish in captivity. Pier Aquatics were able to offer the fish at an affordable price for what represent an almost impossible species to get hold of. Pier Aquatics have also imported *S. lacerdai* recently, a species which inhabits similar habitats to *S. macropterus*.

New Descriptions

Two new descriptions have excited aquarists in recent months.

New *Panaqolus*

The first is the formal description of the 'Flash Panaque' or L204 as it is known in the hobby. Known now as *Panaqolus albivermis*,

Panaqolus albivermis is described as a new species based on four specimens from the San Alejandro River, a tributary of the upper Ucayali River in central Peru. *Panaqolus albivermis* is diagnosed from all other *Panaqolus* except *P. maccus* by having head,

body, and fins with widely separated small white to yellow spots, vermiculations, and/or thin oblique bands on a black base (vs. exclusively small white to yellow spots on a black base in *P. albomaculatus*, generally broad oblique bands of alternating light to dark brown in *P. changae*, *P. gnomus*, *P. purusiensis*, and a uniformly dark gray to black body color in *P. dentex*, *P. koko*, and *P. nocturnus*); *P. albivermis* can be diagnosed from *P. maccus* by having a black base color (vs. brown), by having parallel dentary tooth cups (vs. acute intermandibular tooth cup angle), and by having a larger known adult body size (95.8 mm SL vs. 84.8).

Lujan, NK, S Steele & M Velasquez, 2013. A new distinctively banded species of *Panaqolus* (Siluriformes: Loricariidae) from the western Amazon Basin in Peru. *Zootaxa* 3961: 192–198.

New *Corydoras*



Neotropical Ichthyology, 11(2):257-264, 2013

A new species of *Corydoras* is described from the rio São Francisco basin in northeastern Brazil, Minas Gerais and Bahia States. The new species is distinguished from most of its congeners by the anterior portion of the infraorbital 1 very large, conspicuously expanded towards the anteroventral margin of the snout and almost entirely covering its lateral margin. Other characters that distinguish the new species are the infraorbital 2 slender on its dorsal tip, contacting only sphenotic and not compound pterotic; and the presence of two laterosensory canals on trunk. A phylogenetic analysis including the new species found it sister-group of *C. flaveolus*, and both species sister-group of *C. paleatus*. An identification key to the species of the rio São Francisco basin is also provided.

Luiz F. C. Tencatt, Héctor S. Vera-Alcaraz, Marcelo R. Britto and Carla S. Pavanelli¹, A new *Corydoras* Lacépède, 1803 (Siluriformes: Callichthyidae) from the rio São Francisco basin, Brazil. *Neotropical Ichthyology*, 11(2):257-264, 2013

Images by Mark Waltes

Will the true “Black” Cory please stand up

Ian Fuller



Corydoras schultzei black male. image Ian Fuller



Corydoras venezuelanus natural colour. image Ian Fuller

Over the last few years there has been a lot of confusion over the true identity of the “Black” Corydoras. German hobbyist Hartmut Eberhardt produced the first true black *Corydoras* in the late 1990’s, initially a number of black offspring emerged from spawning’s of the species we know in the hobby as *Corydoras schultzei*, which at present is still recognised by science as a synonym of *Corydoras aeneus*. After perfecting the colour form some stock was supplied to breeders in the Czech Republic, who proceeded to breed them in large numbers, and very quickly these fish were becoming available all over Eurpoe. During these fishes early development they display red/orange fins, which darken as the fish mature.

The confusion started when another “Aeneus” type, *Corydoras venezuelanus* Ihering, 1911 was discovered in the Llanos of Venezuela and also Colombia.

Corydoras venezuelanus is a smaller species , reaching a maximum size of 50.0 mm SL males – 55.0 mm SL females. On the other hand *Corydoras schultzei* would be expected to reach 65 mm SL. males – 75 mm SL. females. There are other differences, *Corydoras venezuelanus* has a more rounded body shape and a large distinctive red/ orange shoulder blotch, which can be very impressive with fish in breeding condition. The caudal fin is also grey in colour. The attached mages clearly show the differences between the two species.



