



FIRST COAST BETTA SHOW May TBAS Meeting

THE FILTER



Xiphophorus helleri
Red Brick Sword

TBAS . . . Since 1992

April 2018

Volume 27 Issue 9



TAMPA BAY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

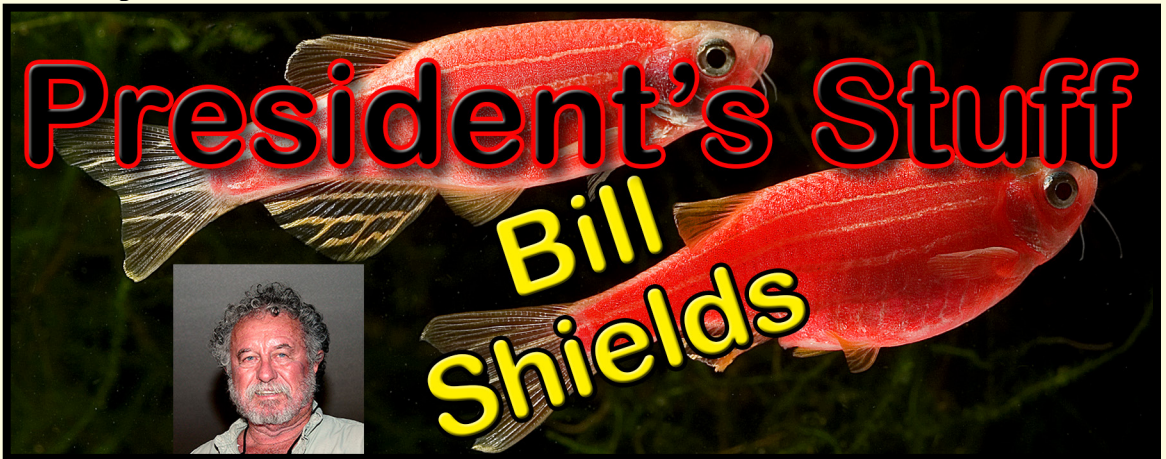
“THE FILTER”

Tampa/St. Pete, Florida

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Another reason to be grateful to having friends like Charlie Nunziata, is their willingness to help you. Our scheduled speaker cancelled the Friday before the meeting and on the drive up to Jacksonville for our SKS (Suncoast Killifish Society) meeting Saturday. I mentioned our predicament. Charlie said he would put something together for us. That was an understatement as he gave us a very interesting and informative talk. Wish I could “put something together” with so little notice.

Sorry I had to miss the BBQ/ tour of Andres Ryan’s facility on Sat March 17th. I understand there were lots of good food to eat and many items to purchase at his facility. Andres is a great producer and a real friend to the hobby.

The information and forms on the First Coast Betta Show and presentation at our May meeting have been posted on all the Florida clubs fb pages and on our forum. This is an opportunity to show off your fish and purchase some beautiful Bettas in the auction. Feel free to ask Bill Little, Paul and Aurelia Ogles any questions you may have pertaining to the show. Please fill out all your paper work before the day of the event and bring it in with your fish between 5 and 6:30 PM on April 9th.

Looks like our efforts to get the forum being used more frequently is starting to work. The forum does not track you like the social media sites do and is easily searchable. There is a wealth of information available. If you are not a member now is the time to sign up for an account.

I am looking forward to this month’s presentation by Chuck Rambo on the History of Cichlids in the Hobby.



Tropheus moorii Chipimbi
Red Chipimbi
Photo by Mike Jacobs 2018

Bill

Bill Shields, President, TBAS



WILD BETTAS – THE ALBIMARGINATA COMPLEX (PART 2)

Previously (January 2018 issue of THE FILTER), we talked about the fact that the genus *Betta* is comprised of a very large number of species and the need to assign them into smaller units referred to as Groups or Complexes. This month we will explore the first of the Complexes – the Albimarginata Complex. This complex is comprised of only two species *Betta albimarginata* and *Betta channoides*.

