

# UnderWater

The Official Newsletter of the Iowa Aquaria Association

November 2004 | V1:N1

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Fishroom Tour '04



Photo: Joe Lover (loverland)  
Species: Cynotilapia Afra "Jalo Reef"



Volume 1, Number 1  
November 2004  
Published monthly by the  
Iowa Aquaria Association  
for members.

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# UnderWater Welcome

Welcome to UnderWater, the IAA's monthly newsletter of aquatic news and knowledge.

We will do our very best to bring you the new issue in a somewhat timely manner. Our intention is to provide members with a monthly

publication that they can be proud of.

If you are interested in contributing to UnderWater, please contact me, your beloved interim editor, at [jlover@comcast.net](mailto:jlover@comcast.net).

We need all kinds of fish-re-

lated articles, photography, and resources. Be it fresh, salt, clean, or dirty water, we'll try to cover it here.

If you have suggestions, comments or concerns, please feel free to let me know about them. Welcome!

## From the President **by Scott Carlson (fishwhisperer)**

This is an exciting time of year for our club. The summer is traditionally a slower time for the hobby and, in theory, the site is slower as a result. As the fall/winter cold chases some indoors, the site should pick up. This increase has apparently already started. We broke our long standing record of 19 members on-line from way back in the first month sometime. On November 7th we had 21 on at one time. Membership has steadily grown.

In the summer there aren't as many "fishy" events going on. This fall/winter we are looking forward to the meeting and swap-meet in Davenport this weekend and a meeting/event(?) in Des Moines on February 5th at the Best Western on Merle Hay Rd. With the new by-laws that we hope to have adopted in Davenport, we should be able to make some real progress in Des Moines. A lot of members have had a lot of great ideas that we have struggled to employ due to the lack of

a decision-making body or process. At the Des Moines meeting, equipped with both, we should be able to decisively make stuff happen.

We have a lot of very passionate and talented members. This newsletter is evidence of that. Despite some very turbulent times and strong differences of opinion, the future looks bright. Thank you to all that have shared their insights and wisdom. Your passion is appreciated.

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# The Trouble With

by Andrew Boyd

# H Y B R I D S

With all the recent kerfuffle about hybridized cichlids, I thought it timely to write about why, in certain circles, the word 'hybrid' is frowned upon.

There is a perfectly legitimate scientific reason for hybridizing fishes (or birds, for that matter) of different species or genera. One of the old tests of whether or not two animals would fit into the same genus was to cross breed them and see if the offspring were fertile. But when trying to preserve dwindling stocks of rare cichlids, hybridization is of no good whatsoever, and can even be quite harmful.

An aquarist may have a nice male *Melanotaenia goldii*, a rare New Guinean Rainbowfish. But perhaps he cannot find a female of this species and so is tempted to use a very similar looking female of *M. herbertax-*

*elrodi*. So he cross breeds the two species and obtains a batch of fry that are *goldii* x *herbertaxelrodi* hybrids. Some of these he then sells to friends as *goldii* and the rest he grows up and disposes to the aquarium

at all and at some stage (maybe in the next generation, when the fry will not look like their parents) someone will work this out. The ultimate result will be a lot of wasted work in raising fishes of no real value.

with Killifish.

In the Australian cichlid scene at the moment, there is a great deal of concern about hybridization because of the low available gene pool, that many

dedicated breeders are devoting their lives to preserving. In the case of many of the Lake Victoria cichlids, which are now extinct in the wild, this work is quite literally of vital importance.

When buying cichlids, aquarists should make a point of getting to know what

wild specimens look like, to guard against obtaining hybrids, or even 'pure' fish that may not be compatible with others in their breeding tanks. In the case of the African Rift Lake Cichlids, there are two excellent books by Ad Konings, on

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Check out my hot, new "Fire Engine Red" Ps. Saulosi!

trade. What has he done wrong? Well for a start, his friends will be in possession of viable hybrids that they will be tempted to rear up and breed, *goldii* being as rare as it is. Other aquarists will purchase them from the shops in good faith and taking them to be pure stock, will also breed them. But these fish are not *goldii*

Hybridization is not always deliberate: with the *Aulonocara* (Malawi Peacock Cichlids), most of the females are quite similar and in a community tank, the father of a particular brood of fry may not belong to the same species as the mother. Care must also be taken in this regard (similar females)