Corydoras venezuelanus darker female, image Ian Fuller



Corydoras schultzei at 12 weeks. image Mark Walters



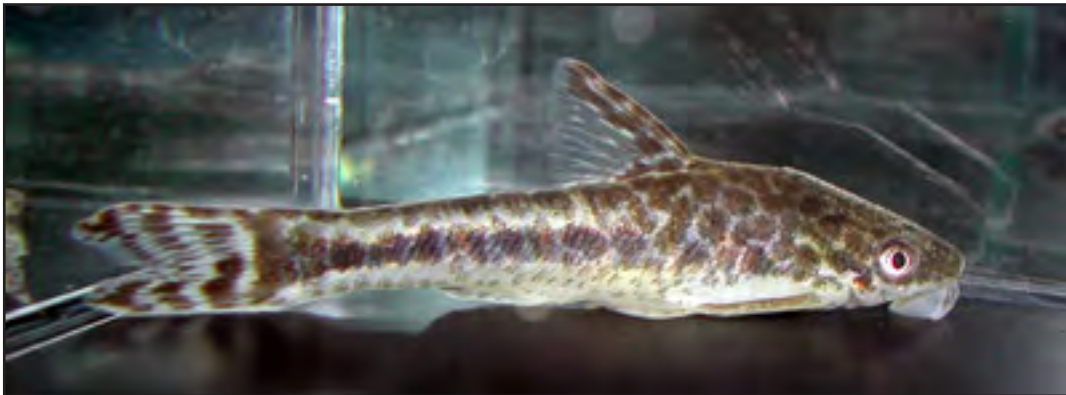
Corydoras schultzei adult female. image Mark Walters

This fish is regularly being imported and when they darken their body coloration, which can be caused by stress, lighting conditions, etc., they resemble the black *Corydoras schultzei* youngsters. This fact may have lead to the name “Venezuela Black “ being used.

Otocinclus

The ultimate algae control

Ian Fuller



Otocinclus flexilis

When it comes to algae control in our aquariums we are faced with the decision of how to eradicate it?

It does not usually take very long before a newly set up aquarium shows signs of algae growth, now to me a light covering of algae on pieces of drift wood or rock work gives a tank a natural look. The trouble is it does not stop at a light covering but continues to grow and colonize the whole aquarium, including plant leaves, causing the plants to look mottled and even furry. The worst and most inconsiderate place it grows is on the main viewing area, the front glass panel. Now its decision time, what do we do to control or even get rid of it all together. Now here are the choices, we can either use a) an approved chemical control, of which there are several on the market, b) invest in a mechanical device such as an algae magnet or a scraper, these are however very limited in as much as they can only remove algae from flat surfaces, which would leave the algae in the rest of the aquarium to grow uncontrolled.

You could of course experiment with light levels and a strict balanced feeding regime, not an easy program to maintain, especially when lights are primarily there for the benefit of those viewing the contents of the aquarium. Very often lights are on for fifteen hours or more every day, I know mine are, when ten to twelve hours is more than enough to provide plants with all there needs.

There is a further choice, one which in my opinion is the best of all, and it's a natural one. By the use of algae eating catfish the growth of these unwanted algae's can be controlled. There are quite a large number of catfish species that fall into the category of 'Algae Eater', they range considerably in size from a mere 1½" to well over 12" (38mm – 305mm), so your choice will depend on a) The size of the aquarium, b)

The other inhabitants they will have to live with in the aquarium. There are large *Hypostomus* types that would do a fine job in a large cichlid community, there are smaller *Ancistrus* species that would do an equally good job but in my opinion pound for pound, the best algae eater by far are the *Otocinclus*, a group of small Loricariidae species. They range in size from 1" to 2" (40 mm – 60 mm) standard length, (body length from tip of snout to caudal peduncle) the majority falling into the smaller end of the size scale. They are found in almost all regions of tropical South America, inhabiting small fast flowing streams and the shallow margins of larger rivers, where there is plenty of thick vegetation.

