

CICHLID TAILS

The Newsletter of The Texas Cichlid Association

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President's Letter

Hello Everyone!

Happy New Year!

The TCA Christmas Party was well attended and fun! We had plenty of good food to choose from at the Golden Corral Steaks & Buffet in North Richland Hills. We exchanged lots of fishy gifts, not all live ones this year! I hope everyone had wonderful holidays!

We are still working on the meeting schedule for this year. We will bring in several speakers for the regular monthly meetings during the year, and our very own Larry Lampert is on the schedule. The Golden Corral has a very nice meeting room that we can use at no charge. They liked us so well after the Christmas party that they invited us

to come back any time! So much for rowdy fish people!

We are always open to moving the meeting location so no one has to drive so far each month. If you have a location you would like to use and want us to look into, then please let me know.

The biggest event for TCA this year is hosting the American Cichlid Association Convention in July. I am so excited to have all of our fish friends from around the country (and a few other places) come to Texas!

We have an awesome lineup of speakers, including Ad Konings, Willem Heijns, Al Klee, Wayne Leibel, Laif DeMason, Spencer Jack, Ric Perez and Howard Schmidt. Trips to the Sixth Floor Museum, the Dallas World Aquarium, the Fort Worth Stockyards and Billy Bob's are planned. Marvin and Ralph are working on the show awards, and Keith and Larry are busy planning Hospitality Room activities.

We are planning to set up 500 aquariums for the show alone. This is huge!!! To do this we will need every club member's help. We can all have a lot of fun doing this, too, by spreading out the work so everyone gets to visit some at the convention! So get your show fish ready and plan to attend the ACA 2005 convention!

The next regular monthly meeting is February 19th at the Golden Corral where we held the Christmas party. We are working on getting a "real live speaker", and are investigating several options. So everyone will have to attend the meeting to see who our special guest for the month is.

See you at the February meeting.

Kathy

CICHLID TAILS

Cichlid Tails is a bi-monthly publication produced by and for the members of the **Texas Cichlid Association**, a non-profit group of hobbyists dedicated to furthering the aquarium hobby and promoting the practice of keeping cichlids by the dissemination of information. Published since 1983, **Cichlid Tails** is dedicated to sharing technical and educational information on the keeping of the fishes of the family **Cichlidae**, and the keeping of aquariums and aquarium fish in general.

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TCA's website: www.texascichlid.org
ACA 2005 website: www.aca2005.org

Editor's Notes

Help! Yes, TCA members, I need your help! You will notice that this issue consists of only eight pages. I had to really scramble to make it that long, and even used "a blast from the past". I need articles, and a few photos wouldn't hurt either!!

What about you folks who are participating in the Breeder Award Program? One of the criteria for winning an award is writing an article for *Cichlid Tails*. Furthermore, I know some of you are real camera freaks. Send me the fruits of your obsession.

What about it, guys and gals? Yes, you *can* do it. What do you think editors are for? We will help you any way we can. Just give us a call or an e-mail.

No one identified the individuals in the picture below, so here's a hint. This picture was taken at the Catfish Convention held in October, 2004. Key word-"catfish". First winning response wins a prize!



Gotta go. It's 5:30 in the morning, time to begin a new day; breakfast and the newspaper are calling. See you in February at the Golden Corral!

Kathy

P.S. How do you like the new back cover? Thanks to Coleen Ullman for the great reworked TCA logo!

REPORT ON TCA'S CHRISTMAS PARTY 2004

On December 11, 2004, the Texas Cichlid celebrated the upcoming holiday season with its annual Christmas Party and "Crazy Santa" gift exchange.

This year the club broke with tradition and held the party at the Golden Corral in North Richland Hills, a buffet-style restaurant, rather than at a more traditional sit-down-and-be-waited-on establishment. I believe everyone enjoyed this format. I know the Golden Corral folks did – they even invited us back for regular monthly meetings!



What a pile of gifts!

After a wonderful meal, numbers were drawn by those who brought something to exchange, and the fun began. What a haul of gifts everyone brought! Items covered a wide range, including live fish, Keller Farms gift certificates, a collector's item book, fishy wine glasses, cookie jar and salt & pepper shakers, and a wooden crate with discus and angelfish on the ends.

After all the eating, visiting, gift-opening and swapping were completed, it was time to head home. (For some of us -- ask Ralph DeBoard about his parking lot "incident"!) Everyone had a great time and was in a proper mood for the holiday season.