# Bag it up

by Camille Nichols and others



## Fish bagging 101

1. In general, choose a bag with a width equal to 2-3 times the body length of the fish. Bag males separately, then tape bags together if sold as a group. Most fish over 2-3" should be bagged separately, **use careful judgement**. Even very small fish can kill each other if bagged together. When in doubt, bag individually.
2. Fill the bag 1/5 to 1/4 of the way with tank water or aged water (see tips). Place the filled bag in a small bucket or tub to hold it upright. Make sure you add a dechlorinator if tap water is involved. You don't need a ton of water here.
3. Net the fish out and place in the bag.
4. Lift the bag up and hold it firmly in the left hand. (Reverse if left handed)
5. Quickly grab the neck of the bag with your right hand so that there is approximately a 60/40 mix of air to water.
6. Twist the neck of the bag several times to form a "rope" to tie off or rubberband.
7. Hold the bag firmly (some hold it between their knees) and pull to stretch the "rope".
8. Tie the neck of the bag in a simple knot or fold over and tie with a sturdy rubberband.
9. If you have bags that are 2 or less mil. in thickness, you should double bag. Take another bag and insert the first bag into it upside down. This will minimize leaking and death trap corners.
11. Tie off/rubberband the second bag as described earlier.
12. Transport fish in a styrofoam box or a cooler to help maintain water temperature.

## Helpful tips and tricks

Tall, narrow bags are better for most fish. A 2" fish will do great in a 4" wide bag. You can use less water in a narrower bag, and they are easier to tie/rubberband.

Big fish should be bagged and boxed. They will do better.

Use 20% water, 80% air.

Use aged, clean water. The night before bagging, fill an old tank with fresh water, add dechlor, aerate and heat over night. Your fish will do infinitely better in fresh, aged water than in tank water. Tank water, although invisible, contains many dissolved metabolites, i.e. crap. That stuff turns to ammonia very quickly in a bag with the fish respiring into the water.

Use Bag Buddies or Ship Right or similar. They help with stress and add oxygen.

Square bottom pleated bags cost more, but are worth it. In general they are thicker, leak less, and are easier to fill.

Box your fish immediately after bagging. Darkness reduces fish stress.

Bring some hydrogen peroxide for all the fish that are bagged improperly. A couple of drops will revitalize the fish by adding dissolved oxygen to the water.

Always bring extra bags, rubberbands, and dechlor to events. Accidents will happen!

# Pseudotropheus "Blue Frost" Kingsizei

## Introduction:

I discovered this species first over at now friend Scott Carlson's fish room when I first met him. He had a beautiful wild caught group, and still has a nice group. I saw a 20 gallon filled with young kingsizei, mostly males I think. Lots of nice blues, and at such a small size. Wow. I ended up getting a nice pair from him, and a dozen fry to grow up. I ended up with two females out of the dozen. I now have two males and three females, which have all started breeding.

## Species Info:

This species starts out a dark brown color when young, and females keep this color for some time. Older females can display a blue "tint," but usually not like a male. Males can start to show color around 1" in size, and often start displaying to each other by 2". Males can become quite territorial once they reach 3". This slow growing dwarf species can reach 4-5" in older males. I would suggest a tank size of at least 55 gallon, as a long footprint is important. I keep my group in a 75 gallon setup with other Malawians. Mine started breed-



ing once the females reached a good 2 to 2 1/2" in size. Breeding males become quite intolerant of other males, and unwilling females can become targets as well. My 75 gallon is kept heavily stocked with other Mbuna, which helps diffuse aggression. I have had luck keeping Kingsizei with Pseudotropheus Acei species. They tend to swim in groups, and the other tank mates join in. King-size fits them well, as I've witnessed 2.5" males challenge 7" Sci. Fryeri before. I would recommend one male to at least 3 females; 5 or more would be best, but those gems are not easy to come by. I feed my Pseudotropheus species HBH Graze Spirulina flake, NLS Cichlid Formula, and brine shrimp (frozen and pellet) sparingly.



# FISHROOM '04 TOUR

## Loverland's fish

Each month, we will devote a page to an IAA member's fishroom or tanks. Since this is the first issue of UnderWater, and time was scarce, I decided to be the first on the Tour.