While both species are small in size, about 2.25”, with the female being a bit smaller. Both species are paternal mouthbrooder and the male incubates from 10 to 15 days with 12 days being very consistent. Incubation time can vary with water temperature. Females normally initiate spawning. Both species are among the most colorful of the many wild betta species. Males normally are more intensely colored than females; females tend to have a washed out look compared to the male.

Comparison photos are shown below.



Betta albimarginata

Betta channoides

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Mature male *Betta albimarginata* and *Betta channoides* look very much alike and has caused a great deal of confusion. On at least one occasion images of one species has been substituted for the other in a leading publication.

While the habitat for the species is relatively close in proximity the populations does not comingle nor do they cross-breed as far as we know. The separation is maintained by an interesting geographic barrier which does not permit comingling of the two species despite the areas being less than 150 km.

Both species come from Indonesia, more precisely from the province of East Kalimantan which is the eastern region of the island of Borneo. The species are separated by mountain range. *B. albimarginata* can be captured to the north of the mountain; *B. channoides* are found on the south side of the mountain. When keeping these species it is important to remember, particularly when handling fry, not to get confused and mix the two species as they will hybridize.

If you do not have any experience with maintaining and breeding wild bettas either of these two species are good candidates for your initial try. You normally do not see them in your LFS but are offered on Aquabid fairly often. Additionally they travel reasonably well because there is no need to worry about oxygen issues.

These species are paternal Mouthbrooders. Best practice suggests that pairs should be setup in their own tank with the tank size between 5 – 10 gallons. The tank should have the tightest-fitting cover you can find and the tank should not be filled to the top. I leave the level of water an 1 to 1.5 inches from the top. Raising fry requires a need for a layer of warm, humid air in the container to permit the proper development of the labyrinth organ.

The breeding process begins with a protracted courtship; eggs and milt are released during an “embrace” typical of anabantoids in which the male wraps his body around that of the female. Several trial embraces may be required before spawning commences. Once the male has all the eggs in his mouth the cycle is repeated until the female is spent of eggs. This process can take place over a significant period.

It has also been my experience that spawns are quite small, with 12-20 eggs being considered a good numbers. Two of my spawns

produced only 2 fry. You must also be very careful not to disturb the holding male while he is holding. When surprised the male will often swallow or release the eggs prematurely. The incubation period is 10 – 21 days at the end of which the release is fully-formed, free-swimming fry.

At this point there is a decision to be made. Do you remove the parents or attempt to collect and remove the fry? My decision, particularly with my use of 5 gal tanks, is to remove the parents and let the fry grow out in the tank. The fry are sufficiently large to accept foods such as microworm and BBS immediately.

If you are new to keeping wild bettas, one of these two small species is an excellent place to start. Next time we will look at keeping a larger mouthbrooder.

CHUCK RAMBO SPEAKING AT TBAS MONDAY, APRIL 9th



History of Cichlids in the Hobby

by Chuck Rambo

Chuck has been keeping cichlids for over 50 years. At one time he maintained over 50 aquariums with cichlids from all over the world. His interest in the hobby was enhanced with his involvement with numerous aquarium societies. He has been a two time Chair of the American Cichlid Association and was awarded the title of “Fellow” for his contributions to the society. He has been the past President of the Pacific Coast Cichlid Association many times and been awarded the honor of “Life Member”. His appreciation of the aquarium hobby lead to another interest in the history of keeping aquarium fish. Chuck’s presentation will start with the Victorians keeping aquarium fish in the mid 1800’s up to the 1970’s and the introduction of rift lake cichlids.