CULTURING MICROWORMS

By Kathy England

Microworms are very small nematodes endemic to the leaf litter of the forest floor. They are a very good live food for the fry of most fish species, particularly for those fry that are too small to take newly hatched brine shrimp as a first food. Even the adults of smaller species tend to like these worms, which often stay suspended in the water for a while before settling on the tank bottom.

Culturing microworms is simple. For culturing medium, place a few tablespoons of dry baby cereal (you can use either rice or oatmeal – rice has worked better for me) in the bottom of a shallow plastic container such as a margarine tub or deli salad container, with perforated lids. There should be no standing liquid in the medium. The worms produce water as a waste product, so the culture will turn soupy later on anyway.

Sprinkle about a teaspoon of dry yeast into a cup and add about 1/4 to 1/2 cup of very warm water. Not so hot that you can't hold your hand under it. Very warm water is needed to dissolve and activate the yeast. Stir the yeast well until it is completely dissolved in the water. Then slowly pour the yeast water over the cereal in the container, stirring as you pour. The cereal should be gummy, not watery, so don't add too much water. If you need to add more water to make it gummy, make sure it's very warm. Once this is completed, add some worms, together with medium, from a starter culture, and put the lid on the container.

Within a few days, close inspection of the culture will reveal a writhing sheet of nematodes over the entire medium surface. Soon after, worms will be seen crawling up the container sides, where they may be collected. Use a toothpick or popsicle stick (or your finger) to carefully scrape worms from the container sides and then feed them to your fish. As with any fish food, overfeeding microworms will foul the tank water, so use them judiciously. The worms can

survive for up to 24 hours in the aquarium, but after that they die and decompose.



Kathy's Microworm Cultures

After some time, the culture will peak in productivity, after which it declines. If you let the culture go too long, it will turn into a stinking watery mess, so it is advisable to start a fresh culture seeded from the old culture as soon as it starts producing well. However, even if your culture crashes, it's usually worth a try to start a fresh culture using a bit of the "dead" culture. It may take a while for the culture to take off, but a few worms almost always survive to carry on the line.

Have fun with your microworms!! I keep mine in the kitchen, as you can see from the photo above – where will you keep yours?

TCA Donors and Supporters

TCA considers itself very lucky to have many different companies graciously donate items in an effort to both support TCA and keep the fishkeeping hobby growing. These donations benefit you, as a TCA member and/or fellow fishkeeper, in two ways: (1) by providing a way for TCA to raise money, which is used to fund semi-annual workshops, thus furthering the spread of information about cichlids; and (2) by providing you, the hobbyist, with top-quality products at very little cost. Because these

companies support you and your hobby, we ask that you seriously consider supporting them by purchasing their products for your fishkeeping needs.

We would also like to thank the many individual breeders and fish distributors who sent or delivered fish or other items to be auctioned off as TCA club donations. Also, many thanks to those who sponsored awards in our show. We appreciate your efforts. The list includes the following:

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| Amazonia | Kordon |
| Aquarium Pharmaceuticals | E. J. Danner |
| Aquarium Systems | Cole Enterprises |
| Armke's Rare Aquarium Fish | Hikari Sales |
| Cichlid News Magazine | Mark Whitney |
| DFW Aquarium Supplies | Whiz-Q Stone |
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| Old World Exotic Fish | Christy Duval |
| David Andrews | Phil Tucker |
| Randy Rhoades | Larry Lampert |
| Carvi Shamsid-Deen | Ron Treber |
| Ronnie Hoeninghaus | Nancy Clark |

Body color is a mellow golden with very definite metallic blue shimmering highlights. This is especially true in the more brightly color male. Dramatic splashes of red further highlight the metallic blue. Both male and female have a distinctive brilliant blue metallic line edging the entire jaw.

More peaceful than its Rift Valley cousins, *P. Philander* can readily be kept in a community tank of small South American dwarfs or preferably in a small tank by themselves. It in no way can compete and survive in a Rift Valley community tank. A well fed and maintained pair is very colorful and show to their best advantage in subdued lighting. A bottom to mid-tank swimmer, this friendly and gregarious fish does not need much in the way of hiding places.

