January 2016

Welcome to the first edition of Fins and Friends for 2016. I hope you all had a nice Christmas and I wish you a very happy new year.
Sadly, we have lost Tony as editor due to circumstances beyond his control so I'm standing in until we can find another full time editor. If you want the job please let a board member know. There are also other positions available, see inside for more details.
Shawn has taken over as speaker coordinator for this year and has some good speakers lined up for the coming months. Keep your eyes on this magazine for more details nearer the dates.

It would be really nice to see some articles written by members being put forward for inclusion in Fins and Friends. If you feel you can contribute something please email it to reginaaquariumsociety@gmail.com . I know several people who are going through the awards (BAP, HAP & APP) but stop when they need to write an article. Why give up? It doesn't take much to write a short article and it will progress you through the levels.

So, on with the issue.

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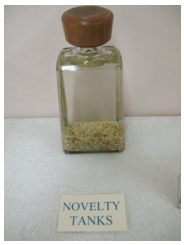
The last meeting of the RAS was held on Sunday 13th December 2015. Although poorly attended, those who went enjoyed a social day with secret Santa, home made desserts and an auction. Two children attended and were presented with Christmas bags. Four people got involved with the secret Santa. The club made $3 from the auction commission.

Results of the BTG show are as follows:
Photographs: 1st, 2nd & 3rd place Shawn Pollock
Arts & Crafts: 1st, 2nd & 3rd place Shawn Pollock
Novelty Aquarium: 1st place Shawn Pollock
My favourite fish: 1st place Shawn Pollock

Below are some photos of the day. Thanks to Martin Kesmarky for recording the day for us.



















GEOPHAGINAE

A Series By Paul Mansfield
Part Four

In this part we look at two genera; Acarichthys and Satanoperca.

Satanoperca are somewhat uncommon in the hobby. I have no idea why as they are really nice fish and easy to care for. Perhaps it's just that they can get large and need a lot of space, especially when breeding.
All Satanoperca (from the Greek – literally Satan's Perch – who comes up with this?) are fairly peaceful except when breeding. They are all gregarious to some extent and should be kept in groups of 5-8 or bullying of the weakest individual will occur. Surprisingly for a large fish they can not really take large foods so keep the size of the food fairly small. They also need to be fed 3-4 times a day. The old adage 'Little and Often' sure applies to this genus. Water quality needs to be kept up too or they are very prone to stress and diseases. Good filtration and weekly water changes are a must. The only real difference between the sexes is that females tend to be plumper than the males.

Satanoperca acuticeps (Sharphead Eartheater) is the odd one out of the genus as it tends to be more pelagic than benthopelagic. This means it feeds more in the water column than on the substrate. The more forward facing mouth is a clue to this behaviour. The light brown body colour is overlaid with horizontal rows of metallic blue spots and there are 4 dark spots along the lateral line. Fins are opaque with a blue or yellow tinge. There are blue lines on the face. Males can grow to 170mm with females staying slightly smaller. They do not mouthbrood at all, raising their fry in pits in the substrate.

Satanoperca daemon (Three spot Eartheater) is stunning to look at. The body is covered in horizontal rows of metallic blue/green scales and these continue into the lower part of the head. There are also two blue stripes from the mouth. One to the eye, the other passing beneath it. The lower fins and the bottom half of the tail are red with blue lines. The dorsal is opaque with yellowish red at the base and a pattern of blue and black at the top. There are three dark spots along the flanks, the one on the caudal peduncle being ringed in a lighter colour. Males can grow to 170mm with females staying slightly smaller. They do not mouthbrood at all, raising their fry in pits in the substrate.

Satanoperca jurupari (Demon Eartheater) can grow to 185mm with females being a bit smaller. The light brown body colour is overlaid with several rows of golden green metallic scales. There are no dark spots on the flanks. The fins are opaque with a bluish sheen. Despite the common name they are not at all demonic. They are larvophilous breeders. This is one of the more commonly seen of the genus.

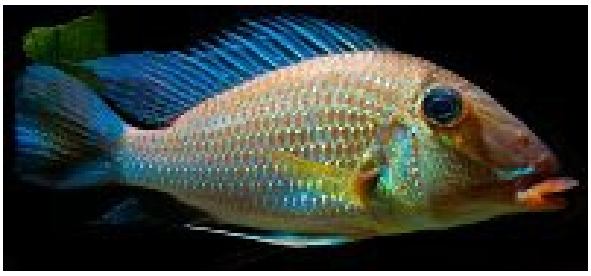
Satanoperca leucosticta is subtly stunning. The olive green body colour is overlaid with rows of metallic green/gold scales, right up to the mouth. The top of the head does not have them but has dark horizontal lines from mouth to forehead. The fins are basically clear but covered in the same bright spots as on the body. Males grow to 150mm, females a bit smaller. They are larvophilous breeders.

Satanoperca lilith is perhaps the plainest of the genus but can still be a good looking fish. The light brown body does show some reflective scales but no colourful lines as in other species. There is a dark spot just under the dorsal fin and a lovely eye spot on the caudal peduncle. The fins are mostly red with blue spots. There is a pattern of horizontal lines across the front of the face. This is the biggest fish in the genus. Males can reach 255mm, females a bit smaller. No mouthbrooding for this fish, they prefer to raise the fry in pits dug in the substrate.