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Onespot Squeaker . . . *Synodontis schoutedeni*

photo: Mike Jacobs 2018

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Occasionally I have someone who has a fish, usually an Oscar (*Astronotus ocellatus*) that is listless and eating very little. The water checks out fine and the diet seems good. Or the owner is away on vacation and the fish won't eat. Some people find it difficult to believe that fish have intelligence and feelings. But anyone who has kept fish for any length of time knows that they recognize the person who feeds them. So do fish get depressed?

In their natural habitat there are challenges all the time: finding food, guarding their territory, finding a mate (sounds familiar). The smarter the fish the better it survives and reproduces - Darwin's theory simplified.

I had an Oscar that kept a pet goldfish. He would chase it around until he had cornered it and then back off and laugh (I swear). But they were also the best of friends and even slept next to each other at night. The Oscar kept breaking the heater so I piled several lava stones around it. Every day some of them had been moved and just when he would expose the heater I would pile them back up and it would start all over again. One day just for fun I threw in a couple of ping pong balls. The Oscar got me back for that. He would bounce them off the lid in the middle of the night making a loud KAPOW sound. I also put several plastic plants with fishing weights attached. These were moved constantly, too. In short I gave my Oscar toys to entertain himself. As a result, I rarely had problems with his not eating or his sulking in the back of the tank, until I went away on vacation. He did not eat the whole week I was gone. The goldfish ate fine.

Oscars are not the only fish to get depressed. Sometimes people who keep bettas have problems with their fish. These fish love to explore and adding several caves and plants they will move about and squeeze through every space available. Add a snail or a couple of ghost shrimp and the betta will be a very happy fish. The mirror theory usually works because the betta is defending his territory and it gives him something to do. Constant defending can be stressful however. To really enjoy the intelligence of these fish put something new in the tank and watch them investigate it.

Saltwater fish have been known for their “smarts” for a long time. Everyone knows about the octopus’ ability to open jars for food. I think they can read, too. I had one escape and jump three cubicles, passing several \$12 fish to eat a \$30 fish. I know someone who has trained his Huma Huma Trigger to do loopos upon command. I had a mantis shrimp for several years that was trained to do tricks for food. Most people who keep saltwater fish already know about keeping habitat with their fish and invertebrates but sometimes they need a little stimulation, change things around or make them work for their food.

So keep your fish happy, healthy and entertained and they will live a long time and entertain you in the process. Until next month, happy fish (and invertebrates) keeping.



Nothobranchius rachovii 'Beira 98'

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MEMBERSHIP DUES!!!!



Membership Dues for TBAS are due on the anniversary of your sign-up date every year. Please make sure you check the “sign-in” list on the table at every meeting to check your “Dues-Date” . . . Thanks!!!

USE PAYPAL ON THE TBAS WEBSITE . . . TBAS1.COM . . . !!!!!

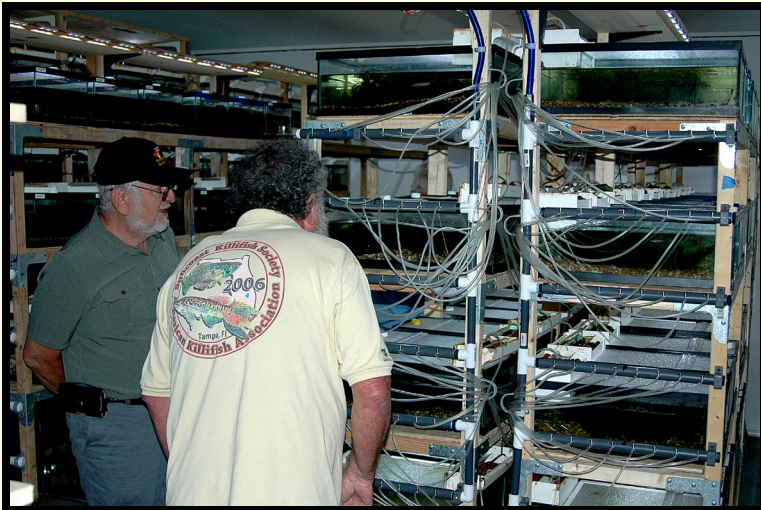
Ken's New House & Fishroom!!!

