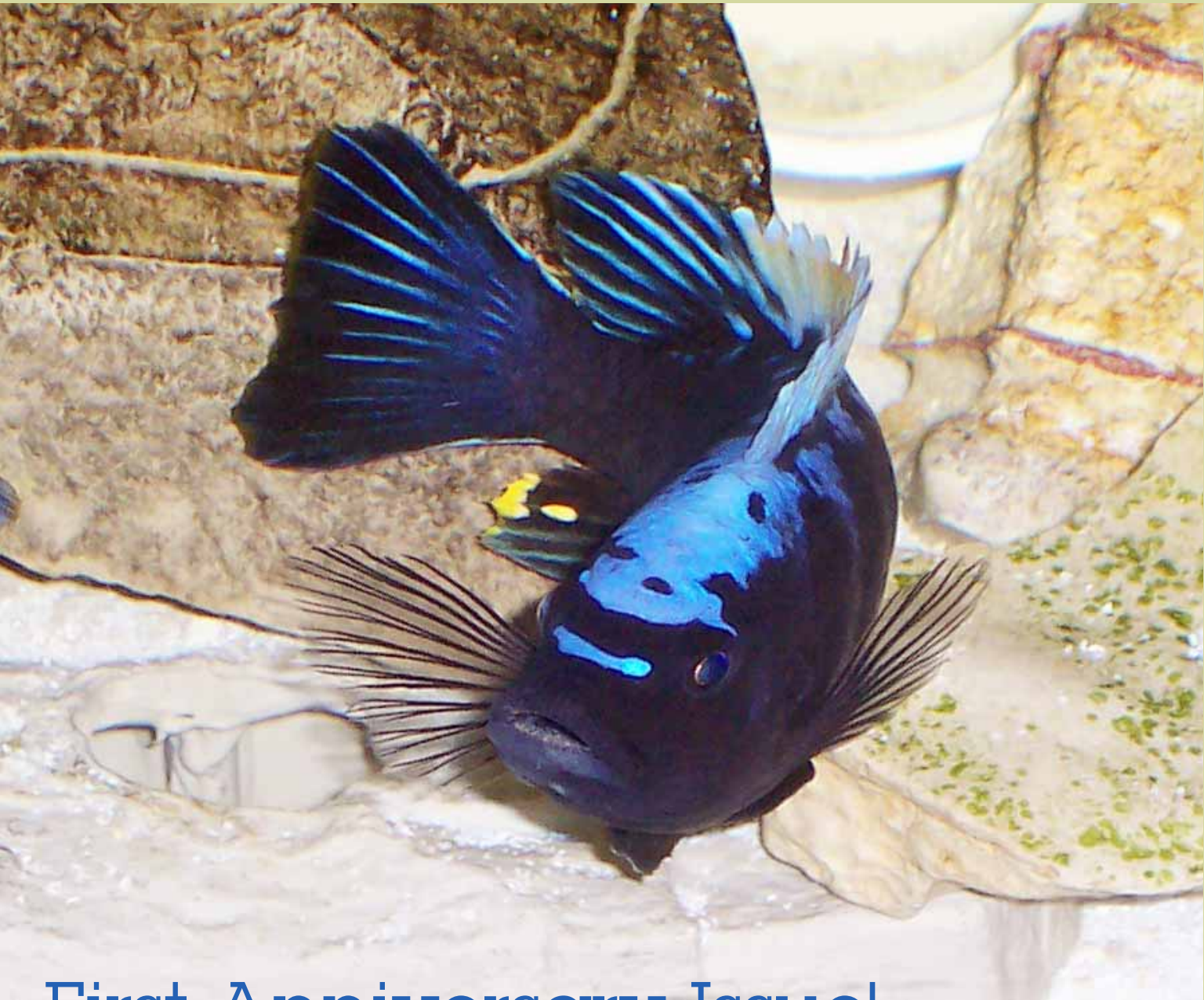


UnderWater



The Official Newsletter of the Iowa Aquaria Association
November 2005 | V2:N11



First Anniversary Issue!