In a medium sized community aquarium of say twenty gallon (89 liters). To start with I would recommend four or five *Otocinclus*; ideally they should not be introduced into the aquarium until there are sufficient amounts of algae growth to maintain them. If however the algae growth is growing at a faster rate than the *Otocinclus* can consume it, then more can be added until the balance is reached. *Otocinclus* could be considered true vegetarians, as although in their natural habitat they graze on plants and rocks, feeding on the abundant algae growths, they will also eat insect larvae and small crustaceans that they find living in the algae. If too many specimens are introduced into the aquarium initially they may very well eradicate all traces of algae very quickly and will then need specialist feeding to compensate for the lack of algae. Fortunately there are many specialist foods on the market which would fit the bill but I would be more inclined to reduce the their numbers. Just as a an added point in regard to their diet, the addition of small amounts of newly hatched brine shrimp would be very beneficial in keeping them in tip top condition.

The choice of *Otocinclus* species is not that vast, in total there are around thirteen described species, however the majority of these never enter the hobby, with the exception of the odd one or two specimens arriving as contaminants in shipments of other fishes. Having said all that, being able to identify each of the species that are available is not the easiest of task. Visually many *Otocinclus* species have overall body colour patterns that are very similar to each other, the most prominent feature being a dark brown to black horizontal band, which extends the full length of the body from the tip of the snout to the caudal peduncle. The thickness of the band may vary from one species to another, but the differences in such small fishes would be very difficult to assess. However there is another area that is a prominent feature in the separation of several of the species; this is the colour pattern that occurs on the caudal fin itself. Some of these patterns are very distinct.

In more recent times there have been a number of new, very distinctly patterned species discovered, which have yet to be described by science. The first of these discoveries was the 'Zebra Oto' *Otocinclus, cocama* with broad irregular dark vertical bands on a whitish body. Shortly after *Otocinclus, cocama* appeared another one with the very imaginative name of 'The Spotted *Otocinclus*' arrived and although this is another of the species with a horizontal stripe running the length of the body, it has distinctive large brown irregular spots on the upper third of the body.

Otocinclus are beautiful little fishes and an aquarium set up specifically for a group of them would make an ideal living picture. Being small fishes a large aquarium is not needed; something in the region of ten gallon would be ideally suited. Well planted in a sandy substrate with the addition of a few largish pebbles, a piece of bog wood, good lighting and an adequate filtering system and you are up and running. The addition of a shoal or two of small characins and a couple of dwarf *Corydoras* and the picture is complete.



Otocinclus huaorani

Hisonotus are also small Loricariidae catfishes closely related to *Otosinclus*, the images below are of the brilliant metallic green *Hisonotus aky*.

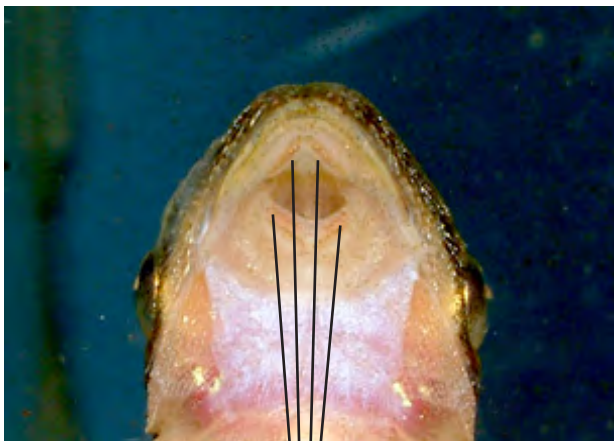


Hisonotus aky



Hisonotus aky mouth

All images by Ian Fuller



Otocinclus huaorani mouth showing the position of the teeth cartridges

Two green parrots are perched on a wooden branch, facing each other. The parrot on the left has a speech bubble above it containing text. The parrot on the right has a speech bubble above it containing text. The background is a light blue to green gradient.

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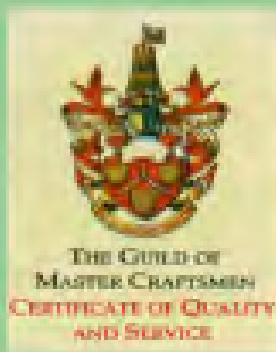
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