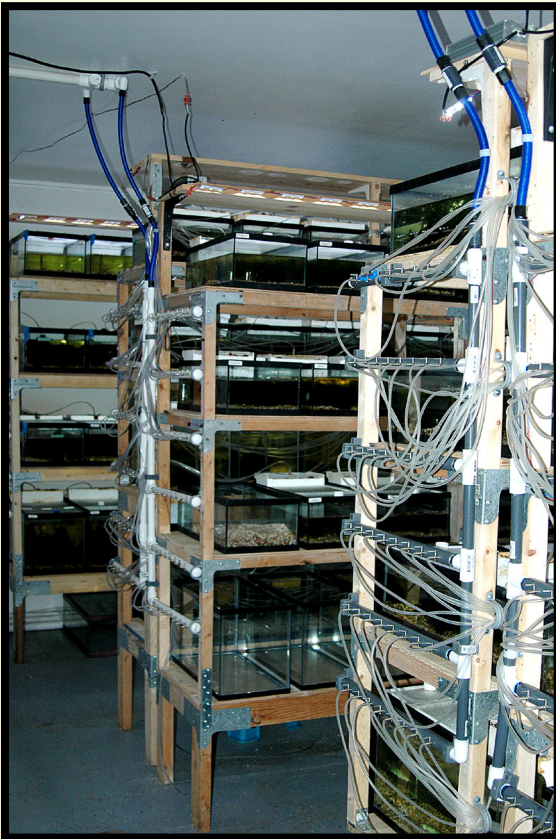
by Mike Jacobs

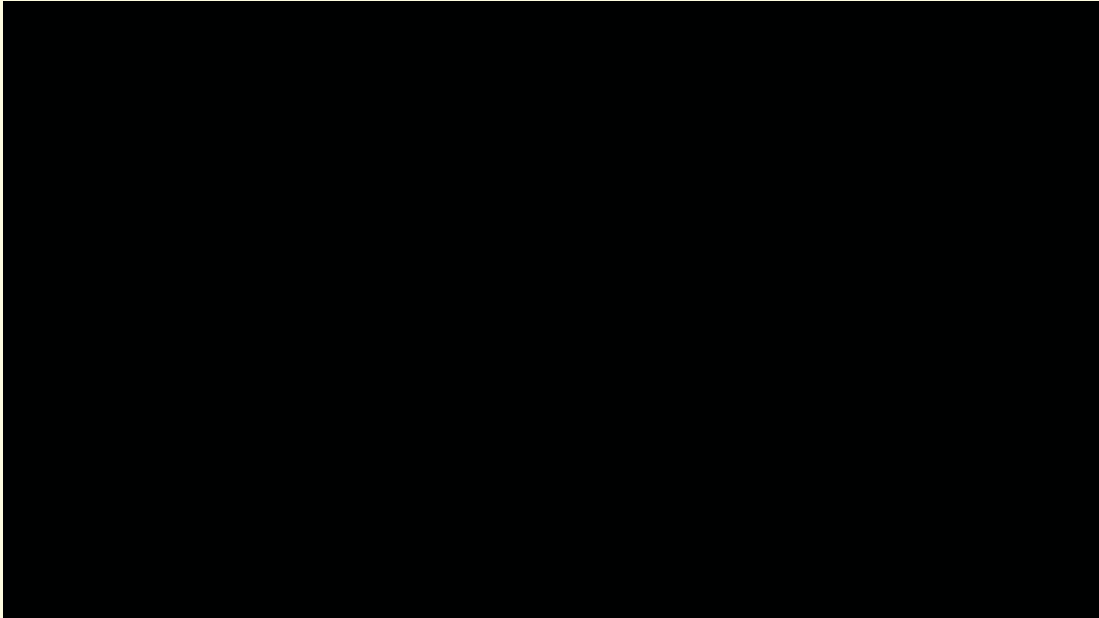
Ok . . . we keep fish . . . we are a little bit **CRAZY** . . . but now I know someone that is certifiably **CRAZY**. Ken Normandin, a long time member of the Suncoast Killifish Society (SKS) just bought a new house in Jacksonville, Fla. and built a new fish room - 300 TANKS . . . yes . . . 300 TANKS!!!