COVER: *Cynotilapia* sp., Mbamba Sand Senga, by Chad Lopez (orbital)

INSIDE: Species Profile: *Cyprichromis Leptosoma*



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UnderWater Welcome

Well daylight savings has arrived again and as usual it is defective. I haven't saved one minute yet. I want my money back.

Good news: with the colder shorter days my work slows a bit and I am able to spend a little more "fishy" time. Traditionally other hobbyists also focus more on the fishroom and fish related activities this time of year. This is exciting. IAA is a great place to hang out right now.

More Good News: in less than two weeks we will be enjoying our 2nd annual IAA swap-meet in Daven-

port. The first one was our biggest in attendance and (I think) sellers. This one is shaping up to be another great event.

This will be a great opportunity to get rare, beautiful fish and aquaria stuff directly from other hobbyist - CHEAP!

Malawi-1 is tirelessly putting together our second show. Don't be shy. Bring your best.

A 20 gallon set up is being donated by Kevin at Pet Mart in Davenport to be raffled. Somebody will win it.

We are very fortunate to welcome Rick Borstien from the Greater Chicago Cichlid Association (GCCA) to speak on "Tips and Techniques of a Master Cichlid Breeder". Rick is the webmaster for the GCCA's award winning web site. They recently took first place in four categories of the Federation of American Aquarium Societies' website awards.

The time is right. Attend this great event and support the IAA. See you there!

**-Scott (fishwhisperer)
IAA President**

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UnderWater Photography Contest



Trent Foltz (furcifer)
Discus



Chad Lopez (orbital)
Cynotilapia sp. Sand Senga
Honorable Mention



Trent Foltz (furcifer)
Cyp. male
Honorable Mention



Tanya Sabby (tanya)
Pseudotropheus polit
Honorable Mention

The first place winner, Furcifer, won a \$50 gift certificate to Neptune Aquatics. Congrats! November 20th is next month's photo submission deadline.



Driftwood

DOS & DON'TS

If you have ever visited a fish message board like Fish2Friends Message Board, then you have probably seen questions about driftwood from time to time. In this article I hope to answer some of these questions, as well as put a few myths to rest. If I can help to enlighten even one person then the time I spent compiling and writing this article was well worth it. As with everything in this hobby the information may or may not work for you or in your situation.

The most common question asked regarding driftwood is: "I found this really cool piece of driftwood at the (insert wherever you found it) and I want to put it in my tank. How do I cure it?"

No matter what method you decide to use, scrub your driftwood first. This

will get rid of anything loose on it. There are quite a few answers to this question.

One way is to boil the piece for a few hours (I've seen some people say up to 8 hours) then to soak it until the piece rests on the bottom of the soaking container (changing the water everyday or every couple of days at the most). Personally I like the boil/soak method, although this takes time so you need to be patient. Another way is to soak it in a bleach/water mixture (1 cup bleach/5 gallons water) for a few days. Of course bleach is poison, so if you are a kid get an adult's help to do this with proper protective equipment and ventilation. Consider rotating the piece around occasionally in the bleach, as it seems to be more effective. Then rinsing it for a few days, by soak-

ing it (again changing the water daily). I would NOT recommend the bleach/water thing, as I don't like to take the chance that the bleach wasn't rinsed out and therefore could get into the tank, possibly killing the fish (see my exception to this below). I've also seen a person suggest putting it in an oven on 200°F for a few hours, thus killing any little bugs living in it. This idea also solves the bleach concern listed above. As a former firefighter, I would also tell you that this could cause the piece to start on fire, possibly even burning your house down if you don't watch it real carefully. If you use the oven idea please watch the oven at all times. Another suggestion is to just weight the piece down and throw it in the tank.

The next most common question goes

something like this: "I put some driftwood I found into my tank and now the water is turning brown, what is it?"

