

Livebearer News

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BRITISH LIVEBEARER ASSOCIATION



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Editorial by Paddy Davies

Well this is the last issue of 2013!? Confusing isn't it...

I would like to thank all our contributors this year, it really is great to be able to publish original material.

I hope that 2014 will see all the Issues Published on time.

This Issue contains details of our Spring Auction in Yorkshire. This will be followed in October by our Autumn Convention, details to follow.

Have a very successful 2014, we are looking forward to seeing you at our up and coming events.

please send me any articles if you have any fishkeeping experience you would like to share, or if you have any photos of your fish or tanks you would like to share with us, (photos must be your own) and sent to me at the email address below.

Paddy Davies

Paddyd99@gmail.com

Chairman's Message by Chris Cheswright

This is the last magazine of 2013 so if you are looking for more you will need to rejoin. This can be done by sending me a cheque or through paypal blamembership@britishlivebearerassociation.co.uk . So decide on a postal or e-membership and get yourself rejoined. The first event of the year is booked and was in the last journal. The suggested hotel is one junction away from the venue and has a Toby Carvery, next door for eating and drinking (the hotel breakfast was more expensive last Year. The date is Sunday 23rd March. It is being run in conjunction with the DJAY Open Show but will have a separate auction for livebearers. The Club will be having an all fish Auction as well so if you keep other types of fish that is great for you.. We are intending to have a Table Show for pairs of fish and will supply the tanks, all you need to do is bring fish and water. These fish are auctioned at the end for the BLA and Charities so if you are bringing fish to the Auction please bring at least one bag for the Show.

The Classes will be:

Goodeids

Cultivated Livebearers

Any Other Livebearer

Breeders (at least 4 fish).

Since the start of last Year I have made a bit more of a concerted effort on the fish keeping and this has resulted in a population explosion of a few fish such as pygmy swords and a wild population of *X. variatus*. At the Midland Charity auction I picked up 3 populations of *Characodon lateralis* and all are doing fine. These were from stock being bred at Tropiquaria, well worth a visit I should think if you are down that way. <http://www.tropiquaria.co.uk/aquarium.html>

I am hoping that we get our act together for 2014, in particular getting all four Magazines out before the end of the Year. Paddy is always looking for some articles and pictures, please help him out. I would like to thank Kim for her constant pressure for us to get things done and the polite way in which she reminds us! Thanks Kim.

4th Annual Meeting of the Goodeid Working Group

Word and photographs by Paddy Davies

Editors note: We have previously published another (better) Article on this meeting by Nigel Hunter, but as both of us wrote an Article, I hope you do not mind us including it.

In September 2013 I attended the 4th Goodeid Working Group meeting in Asperen in the Netherlands. This was held jointly with the Netherlands Killifish Association.



Sterotypical photo of local area

There were four BLA Members there, Nigel Hunter, Shaun Stevens, Dai Jones and myself, a massive thanks is due to Nigel for his chauffering skills, he drove all the way from Britain to Holland via the channel tunnel, a distance of some 500 km's in his new car without a complaint...well, not many!

We met at Nigels at 5am and arrived at the Venue about 12pm – Not too bad at all.

There we were welcomed by Michael Koeck, our room was not ready, so we took the opportunity to have a welcome drink at the bar while the hotel filled up with Goodeid enthusiasts from around the world. There were people from Austria, Portugal, France, Netherlands, Belgium, UK, USA, Mexico, Germany, Denmark and probably several others that I cannot remember, so it was a truly International gathering.

There were show tanks on display with many species of Goodied from several populations, there were also quite a lot of Poecillids and more Killifish than you could shake a stick at!



Half of the fish Display

We went for a wander to the town of Leerdam as it was only ten minutes by car from the Venue, a lovely small town, we visited the local aquarium shop as well as the icecream parlour for Nigel 'Two scoops' Hunter.



Leerdam

That evening we had a meal at Fort Asperen, it was a lovely meal in a large banquet room,

On the Saturday we had the Lectures, as usual the calibre of Speakers was very high.

First up was Rit Forcier, a former Chairman of the American Livebearer Association, the subject of his Talk was collecting in Mexico, this was a fascinating account of the joys and tribulations involved in collecting fish in the wild as well as great photo's and descriptions of the habitats and a look at the work that the Fish Arks in both Morellia and Monterrey are doing. He ended by imploring us to join him next time.

Next up was supposed to be a lecture by Ruud Wildekamp from the Netherlands on Empetrichthys and Crenichthys, unfortunately Ruud could not make it, luckily for us, someone else, whos name I have forgotton stepped into the breech and delivered the talk superbly. In it we visited the habitats of these fascinating endangered egg laying Goodied, including locations of all of the Crenichthys bailyi subspecies.

The third lecture was presented by Adan Fernando Mar Silva from Mexico. This was entitled "Molecular systematic of *Xenotoca melanosoma*, an endemic species of central Mexico." This programme went though the research he had done in determining the relationships between different populations of *X.melanosoma*. He also highlighted the perilous situation this species is in.