The SKS went to Jacksonville to see his new house and fish room and this is what we experienced. I was absolutely in awe!!! Ken, of course fixed up the new house first but then he turned to the **NEW FISH ROOM!!!** These photos will only give you a hint as to the scale of it all . . . Ken was proud . . . justifiably so!





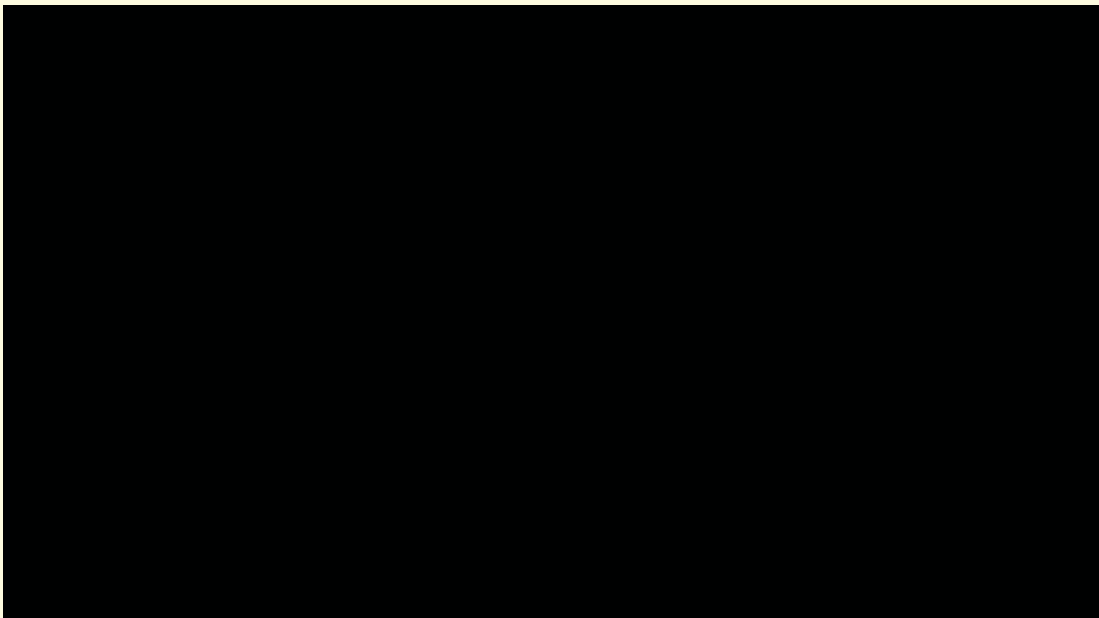




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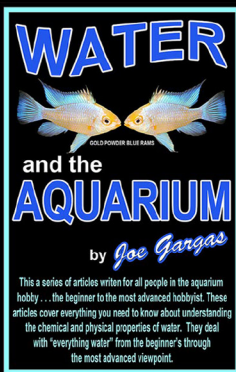


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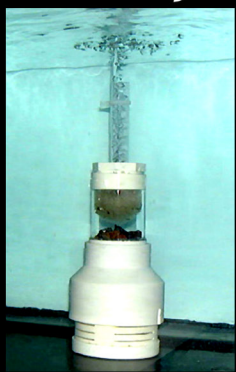


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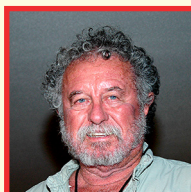


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