The brown is the tannic acid leaching out of the piece into the water. Some people like this because it gives them a "black water effect". The leaching can continue for months or years after you introduce the piece to your tank. Another reason I like the boil/soak method listed in the last question is I think it helps to decrease the amount of tannic acid that leaches out once the piece is in the tank. One other way to reduce this "black water effect" is to do more frequent/larger (percentage) water changes. It has also been noted that the tannic acid can lower the pH in your tank. If you are concerned about this, then keep an eye on your pH level with regular

testing. Another suggestion is to find a piece that has been "weathered", supposedly the piece will contain less tannic acid, as it will have already leached out during the "weathering" process. You can also add another carbon cartridge to your filter system to help clear up the staining. Remember to change your carbon cartridge more often if you have a very active leaching piece.

After the questions listed above there are many different ones that pop up from time to time. Some of those are listed here:

"I found a piece of pine and want to use that. Is that ok?"

The answer is NO. You should only use hardwoods (oak, maple, ash, elm or hickory) for your aquarium. The sap and

pitch in the softwoods can and most likely will create a syrupy mess in your tank. The soft woods will also decay easier than a hardwood. If you have a difficult time telling which type you have I suggest you use the following method. After the piece is dry, take the edge of your fingernail and depress it in to the piece. If it goes in easy then you have softwood. Get yourself another piece.

"I soaked my driftwood for months and it still won't sink to the bottom of the tank."

Fortunately there are a few ways to make it sink. One way is to use some fishing line and tie a plant to it for added weight (and beauty). Or you could silicone (make sure you use an aquarium safe silicone) it to a piece of slate (if you like the look

or to some flat pieces of plastic (then bury the plastic in your substrate). Some people have used titanium or stainless steel lag bolts embedded in the wood to weight it down. I would not do this, as I don't want anything metal introduced into my tanks. I also heard of one person that drilled some holes in the bottom of a piece then filled it with molten lead to make it sink. You could then silicone over the lead to seal it from the water.

"I read (heard) that driftwood is good for my plecostomus. Why?"

From my research this is true. It seems that plecos rasp fibers off the wood and break it down for the cellulose. As I understand it, it helps their digestive system. I guess it is similar to fiber in a human's

diet. Unfortunately I have found very little information on the internet regarding this.

"Can you use driftwood from saltwater for a fresh water tank?"

Yes, you can use driftwood from the ocean for a freshwater tank. Remember that exception I mentioned before? Here it is - for a piece from the ocean I would use the bleach/water mixture just to be sure that nothing bad got into my tank. I did this with a piece and have had no ill effects from it. I did however make sure that I rinsed the piece very well before putting it in the tank.

by Tom Haupenthal from his website www.Fish2Friends.com and [Aquarticles](http://Aquarticles.com).



Ps. sp. Lime Nkhomo “Mbenji” Sunflower

Introduction: I first saw this species at a local pet store, The Fish Tank. Rick had three adult males in his front 125 gallon tank behind the checkout counter. They looked interesting, and I saw that Mike Helford had some fry on his list he sent me. So I let him know I was interested in them and he sent 6 fry home with Scott Carlson. I've been growing them out since, and they all are in the 2.25" to 3" range now. I have had one spawn from them so far which I've grown up to about the 1" range.

General Information: Lime Mbenji males and females look pretty similar, although females show more barring and are not quite so brightly colored. There are two similar types of Ps. sp. Lime Nkhomo, one being from Nkhomo Reef, near Benga and Mbenji



Island. The Mbenji type are a brighter yellow coloration. Ps. Sp. Daktari are closely related to the Ps. Sp. Lime and Ps. Sp. Lime Nkhomo.

Habitat: Ps. sp. Lime Nkhomo inhabit the sandy intermediate habitats at a depth of 15 to 25 meters.

Lake Malawi has a relatively high pH of 7.5-8.8, general hardness of 4-6 dGH, and a carbonate hardness of 6-8 dKH. The water temperature stays 76-78F year round.

Care: I suggest a minimum tank size of 40 to 55 gallons for a medium to large group. One male to 3-6 females or two males to 6-12 females, with plenty of cover or rockwork. Males behave aggressively towards conspecifics, but are not overly aggressive in Mbuna standards.

Feeding: I suggest a high quality spirulina flake, New life spectrum pellets are fine also. Brine shrimp and krill can be fed very sparingly as a treat.

