

# UnderWater



The Official Newsletter of the Iowa Aquaria Association

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COVER: Copperband Butterfly | by Jeff Shelton (jeff)

INSIDE: The Dailey Adventure: Sailfin Pet Shop | Amazon Biotope Aquarium



# UnderWater Photography Contest



## Honorable Mentions for October 2005

Top: Shrimp  
by glass-gardens

Bottom left: *Cynotilapia afra* "Sand Sanga"  
by Chad Lopez (orbital)

Bottom right: Picasso Trigger  
by Jeff Shelton (jeff)

**First place this month goes to Jeff Shelton, for a great photo of his Copperband Butterfly (on the cover). Well done, as usual Jeff! October 20th is next month's photo submission deadline.**

# THE ADVENTURE

## The Sailfin Pet Shop in Champaign, IL

Another month has passed, and during that time, I have had a couple of fishy adventures. Our focus for this month's Dailey Adventure is The Sailfin Pet Shop.

I had the pleasure of visiting this store located in Champaign, IL. It's an easy store to find, off of Interstate 74, at 720 South Neil Street. The business is incorporated, and the President of the store is John Cwaygel. John and I were not able to correspond in person, but he left me a nice voice-mail, inviting me to do the article, and allowing me to do whatever necessary to get it done (within reason). However, as I was not able to meet John, I had the privilege of speaking with a few staff members, and specifically the Manager, Tim Norsen. Tim told me, under John's ownership, the store has been there for 28 years!

I don't know where to begin, but will start with a simple WOW!! I had been to this store before, and marked it as an apex "mom and pop shop" years ago; and after this visit, my opinion has not changed. It had been several years since my last visit, and it was nice visiting it again. Some things reminded me of days of old, and some things were certainly new.

I'll say that this is one of the best all around pet stores I have visited. From the birds, to the reptiles, to the small animals, to the fishes; they not only have quality and



quantity, but things are maintained well. The staff seems knowledgeable and shows care for their animals. Everything is well kept, and nicely displayed. I remember, from years passed, that the birds were quite good at talking in comparison to other stores. As much as I could go on, this is not what the article is about. But, you should know that they are an excellent all around petstore, and one I believe you'll be hard pressed to beat.



# THE ADVENTURE

Onto more interesting things, let's get started on their fish. One of the first things I noticed was the amount of species of fishes they had in the store. They were of nice quality, and they had many different species to choose from. I would label them as having something for just about everyone, but the store appeared to put an emphasis on their Saltwater fish and American Cichlids. I'm not saying they didn't have African Cichlids, "Community" fish, "Oddball" fishes, etc. But, I observed many species of these types of fish that one would not regularly see in the IAA area as much.

Surprisingly, the store doesn't house large aquariums for displaying their fish. From what I saw, the saltwater area had 10-29 gallon aquariums, and 20-20L gallon aquariums. They did have what appeared to be about 9-30s for various invertebrates and live rock. In addition, some of the display tanks up towards the front of the store house some nice looking saltwater specimens (I'm assuming not for sale). The selection of saltwater fish is the best I've seen; about double of any store in the Quad Cities area.



In the next aisle over, you'll encounter freshwater fish. At the end of the aisle are their bettas which are nicely displayed in small aquariums partitioned off to maximize their space/display of the fish. In this aisle, there are 24-20H gallon aquariums, and I believe 45-15 gallon aquariums. Fifteen of the 15 gallon aquariums are housed with plants that appeared to be very healthy and thriving.

In the last aisle, you'll observe their largest tanks in the store. There are 24-30 gallon aquariums along with 10-29 gallon aquariums, and 20-20L gallon aquariums. In these tanks are miscellaneous freshwater fishes, and you are likely to find the larger specimens in this area.

One other thing to note about the store is its pricing for dry goods. I didn't observe a whole lot, but pricing seemed typical of most mom and pop shops. I would say the prices were on the low end of the scale, but understandably, not as cheap as superstores and mail order catalogs. For example, an AquaClear 110 Powerfilter was \$67.95. Their aquariums were also nicely priced, and they had a nice selection to choose from.

On fish pricing, they were very reasonable for most fish.