The final Lecture was delivered by Rit as he was determined to give good value for money. This time with a more general Talk on his experiences with keeping and maintaining Goodeids over the Years. This was a great Talk going into just enough detail about the art of keeping Goodieds as a hobby and extolling to benefits of Groups like the ALA, the BLA and The GWG in terms of sharing information and supporting Conservation. After this Talk there was an Auction of Livebearers, many rare and desirable species were available, including *Phalloptychus januaris*, *Girardinichthys .irenae*, several *characodons* and many more.



BLA Members at Auction

This wonderful day was finished off by a great buffet meal in which both, Awards were handed out for the killifish and great conversations were had by all.

The next day was taken up by the auctioning off of the Showfish, about 150 lots of livebearers and over 500 lots of killies.

If this account has whetted your appetite, you are welcome to join us next Year when the Conference will be held in Morellia, Mexico, this is a rare chance to visit habitats of these rare fish and support the cause.

Finally I would like to say thank you to all who organised the Conference, and Nigel Hunter for driving.



Nigel '2 Scoops' Hunter





More B.L.A. Members



Xiphophorus variatus – Laguna, Mexico

Words and Photographs By Chris Cheswright

This platy, by its name, is a very varied fish in the wild. I cannot remember all the exact locations I visited these days but have fond memories of touring Mexico in a VW campervan. This was before the days of easily available 4w drive vehicles. The VW's were fine but lacking in a number of things like air-conditioning and a degree of comfort. With the engine in the back it was often difficult to keep the fish cool during journeys between locations. Other abiding memories are of red grease which seemed to be in places destined to stain t shirts and Martine who drove a whole day in 3rd gear.

So back to the fish. A muddy ditch by the side of the road did not look at all promising but one swoop of the net brought forth a vivid turquoise fish with a yellow tail. A most beautiful *variatus* platy that would have beaten any cultivated form into submission. Whilst another time in the same river that we found *Xiphophorus multilineatus* (a little further along the road) we came another *variatus* platy but this time with no colour what so ever. It did survive in the hobby for a while but the lack of appeal led to its demise in the UK.

So to another location that the great Mr MacAllister had visited before, down a side road posted Laguna (we never did find a lake), to a small well for the local village by the side of the road. This seemed to be fed by a stream or spring and was notable for the presence of a turtle. Also resident were some young *X. variatus* of unknown colours. Just down the road and through a barbed wire fence was a slow flowing stream in which we found quite a number of these young fish. A fair number made it make to the UK and the *X. variatus* Laguna population was in the hobby, and still is today.



These fish were very variable in colouration but as happens with breeding in our tanks the variety reduced to a few variations. Just like *X. xiphidium* which have varied markings on the caudal peduncle. The fish I have had for several generations are a very pretty fish and the males have either a red/ orange or a yellow tail. Going back about 5 years something odd happened, that I am not sure we have ever explained, but this population began sporting lots of black marking (see picture) and bred for a number of generations like this, they were truly stunning. But now there is no sign of this black colouration in the hobby. We have to assume (and hope) that we are still dealing with fish purely from that wild population and that no one along the line has bred it with some other platy. I have seen some odd fish over the years which may or may not have been inter species crosses but there is never any proof either way.

The Laguna population are not difficult to keep and are ideal for flock spawning. My present fish are in a 2 foot tank planted with *Cryptocoryne affinis* (a very hardy species that seems to grow almost in the dark) and a low temperature, probably around 18 or 19 Celsius. They do well and there are always babies. This is in no way the only way to keep them and other methods would result in a greater abundance of fry.

In summary a nice fish that brings back memories of a particular spot in Mexico.

Sales

I have a large number of Fish Tanks for sale , these vary in sizes, some with v traps, which is enough to start your own fish-room, if you are interested please contact me by phone or email, any reasonable offer accepted.

Dai Jones, wildun1964@gmail.com
01275 219236

Vienna VDA-AK Autumn meeting

Words by Nigel Hunter

Photographs by Kay Urban and Nigel Hunter

In October I cheekily invited myself to Vienna on the same weekend as the VDA German livebearer autumn meeting, I had been looking for an excuse to visit Michael Koeck at the Haus des Meeres Zoo again so off I went. The Hotel where the group were based was the same one I stayed in on the last visit to Vienna so I was happy about knowing the area

I arrived in Vienna at the Haus des Meeres at about 10am, Mike was there working so I left my luggage with him and headed off for a quick tour of the local market for breakfast and a bit of shopping

I returned to the HdM at about 2pm and met up with some friends from the Goodeid Working Group who were also attending the meeting the afternoon was spent drinking beer and chatting, An evening group meal at a local Greek restaurant followed till the early hours, luckily it was almost next door to our Hotel

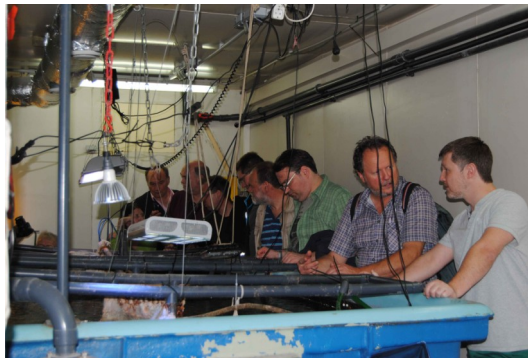
Saturday morning we went to the Haus des Meeres for the Meeting where I felt a little embarrassed by my lack of foreign languages but fortunately most of the group spoke some English so we managed, two talks were given and I could understand the written word better than the spoken. In the room was a 150,000 litre hammer-head shark tank. 'So what?' you say but we were on the 10th floor!