Satanoperca mapiritensis is another species that lacks the bright body spots. However, the head is covered in bright blue scales forming a reticulated pattern. There are no dark spots or stripes on the body either. Fins are opaque with a blue sheen and some red pattern will be visible. This is the smallest of the genus. Males reach 140mm, females a bit smaller. They are ovophilous breeders.

Satanoperca pappaterra (Pantanal Eartheater) has a few lines of blue scales along the flanks but more lines made up of dark, non reflective scales. The head does have the bright scales across the gill plates and forming a diagonal line passing beneath the eye. The top lip is light blue. The fins are light blue with red patches. Males grow to 192mm, female a bit smaller. They are ovophilous breeders.

Satanoperca rhynchitis is quite perch like in appearance with the rows of green scales along the body and the overlay of several dark stripes. There is a small dark spot in the tail, just behind the top of the caudal peduncle. The lower lip is red. The head has no reflective scales but there are darker lines across the head. Fins are opaque white with occasional smudges of light yellow. Males reach 141mm, females stay a bit smaller. They are ovophilous breeders.

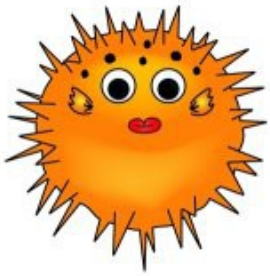


Satanoperca sp. 'Orange Lips' (left above) and **Satanoperca sp. 'Red Lips'** (right above) are currently being sold as two distinct species but this is open to doubt. Both come from French Guyana and are very similar. (The blue showing in the fins above is flash blue not true blue). Some ichthyologists are claiming that both fish are actually just variations of Satanoperca rhynchitis but the jury is still out on this one. As they are both fairly recent discoveries a lot more research needs to be done. There is not even a full size published for them as yet. We do know that both (if indeed it turns out to be two species) are ovophilous breeders.

Lastly for this part we look at the genus Acarichthys. Very easy to do as there is only one fish in the genus.

This is **Acarichthys heckelii**, the Threadfin Acara. This lovely fish has been in the hobby for ages and most people would have seen it in shops. Although fairly peaceful they can have a problem with each other so a 33gal tank is the minimum size for a pair. You want more then you really need to get that big tank going. The silvery grey body is overlaid with horizontal rows of blue/green metallic spots which continue into the fins. There is a black mid lateral spot and a vertical black line through they eye. There is a yellow patch on the gill plate, a larger one across the 'shoulders' and a third in the anal fin, All fins have some red in them to some degree. The heckelii can be frustrating for would be breeders as they mature quite slowly. Indeed they may be two to three years old before they spawn for the first time. Even then they are not easy to trigger. The temperature needs to be lowered, then raised, maybe several times to get them going. Both sexes have the thread fins that give them the common name. The only real difference between the sexes is that females are fuller in the body. Males can grow to 134mm with females usually staying a bit smaller. Breeding habits are unusual in the wild in that the female actually digs burrows in the substrate in which she lays her eggs. She digs several, some true, others just blinds, probably to confuse predators. This is not really possible in an aquarium environment but luckily they have been found to spawn in a large upturned flowerpot with a 'doorway' cut out. No mouthbrooding takes place. Although not fussy about foods it is important that this fish is given some form of vegetable matter on a regular basis. Without it the species does not do too well.

In the next, and final part of the series we will be looking at the two genera Biotodoma and Guianacara.



Saskatoon Aquarium Society will be holding their Giant Auction on Sunday 31st January 2016 commencing at 14.00. The usual venue – Faith River Church, 2625 Preston Avenue South, Saskatoon.
Always a good turn out and usually some interesting finds. Bidding can sometimes get fierce but it's all done if a light hearted, very friendly way. It's always worth a trip to Saskatoon auctions so hope to see you there.

Remember that there is no RAS meeting in January this year. The next meeting is Sunday 21st February. Usual time and place.

There will be workshops presented by Shawn and Lee as well as a round table discussion, presentation of the awards for 2015 and discussion on the budget for the coming year. We hope you can make it to this meeting.
Awards to be presented are as follows:
BTG winner and BTG runner up
Editor's choice award winner and runner up
Breeder of the year
Horticulturist of the year
Senior Member of the year

<u>The RAS Needs You</u>

Sadly we have lost both Tony and Penny already this year due to circumstances beyond their control. James and I went to dinner with them at the end of December and they were very sad to have to leave the RAS and Regina. We will miss them greatly and wish them well in their new future.
Their departure leaves more gaps to fill than ever so if you feel you can take one of the positions listed below please contact a board member.

Board Member at large
Treasurer
Fins and Friends Editor
Behind the Glass coordinator
Aquatic Photography Programme coordinator.

The good news is that membership rates have not changed this year. Still a bargain at $15 for single adult, $20 for a family and $5 for a junior member.