# THE ADVENTURE



For example, *Cyrtocara moori* (Blue Dolphin) at a solid 4" were only \$9.95 each. *Tropheus moori* "Firecracker" were only \$16.95 and were a good 2.5" each. Nicely sized Iridescent Sharks, around 4", were only \$4.89 each. I do not have any specific pricing for saltwater fishes, but I observed it to be reasonably low.

The last of the fish extends up to the front of the store. In one area is a pond, along with various tanks for housing cooler water fishes (Koi, Goldfish, etc.). In another area, also up in the front of the store, were some display aquariums.

Another thing I wanted to discuss, in detail, is the number of different species the store carried. I'll stick with some of the American Cichlids...but here is a small list of things I saw for sale. I saw Flag Cichlids, Red Headed Cichlids, Cutters Cichlid, Robertson's Cichlid, Panama Cichlid, Brazilian Geophagus, Surinam Geophagus, Sajica Cichlid, Flyer Cichlid, Texas Cichlid, Green Pike Cichlid, Altum Angels, Discus, Jurapari, as well as others. I would like to point out that they had *Corydoras barbatus* catfish (South American) for sale; only the second time that I have ever seen them at a pet store.

Before I left, Tim took me around for a quick behind the scenes show. Their aquariums, for the most part, are on central filtration systems. There is one for freshwater, and one for saltwater. The reef tanks are not on central filtration. Both main filters have chemical, biological, and

mechanical filtration ensuring clear water. They are also run through UV Sterilizers for minimizing the spread of bacteria, etc.

Tim also mentioned that the store designs and installs aquariums and filter systems for residences and businesses. He showed me their 210 gallon reef display tank, and what filtration they designed for it. Most of it was over my head, not having a lot of DIY experience with designing refugiums, etc. However, it was interesting, and certainly showed some of their staff's skill.

Should you have any more questions, feel free to contact the store yourself at (217) 352-1121.



# The Amazon Biotope Aquarium



## Introduction

A biotope aquarium simply means one that only uses flora and fauna from a single region. These aquaria tend to look very natural and are worth the effort.

The water in the Amazon is soft and acidic and usually highly coloured because of all the humic acid. Much of the light is cut

off by overhanging trees, but where the light does penetrate through there is a rich density of aquatic plants. Those are the wild conditions, but the fish that come from there have also become domesticated over many generations, and because of this they are more accustomed to living in harder and less acidic water than their

wild relatives. Quite a high proportion of all the common community fish originally come from this vast region.

## Care

Basic care is exactly the same as any other community aquaria in most regards. Allow the bogwood to colour the water slightly - this will give the tank a far more authentic look and will also alter the light spectrum to one that suits the higher plants more than algae.

A careful eye must be kept on the pH, since bogwood has a tendency to cause the pH to drop to dangerous levels. It may be necessary to add something to buffer the water from time to time (Kent pH Stable is ideal). Regular partial water changes of about 20% weekly should be carried out, and the new water should have some trace elements added to it.

## You will need

The tank can be of any size but big is best. Because of using a large amount of real plants, two lighting

tubes should be used with reflectors. A power-filter will create good localised water movement. Several large pieces of bogwood are used for the main hard landscaping. Set up the tank with all the equipment and then arrange the bogwood - try to aim for a tangled effect as though the wood had collected there after drifting down stream. Once you are happy with the arrangements put the plants in place.

## Filtration

External power filter, used mainly for biological and mechanical filtration. No chemical filtration, as this would remove vital trace elements needed for plant growth. Because of the large number of plants reduce the normal level of filtration and aim to filter the tank's volume of water once every 4 hours.

## Lighting

Use two or three tubes with spectrums for plant growth. The tubes must be the entire length of the aquarium and they must have properly made reflectors. This seems like a lot

## NEPTUNE AQUATICS



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# The Amazon Biotope Aquarium



of light but without it the plants will fail regardless of what else you do.

## Water Conditions

Temp. - 74°F to 78°F.

pH - 6.0 to 7.0

GH - 3 to 7

KH - 2 to 4

Ammonia/Nitrite - no trace

Nitrate - < 10ppm

## Feeding

All the fish will thrive on a diet of flake and live or frozen food. The bristle-nose catfish will also keep any algae at bay.

The herbivores will generally leave the plants alone if they are fed with -

- Lettuce
- Cooked peas without their skin
- Algae pellets/wafers
- Sliced cucumber

Omnivores will require flake food and some live or frozen food two or three times per week.