Breeding: This species, like most mbuna, is a mouth brooding cichlid. Females become sexually mature as young as 2-3". Females will hold for three or four

weeks, around 30 days usually. Later in the brooding period she will desperately try to find a safe spot to release her young. She will protect and pick the fry back up for a short period. The parents will eat the young, so separating them is recommended if you want to raise them.

Availability: This species is still fairly rare in the hobby, but is available on some online sellers and wholesaler lists.

Retail price: If you are able to find this species, you can expect to pay \$9 to \$12 per juvenile fish. Probably more if they are wild caught specimens.

Cyprichromis leptosoma

Cyprichromis leptosoma is found only along the eastern shoreline of Lake Tanganyika, between Kigoma in Tanzania and Mpulungu in Zambia, a distance of over 300 miles. In the wild, Cyprichromis (or Cyps for short) occur all over the distribution area wherever there is a rocky shore with deep and clean water. Five geographical variants of leptosoma are recognized currently and each occurs in both blue and yellow-tailed morphs. In the wild, Cyps live in schools that number in the thousands. I saw photos of these beautiful sardine-like fish and decided that I needed a colony. The Cyps can be found in "regular" and "supersize". The Jumbo variants require a fairly large surface area to best accommodate their schooling behavior. The Jumbo variants can reach sizes up to 6" so a 6 ft. tank is recommended. Well... as I currently do not have a 6 ft. tank in my home, I decided to begin my search for the "regular" size. I purchased a 37 gallon, high tank with the sole purpose of beginning a small Tanganyikan community setup. My tank setup was pretty simple: sand bottom with a tall piece of Texas holey rock on one side of the tank, a small open area in the middle (which I filled with shells) and then a small pile of round river rock on the other side of

the tank. I stocked a shell-dwelling species (Alto Comp Sumbu Dwarf) and a rock/shell dwelling species (Telmatochromis Vittatus). Fortunately for me, our

male maintains full color when schooling with the females. It is not uncommon for Malawi cichlid males to "hide" in with the females, but they usually

fortable enough to spawn! Cyprichromis spawning is a unique endeavor. They literally spawn in the open water. The dominant male's territory is actually a three dimensional water column. When the female was receptive, she simply swam into his "turf". He immediately began to display. Cyp display is also unique. With all fins extended, the male positioned his body in a vertical (mouth to the surface) display and began to vibrate his entire body. The other thing I noticed was that the tips of his pelvic fins turned white (similar to what you will see on the reatherfin species). The white tipped pelvic fins seemed to attract the female as she moved in and began to make a "sucking" motion with her mouth. The male then spun around and she adopted this vertical, vibrating position. They switched places several times and then the female did an open water head-stand. At that moment, she dropped an egg! I was amazed to see that the Cyp eggs were much larger than the Malawi eggs I was used to seeing. As a matter of fact, they were probably twice the size of the eggs laid by the much larger red empress. Once the egg was released, the female quickly backed up and sucked the egg right into her mouth. She dropped three more eggs



2nd Club auction was right around the corner! Lady Luck was in my corner that day, and I picked up a trio of Cyprichromis Leptosoma "Kekese". I was in business!! I very quickly realized that I had a reverse trio (2m/1f) and this was not an optimal combination. Fortunately, the store who put the trio in the auction had some more left. I soon went by and picked up 3 more females. Cyp behavior is pretty different from the Malawi cichlids I was used to. The females schooled together and allowed the subdominant male (which happens to be a blue tail morph) to school with them. Interestingly, the sub-dominant

"drab down" to blend in. Not with Mr. Cyp! There he is, in all of his lonely glory, swimming with the girls. The dominant male (which happens to be a yellow tail morph) stays in an area on the "front" side of the holey rock and doesn't really associate with the others. The "girls" pretty much hang out on the "back" side of the holey rock. I don't see a lot of open water schooling, probably because my tank isn't long enough. However, I will be shortly moving the group to a 55 gal and they should be much more at home. Even though I don't currently have optimal conditions - apparently they feel com-

Cyprichromis leptosoma

in quick succession. Once she had the eggs in her mouth, the male began to shimmy again and released milt to fertilize the eggs. I was really surprised to see this process take quite a long time. The entire spawn probably took almost 30 minutes! The pair would display a bit and then separate. Then display, spawn and then separate. This was repeated numerous times. This group has spawned twice previously. The first spawn resulted in, what I assume, was a batch of dead fry. I think the female held onto them for too long and they starved. I attempted to catch the holding female for almost a week, with no success.