Fish Of The Month

A new, ongoing series. Each month we will look at a different fish. To start us off we have the Pearl Gourami ,Trichopodus leerii (pronounced Trick-oh-poh-dus leer-ee-eye).
Most commonly called the Pearl Gourami it also goes by the names Mosaic Gourami or Lace Gourami. All names are suitable given it's pattern. The whole body is covered with iridescent spots giving it a mosaic, lace or mother of pearl effect. There is a horizontal black stripe from the lips to the caudal peduncle where it ends in a spot. Like most gouramis, the ventral fins have become long and thin.
It is a Labyrinth Fish, meaning that it can breathe atmospheric air from above the water surface. Naturally occurring in swamps where the oxygen levels may not always be high it has adapted this method of breathing so that it doesn't die from lack of oxygen.

This is the most peaceful of the medium sized gouramis and should not be kept with aggressive or overly active fishes as they will become stressed out to the point of death. They do best in a large tank (30 gals or above) with lots of plants, including floating plants, good filtration and somewhat subdued lighting. They are not overly fussy about water parameters, being able to live happily in water from 5.5 – 8.0 pH and a hardness anywhere between 2 and 30 dH. The temperature should be fairly warm, between 75 – 86f (24-30c). Although similar at first glance when small as they grow they become very easy to sex. The males will develop pointed dorsal and anal fins while the females' fins are rounded and shorter. The males also develop a deep red colouration on the 'breast'. They are not at all fussy about food and will take prepared foods with as much gusto as live or frozen. As with all fish their diet should be varied as possible with frozen food (bloodworm or brine shrimp) at least twice a week. A great benefit of this fish is that it will eat Hydra so if you have a problem with those particular nasties then this is the fish you need.
Breeding is fairly easy but you will need a breeding tank for a pair. This need not be tall and should only be filled up to about six inches in depth. The tank should be at a temperature above 80f, have minimal or no filtration, be well planted with a large number of floating plants and have a tight fitting lid. Condition the pair with live foods or frozen bloodworm until the female is ripe with eggs (you will see her abdomen bulge). Once she is ready the male will start to display and hopefully

build a large bubble nest. If you do have filtration in the tank it should be turned off at this point. If the nest is impressive enough the female will approach and the fish will feel each other with those long thin ventral fins. Spawning takes place beneath the nest in the typical Anabantoid fashion of embrace and roll. The male fertilises the eggs as the female expels them. The eggs will usually float up into the nest but any that sink are retrieved by the mail and spat back into the nest. The embrace/roll may occur a few times until the female is out of eggs. She may produce up to 300 at any one time. Once spawning is complete the female is chased away and it is best that you remove her at this point or she may well be killed by the over protective male. The male tends the nest, retrieving any eggs that fall free and removing any eggs that are infertile. The eggs hatch in around 30 hours. The male continues to guard and tend the fry until they are free swimming 4-5 days later. At this point the male should also be removed. The tight lid is important as you should have warm, moist air above the water. The fry will go to the surface and take a breath of air to fill their labyrinth organ. If this is cold then you could lose all your fry at this point. The fry need infusoria or liquid food at this point being able to take rotifers after a few days. At about a week old they should be able to take newly hatched brine shrimp, microworms or powdered fry food. The fry grow quite slowly and special care must be taken when doing water changes (these should be frequent) as a sudden change in temperature can kill off the babies. Always ensure new water is the same temperature as the tank. Once the babies are showing signs of eating well and swimming around then you can start to raise the water level by an inch a day and the tight fitting lid is not necessary any more. Unless you have unlimited tank space it is going to be impossible to raise 300 fry so be prepared to lose some along the way.

Suitable tank mates for the Pearl Gourami would be peaceful Rasboras such as the Harlequin (Trigonostigma heteromorpha), most Rainbowfishes, Platies and even Angelfish that aren't breeding. Corydoras spp. and most plecs are suitable for the bottom of the tank.

All photographs by Paul Mansfield. Which fish would you like to see as Fish of the Month?

2016 Board and Coordinators

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Vice President	Lee van Hardeveld
Secretary	Jami Owens
Treasurer	James Scharnatta (pro tem)
Director at Large	Lynette Halbgewachs
Director at Large	Vacant

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Aquatic Photography Programme (APP)	Vacant
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Breeder's Award Programme (BAP)	Carol Aitken
Canteen	Kim Therens
CAOAC liaison	Shawn Pollock
Editor's Award Programme	Paul Mansfield (pro tem)
Horticultural Awards Programme (HAP)	Adrienne Reinson Wilson
Fins and Friends Editor	Paul Mansfield (pro tem)
Behind the Glass Show	Vacant
Speaker coordinator	Shawn Pollock
Webmaster	Chris Larsen
Marine coordinator *	Lynette Halbgewachs
Member Profiles	Kim Therens

* This position will be ratified by the members at the next meeting.

Judging Standards Committee:
Paul Mansfield
James Scharnatta
Chris Larsen

Please volunteer for one of the positions in red or blue above.

Next issue of Fins & Friends - 14th February 2016

Objectives of the RAS

The Regina Aquarium Society is dedicted to promoting and encouraging interest in the study, breeding and exhibition of all forms of aquatic life and also promotes fellowship between members, other aquarium societies and the general public.

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