All the following plants will do well:

- Echinodorus amazonicus
- Dwarf sword plant (Echinodorus tenellus)
- Hair grass (Eleocharis acicularis)
- Amazon sword (Echinodorus paniculatus)
- Cabomba
- Myriophyllum

Once planted up the plants should be allowed to settle in for at least one week before the fish are introduced, but longer would be better. There must also be LOTS of plants if they are to out-compete the ever present algae.

## The Fish

There are lots of suitable fish for this tank. Stocking level should be kept reasonably low for the best and most natural effect - try to keep to just one third of the normal stocking density.

- Almost all of the small tetras

- Hatchetfish
- Pencilfish
- Larger characins (such as silver dollars)
- Bristle-nose catfish.
- Whiptail catfish
- Angelfish (but not with small tetras)
- Discus (need a high temp. and the plants may not thrive)
- Corydoras catfish
- Dwarf cichlids

by Andy Gordon of England, and Michelle Stuart of Ontario Canada and Aquarticles. Photo by glass-gardens.



# Microgeophagus ramirezi

The "German Blue Ram" has become one of the more popular dwarf cichlids found at your local fish stores today. It stays small, is very peaceful, and both male and female are very colorful and are not that difficult to induce to breed in the home aquarium. The beautiful blue and yellow colors also make them stand out in any South American community tank.

As for breeding that is a different story. I find the best way to obtain a breeding pair is to acquire a half dozen or so specimens about a half-inch in total length so they can work it out for themselves. At this size they are all placed together in a 10 or 15-gallon bare bottom tank with a bubble-up filter and a large handful of Java moss scattered around. Instead of the normal type 3" and 4" clay flowerpots I introduce those 1" high 4" across "cactus garden" type ones still with an entry slot on the side for somewhere to hide. The water temperature should be at least 78 but not more than 82 degrees F. with a hardness of about 80 ppm Total Dissolved Solids. Rams are very easy to feed as they accept an assortment of live baby brine shrimp, frozen brine shrimp and flake foods.

Be on the lookout for any

fish cowering way up in the corner of the tank as it is in danger of being killed and it should be removed to another tank. For the next few days look for more to be found in the same situation as a pair bond is being formed somewhere in the tank. When well over 1", the males will show an extension of the first three rays on the dorsal fin and will be larger than all other fish in the tank. A sure fire way of sexing your Rams is to check the black blotch in the fish's side. If there are blue spangled dots in and around it, that's a female. Those with no dots present are males. Watch for this one and a smaller one staying together around the top of the flowerpot and try to remove all the others before these are the only two live ones in the tank. If these are a pair, and they are ready to spawn, and the female will deposit her eggs on the top right out in the open. At this time there should be no other fishes at all in the breeding tank as both parents do not seem to pay any particular attention to the eggs yet still stay fairly close and only go to fan them occasionally. Within about 5 days, when wigglers are noticed, the male pays much more attention to them than the female and when they become free swimming in another 5 days. I have seen

each parent take a group for themselves and guard them at separate locations. This has not occurred every time and usually the male ends up with them all sooner or later anyway. At this time I carefully remove the female. I also carefully replace the bubble-up filter with a large already seeded sponge filter.

Now comes the big argument among aquarists! I have no other small food at most times except newly hatched brine shrimp, so that's what my fry are fed and I have had little or no problems with them eating it. Both "South American Dwarf Cichlids" by Mayland & Bork and "American Cichlids I - Dwarf Cichlids" by Linke & Staeck mention that the mouths of the young fry are too small to ingest brine shrimp and suggest something smaller such as microworms. I have used microworms but once for a different species and now only make up Lima bean paramecium when necessary, such as for *Ctenopoma ansorgii* where I lost the first five spawns because the food wasn't small enough. I recently gave a half dozen Rams to the fellow who helped me with this web site and he also fed the fry brine shrimp with no problems.

As soon as the male is not able to keep the young ones together and they

swim all over the tank, he is put back with the female in hopes of another spawn. As the fry continue to grow, a few Cory cats are introduced to eat the uneaten food. As for water changes, I never change more than a gallon about every few days, as the fry may be lost if there is a large change in the water conditions.