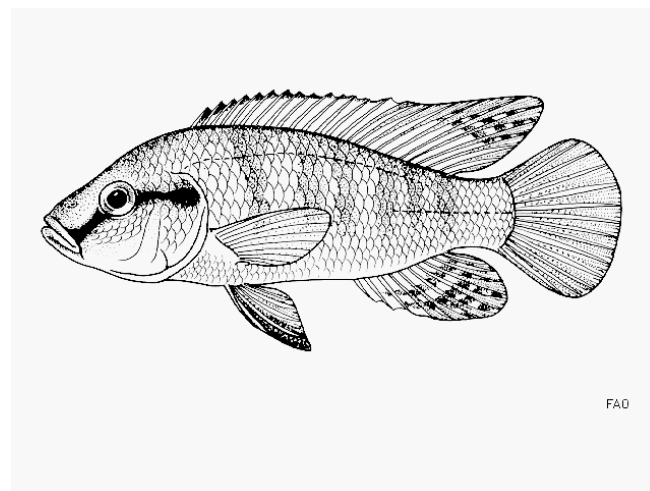
Alkaline water with a pH of 7.2 to 7.6 is preferable, but not critical. Temperature is variable and does not seem to be a factor. A clean tank, however, is a must. One-third of the water should be drained every week, removing any accumulated debris from the bottom. These hardy Africans seem to be particularly resistant to disease.

A versatile and voracious feeder, live brine shrimp and tubiflex worms are preferred, although a wide variety of foods are enjoyed by these interesting dwarfs, including frozen brine shrimp and flake food.

During spawning the male's caudal fin is a deep brilliant blue rimmed with red, while the belly exhibits a reddish-violet color. An area is hollowed out in the gravel and about 60-80 eggs are deposited. The pair will spin about in a tight circle as the female deposits her eggs. Closely following the female, the male fertilizes the eggs, which are then picked up by the female for mouth incubation. Most authorities state that the female does not feed during the period of incubation. We have not found this to be true with our spawning females, who have had no difficulty continuing to eat, despite their bulging bucal cavity.

After 12-14 days the free-swimming fry are released. Their size is surprisingly large for such small parents. For a long period of time the fry continue to respond to the mother's alarm mechanism, and at the first signal of distress will rapidly flee to the safety of her mouth. The female is a very accommodating and diligent mother. While posing no threat during this entire period and that of fry-rearing, the male seems to be only halfheartedly involved in protecting the fry. Since the fry are fairly well developed and of a good size when released, they can take Tetramin particles and baby brine shrimp with no difficulty whatsoever.

Most definitely a personality fish, *P. Philander*, with very little in the way of care and maintenance, will reward the aquarist with many hours of enjoyable fish watching. Conversely, I fully believe that this species enjoys "people watching" to the same extent.



**Hill Country Cichlid Club Workshop,
Show and Auction
May 13-15, 2005 in Austin**

This is HC3's inaugural workshop and show, so everyone should plan on attending and supporting our sister club. Pam Chin is one of the speakers. For more and updated info go to their website: www.xdeleon.com/hccc/

TAIL TRADER

Got something fishy to sell or trade? Notify the *Cichlid Tails* editor. Ads free to TCA members!

Scott Hager
(972) 679-9666 (Dallas)
E-Mail: pardalis55@hotmail.com
NO SHIPPING

FOR SALE:

Cyprichromis leptosoma Chituta "neon head"
small, \$10 ea
Julidochromis transcriptus Bemba small - med,
\$5-7 ea
Julidochromis regani small - med, \$5-7 ea,
Neolamprologus daffodil, assorted sizes, \$4-10 ea;
Enatiopus melanogenys coming soon, \$12 ea.

Calendar of Events

February 19, 2005: Regular monthly meeting, 7:00, at the Golden Corral, Grapevine Highway off Loop 820. Program is a "Mystery Guest Speaker".

March 19, 2005: Regular monthly meeting, 7:00, at the home of Keith and Stephanie Pearson. Page Ullman will show us how to build a wet/dry filter.

April 16, 2005: Regular monthly meeting, 7:00, Location TBA. Program is "Mystery Guest Speaker".

May 21, 2005: Regular monthly meeting, 7:00, at the home of Rob Mears, Oak Point, Texas. Larry Lampert will be speaking.

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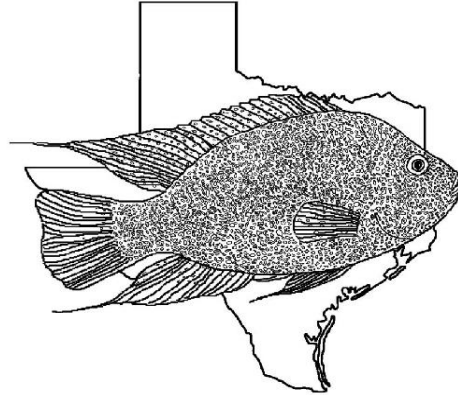
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