My fishroom is quite small, as my largest tank is a 65 gallons. I have 10 active tanks running, and most are 29s and 20 longs. They all run individually (and quite inefficiently). I've maxed out the small space I have in the basement, but my wife made the mistake of suggesting I use the other side of the basement as well. Unfinished basements are perfect for fishrooms!

My interests currently lie with Malawians, and I have the following active breeding groups right now: Ps. Demasoni, Cyto. Moorii, Ps. Saulosi, Ps. Acei Black Tanzanian, Cyno. Afra Jalo Reef, Yellow Labs, and Aul. Stuartgranti Maleri Island. The following are my growing-out, future breeders: Zebra Long Pelvic Ngara, Ps. Flavus, Lab. Pearlmuts, and Aul. German Red Albinos.



by Joe Lover (loverland)

I isolate holding females, and strip them at about 10-12 days. I then drop the still somewhat eggy fry into a tumbler for another 4-5 days. The fry then move to a 10 gallon, where they usually start to eat flakes within another day or two. I've found this procedure to work the best for me, but everyone has their own way of doing it. Mine surely isn't the right way for all, but it works for me.

My show tank is the only tank that resides upstairs, and at only 55 gallons, it isn't exactly a spectacle of fish brilliance. It's a collection of random fish that I haven't been able to part with just yet. It has a few nicely colored

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## The trouble with hybrids, cont. from page 3

the Malawi and Tanganyika species, respectively. These works give a good idea of what the fishes look like in the wild. It is a shame that no such book exists, showing all of the different populations of Australian Rainbowfishes. All the same, it is a good rule not to cross breed populations of such variable species as *Melanotaenia tilfasciata*, but rather to recognize and work within populations, such as those from the Goyder and Giddy Rivers.

Be wary of so-called 'new' species of fishes just on the market for the first time in many years. There have been cases of unscrupulous breeders deliberately crossing different species (particularly in the New Guinean Rainbowfishes and African Cichlids) in order to produce something more colorful. They then raise the hybrids and search, meantime, in the handbooks for something approximating their appearance. The hybrids are then released under this appealing name, to an unsuspecting public always on the lookout for something new and prepared to pay exorbitant prices. To be sure, some new fishes are smuggled into the country

occasionally, but many people have been 'caught' by flashy hybrids that appeared to be prohibited species at the time.

However, the major trouble with hybrids is that they divert those serious souls who are trying to preserve what is left of cichlids that were formerly allowed into Australia. For once these populations are gone, we shall never see them again, except as pictures in old books! A while ago, I was privileged to hear a talk by Graeme Phipps (Curator-in-Chief, Taronga Park Zoo), who expressed the opinion that hybridizers of rare and provenanced (place of origin known) stocks were committing a "crime against the species" and should be prosecuted accordingly. So please do not hybridize fishes deliberately and ensure that you take every precaution to prevent its happening accidentally, thereby helping our hobby to survive.

*First published in Tank Talk, Canberra and District Aquarium Society, Australia, and Aquarticles.*

## Fishroom Tour, cont. from page 7

male peacocks and haps, a couple bright mbuna, and a few others (cat, plecos). My *Cytocara Moorii* group will need to move in shortly, and I just love the idea of a dozen little demasoni roaming the rocks. I think it would be fun to have the 55 stocked with only the Moorii, Demasoni, and some *Flavus*, but I haven't been able to part with the randoms yet. I might need to drop a couple 40 gallon breeders on the other side of the basement soon. The January MAS auction is coming quickly!



### / CALENDAR OF EVENTS /

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
11/14/04	8 AM	IAA Meeting/Swap	Knights of Columbus Club House, Davenport
11/14/04	7 PM	GCCA Meeting	Holiday Inn, Rolling Meadows, IL
11/28/04	10 AM to 3 PM	GCCA Fish Swap Meet	Holiday Inn, Rolling Meadows, IL
12/01/04	7:30 PM	MAS Meeting	Roseville, MN
1/06/05	7:30 PM	MAS Meeting	Roseville, MN
1/19/05	7 PM	GCCA Meeting	Holiday Inn, Rolling Meadows, IL
1/29/05	10 AM to 6 PM	MAS Auction	Bloomington, MN
2/03/05	7:30 PM	MAS Meeting	Roseville, MN
2/04/05	TBA	IAA Meeting	Best Western, Merle Hay Rd., Des Moines, IA