One problem I have found is that new aquarists like them so much that they want to breed them as it was and probably still is with the popular Angelfish. Those new to the hobby take these fish home and really don't know what water conditions they need because at the local fish store they are most likely housed in regular tap water and the store clerk says they have no problems with them. This is probably true but breeding is something all together different. If you have Reverse Osmosis water or are lucky enough to have very soft water naturally from your tap, as some of my friends do, give the "German Blue Ram" a try.

**by Don Zilliox**

First published in *Some Things Fishy*, Newsletter of the Tropical Fish Club of Erie County and Aquaristics.

# ENTER THE DRAGON<sup>GT83</sup>

Hello fellow fish friends. My name is Ron Meier. A few of you already know me, but for the rest of you, well, I'm fairly new to this fish club business. Thank you to Larry Arnold for recommending me.

What got me hooked was my dad when I was just 5 years old. He got a 55 gallon tank (which I thought was huge when I was that small). He had it filled with a tiger oscar, an angel fish, and a common pleco. Now he has a 125 gallon that houses a few arrowanas he's had for a while now, but that's enough of him. I've kept mainly community fish growing up: gouramis, platties, sword-tails, etc., and have bred and still breed most of them. Today I'm mainly into Lake Malawi and Victoria cichlids and



Cynotilapia afra cobue

am on the way to starting a few Tanganyikan setups. As for now though, I'm limited to the amount of tanks I'm able to keep as me, my wife, and 17 month old daughter live in an apt. Once we get a house with a nice size basement, I plan on having a nice fishroom (as many

tanks as I can handle). Right now I have a 55, 29, 20L, 20H, two 15s, and four 10s.

In the 55, I have a breeding pair of Metriaclima greshakei and Callainos (Cobalts), a Leporinus fasciatus (who gets along with my africans extremely

well), three Synodontis eupterus, a rainbow shark, a trio of Copadichromis borleyi, and a few loners I plan to thin out to add a couple breeding species.

A few of my smaller tanks house gouramis, platties and others of the like (wife's fish I should say), but I'm sure she'll get bored and part with them.

I hope to thin out some of my smaller tanks so I can get a couple 40 breeders setup. I will need to as I have a group of Astatotilapia nubilus, Pseudotropheus demasoni, Cynotilapia afra cobue, and zebra long pelvics growing up. I'm using my two 15s for growouts for any fry that may come out of my current breeders. I have a lot of randoms here and there.



Leporinus fasciatus



29-gallon tank

# FISHROOM '05 TOUR

I know for a fact that I'll always be rift lake cichlid crazy, but I'm sure I'll setup a tank for Central American/South American cichlids and maybe even a reef tank (that might be pushing it though). That's pretty much all about my tanks I have right now. My setups keep improving and hopefully one day I'll be able to share my nice fishroom with all of you. May your fish live long and breed often.

-by Ron Meier, Dragongt83



Metriaclima greshaki



55-gallon tank

## 2005 BAP STANDINGS

Name	'05 BAP Points
1. Jo Meade	90
2. Bob Randall	75
3. Bill Brown	50
3. Matt Anderson	50
3. Scott Carlson	50
6. Tim Dolan	30
6. Murray Nelson	30
8. Brett Dailey	20
9. James Kutscher	10

## / CALENDAR OF EVENTS /

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Oct. 6	7:30 PM	MAS Meeting	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Roseville, MN
Oct. 9	7:00 PM	GCCA Meeting	Holiday Inn, Rolling Meadows, IL
<b>Oct. 11</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>EIAA Meeting</b>	<b>Kenwood Park Presbyterian Church, NE Cedar Rapids, IA</b>
<b>Oct. 16</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>EIAA Fall Auction</b>	<b>Country Inn &amp; Suites, Coralville, IA</b>
Nov. 3	7:30 PM	MAS Meeting	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Roseville, MN
<b>Nov. 8</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>EIAA Meeting</b>	<b>Kenwood Park Presbyterian Church, NE Cedar Rapids, IA</b>
Nov. 12	10:00 AM	MAS Fall/Winter Auction	Lutheran Church of the Redemption, Bloomington, MN
Nov. 13	7:00 PM	GCCA Meeting	Holiday Inn, Rolling Meadows, IL
<b>Nov. 13</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>IAA Meeting/Swap</b>	<b>Knights of Columbus Hall 1111 W. 35th St., Davenport, IA</b>
Nov. 18-20	varies	Ohio Cichlid Extravaganza	Strongsville Holiday Inn Select, Cleveland, OH