Photo by Trent Foltz

Cyps are very delicate fish and stress very easily. I finally put some floating plants in the top of the tank, hoping for fry hiding areas if she chose to release. Within 24 hours of putting the plants in, there were fry in the plants, but

I was too late! I wonder if putting the plants in a week earlier would have saved the fry... The second spawn was unknown to me. I think the female had been holding for several weeks before it became obvious that she had a mouthful. She was one of the larger females and they have quite a large buccal cavity. I let her stay for a week longer than when I noticed she was holding. I was actually able to catch this one! I purchased a breeder net and attached it to the top of the tank. I moved her into the breeder and gently

grabbed her. Picking her up out of the water until she began to gasp a bit, I dunked her under the water and six little fry swam out. I immediately released her back into the tank and stared in awe at my beautiful little Cyp babies. They were perfectly formed and larger than most Malawi fry I am used to. I placed a small floating plant in the top of the breeder net for cover. I began feeding them freeze-dried Cyclopeeze. It has been a week since those fry were released and tonight was when I actually got to witness the spawning behavior as the cycle started once again. I guess it's time to get a move on and get that 55 gallon set up so these guys have a bigger home to move to!

• **Diane Tennison, first published in the Hill Country Cichlid Club's "Lateral Line." The IAA and the HCCC have an article share partnership.**

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Photo by Trent Foltz

MANUS

This is my fish room. Not quite fitting as I have tanks in a couple of rooms. Someday I hope to have it set up all in one location. I have had a fish tank and fish in my life for as long as I can remember. My first fish was a goldfish that I won in some ring toss game at a local church event at age 5. My mother then when out and bought it a home, a 5g tank. I still have that tank today!

My interests vary from Guppies to Frontosa. My current species list is:

Pseudotropheus salousi
Ancistrus temmincki
 (Bushy Nose Pleco)
Poecilia (Libestis) reticulata (guppy)
Cyrtocara moorii
Gephyrochromis moorii



Aulonocara jacobfreibergeri
Protomelas taeniolatus
Aulonocara stuartgranti
 (Ngara)
Cynotilapia afra (Nkhata Bay)
Altolamprologus calvus
 (Chaitika)
Altolamprologus compressiceps
Neolamprologus leleupi
Cyphotilapia gibberosa
 (Bismark)
 Albino corydoras
Glossolepis incisus
Labidochromis caeruleus

You could definitely say

FISHROOM '05 TOUR

MANUS

my interests lay towards African Cichlids! I currently have approximately 450 gallons of tank space. I need more! I don't have the skills or knowledge yet, but a 125gal planted discus or angel tank with an emphasis on plants is something I want to do in the future. I also have plans for a large native tank I think we have some awesome fish right here in my own back yard. (Mississippi River)

-by Bill Brown



November 13, 2005
Swap Meet from 9am-12pm
Lunch 12-1pm
Speaker: 1pm (see below)
www.iowaaquaria.com

Knights of Columbus Hall
1111 W. 35th St., Davenport, IA
For info: (563) 386-7913



Guest Speaker: Rick Borstien
*"Tips and Techniques of a
Master Cichlid breeder"*

Looks like it's IAA SwapMeet time again.

IOWA AQUARIA ASSOCIATION

/ CALENDAR OF EVENTS /

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Nov. 3	7:30 PM	MAS Meeting	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Roseville, MN
Nov. 8	7:00 PM	EIAA Meeting	Kenwood Park Presbyterian Church, NE Cedar Rapids, IA
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
Nov. 13	9:00 AM	IAA Meeting/Swap	Knights of Columbus Hall, 1111 W. 35th St., Davenport, IA
Nov. 18-20	varies	Ohio Cichlid Extravaganza	Strongsville Holiday Inn Select, Cleveland, OH