Lunch was at the best Schnitzel restaurant in Vienna, all I can say is they must have hearty appetites



Back to the HdM for an Auction of fish and plants I could have filled my fish room for a few Euros and very rare fish were offered *Characodons* were plentiful, but, as I was flying had to leave them. *Xiphophorus* and *Micropocilia* were well represented, wild types were mainly offered and the plants were superb, the auction was a little different as each breeder sold their own fish in separate lots so you could see whose fish you were buying
After a behind the scenes tour of the Haus des Meeres



We had a couple of hours till the evening meal at a nearby restaurant to view the fish from the public side.

After having the Schnitzel for lunch I asked for a light meal and a beer!



Obviously the others were looking at me and thought I was joking, a nice evening followed till the early hours.

Sunday we were going to Vienna zoo for a behind the scenes tour, I made my own way there as I was too late to go with the group.



On arriving at the Zoo, I was greeted by comments of are you not cold, as I had only a t-shirt and jeans, I thought it was a summer's day sunny and bright. We made our way to the aquarium and Vanessa was our guide, the talk was in German but the fish didn't seem to care.



Vienna has a very large collection of *Aphanius*, *Cyprinodon* and *Fundulus* and are very successful, looking at the numbers of fish. Each tank was clearly labelled with species and location and all the water parameters, which was a change from most fish rooms I know where the only labels are in our heads.

At the far end was the dark side of fishkeeping:



After the tour we were given the rest of the day in the zoo if we wished, I had received a text from home saying about wind, rain and hail stones, so I sent this picture of us having a beer and sandwich in the sun, needless to say the reply I got was not nice...





I would like to thank the VDA-AK for their hospitality, Vienna zoo and of course Mike, Erwin and Bruno for their interpretations and guidance. Thanks to Kay Urban who generously gave us permission to use his pictures

Ultimate Livebearer number 2: *Characodon garmani*

Words By Paddy Davies

This section is about livebearer species I would love to keep...one day perhaps.

This issue's article is about an extinct species of goodeid. *Characodon garmani* was described by Jordan & Evermann in 1898 from a location known as Parras, Coahuila, Mexico. This location is quite far away from any other goodeid locations. The springs that used to provide this species with its habitat have been dammed up and stocked with carp. The water is used mainly for agriculture.

Six other endemic species were described from this location between 1880 and 1895, these species are all now considered extinct.

Despite several searches this species has not been seen since 1953. We don't know very much about this species at all, there is only one female specimen preserved, this has occasionally been synonymised with *C. lateralis*. However it does have identifiable differences including body shape and fin size and shape. It is currently considered a valid species.

However there is some debate about the location, because it is so far out of the way and part of a different river system. On the one hand it may be that in the past the river systems were connected and this would explain this anomaly. The other train of thought is that this species is very similar to the population of a *Characodon sp.* found at 'Amado Nervo'. When the preserved female is compared to the live *C. sp.* 'Amado Nervo', there are striking similarities. This mystery may not be explained in the future but should be used as a reminder to all keepers of *Characodons* that populations should be separately from each other.

British Livebearer Association

Mini Spring Auction Sunday 23th March 2014

@

D J A Y 3RD OPEN SHOW



Rockingham Centre, Hoyland, South Yorkshire.

Address Sheffield Road, Hoyland, Barnsley, South Yorkshire
S74,0PY

URL <http://www.therockinghamcentre.co.uk/>

Nearest Accommodation if required,

please self book

Ramada Encore Barnsley Value Deal

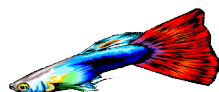
Whinby Road, Dodworth, Barnsley, S75 3LF.

(The Ramada Encore Barnsley, Junction 37 on M1, currently advanced room booking is £29 for a double for the Saturday. This is one junction from the venue and breakfast and dinner would be in the Toby Carvery next door)

Please bring your own water and bag fish responsibly and in insulated containers for travelling and storage before show and Auction please bring spare bags incase needed.

Please note some livebearer sp need individual bagging particular goodieds, any problems noted will be at the auctioneers decision and final.

some classes;
Goodeids
Breeders (4 fish)
Cultivated livebearers
Any other species Live-
bearer



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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 15th March 2014, could all contributors please ensure that articles are provided to the Editor by the Editor by the 10th of March 2014



Photo copyright Dai Jones