CALIFORNIA'S ORGANIZATION OF AQUATIC SHOW TROPICALS
COAST

February meeting is at 10 a.m.

Showfish coast

PROVIDING EDUCATION AND CAMERADERIE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN KEEPING TROPICAL AND TEMPERATE FISH AND OTHER AQUATIC LIFE

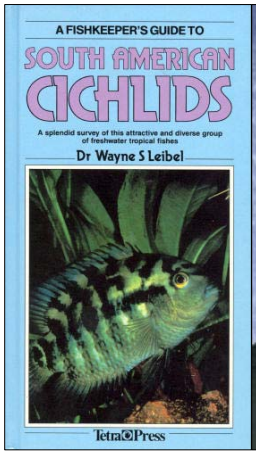
Volume 18 No. 1

FINAL RAFFLE TODAY

WIN THE 50 G AQUARIUM SET AND TAKE IT HOME!

(See details inside.)

January 4th Speaker: Dr. Wayne Leibel



Wayne S. Leibel has been a hobbyist more than fifty years and specializes in South American cichlids, but he manages to have room in his tanks for catfish and characins, too. He is a professor of biology at Lafayette College in Easton, PA but swears he is still a nice guy. He is a Fellow of the American Cichlid Association, where he is now chair of the Guy D. Jordan Endowment fund for cichlid research. Wayne has written several books, articles for magazines such as FAMA, AFM,

Cichlid News, BB, and TFH, and is a “headliner” at major aquarium conferences and societies across the United States. An incorrigible accordion player and collector of vintage aquarium-related stuff, Wayne currently contributes the monthly "Cichlidophiles" column to TFH and is a cheerleader for all things cichlid.

FINAL RAFFLE FOR COMPLETE 50 G TANK, HOOD, AND CABINET

All proceeds for this complete aquarium setup and cabinet, which was **donated by Marineland**, will go to the **American Cichlid Association.** The prize includes the glass tank, the light hood, and the wooden stand (no, the decorations and fish are not included).

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Patience Pays Off
Biotodoma cupido Spawns!

There they were, all of two inches. Supposedly they had just arrived from South America (**Rio Momon, Peru. The cocha we caught them in was very, very warm.**) That's all the information I could get on these

Cupido that swam before me. They were silver, nothing like the pictures in the books. I managed to negotiate the price down to $10 each if I bought six. This was the start of a long relationship with these fish. I took them home and set them up in their own 40 gallon tank. It was located in the garage, next to my fish room, in front of the window. I had landscaped the tank heavily with plastic plants and driftwood. Also in the back of the tank was a large clay pipe to give the *Cupido* somewhere to hide should they prefer a cave. The back and sides of the tank were mostly covered to give the *Cupido* a sense of security. At the center of the rear glass was left uncovered to allow algae to grow on the back of the tank should they need plant matter in their diet. The water was San Diego liquid rock, hard and alkaline. Filtration was provided by an undergravel with powerheads and an outside hanging power filter. They grew well on a diet primarily consisting of flake food and a constant supply of black worms.

The largest *Cupido* were now about two years old and four inches long. .In those two years they had shown no interest in spawning or pairing off. I was about to move and the fish room was about to expand with the new house. Exciting, but a logistics nightmare. Hundreds of fish would need to be moved in a week to the new house. This is where I found it is difficult to pack up a house, conclude escrow, and set up a fish room in the space of a week. On top of that, my work schedule increased dramatically. Disaster struck. I lost breeding stock a fish at a time and as delays in the central filtration setup continued, the cramped temporary quarters took their toll. Among the victims were all but one of my beloved *Cupido*.

Several months later a friend told me she was going to give up on the *Cupido* she had purchased at about the same time as my purchase. I had to have them! An exchange was arranged for the next club meeting. She brought me seven four inch *Cupido*, the same size as the one I had remaining. At home the eight *Cupido* were split into two groups of four…each group in their own 40 gallon filtered by undergravel filters and an aged sponge filter . Since the new fish had been maintained in very soft R.O. water (and I had no R.O. unit) I had to slowly acclimate them to a slightly higher water hardness using 50% tap water and 50% reverse osmosis water (which I purchased).

The first tank was in the quietest corner of the fish room. The second was right next to it, much closer to the activity of the fish room and the lighting. No other fish were kept with them except a short cohabitation with some clown loaches, which didn't seem to bother them much. They

hid most of the time, and the loaches did little to help them overcome their shyness. Once the loaches were removed little activity was noted in the tank. The *Cupido* hid under and around the driftwood. When frightened, such as when the lid was lifted up for gravel cleaning, the fish would dash wildly around the tank. Damage to the fish was a concern every time they took flight.

For six months the *Cupdio* fed well and showed very little aggression towards each other, showing no territorial behavior at all. By December 10 they were exhibiting new behaviors. The fish were now more than 3 years old (talk about a labor of love!). Their colors are becoming more dramatic and the lines under the eyes are much brighter (and larger???) than ever before. One was guarding a pit in the gravel (**digging elongated pits in the fine sand substratum I keep them over**) and approaching other *Cupido* that come too close in a head down position before chasing them off. There was some flaring of gills also.

I couldn't see any eggs or fry and the pair bond was weak...to the point that I was not sure there was a pair. There had never been any territoriality in the second tank before, but unlike the *Cupido* in the first tank, these four *Cupido* had been far-from-shy. The other *Cupido* next door were exactly the same age and size (4 inches SL) as these, dig pits, and were very shy. I added one more piece of driftwood to this 40 gallon tank to add to their feeling of security. I could hardly contain my excitement!

On December 20th they spawned!!!

I walked into the fish room that morning to see a much deeper pit than usual right next to the granite rock which was inclined at a 60 degree angle. A quick inspection showed a plaque of approximately 300 eggs!!!

An inner debate started...pull the eggs (save the first spawn!?)...or let nature take it's course?...oh no, can't forget Ron Coleman's Cichlid Egg Research Project! So I compromised and crossed my fingers. I siphoned off half the eggs. Here's where it got interesting! The eggs were adhered by strands, much like angelfish wrigglers are attached to leaves in the first few days of life. While this may indicate a cave spawning fish there was no interest in the available PVC tubes close by. The overall shape of *Cupido* eggs is cylindrical. That evening the female was attentively taking care of half of her eggs, while the other half was in a container with methylene blue and an airstone...minus a few for Ron's research.

The water parameters were 0 hardness (both general and carbonate), 6.5 pH, with no detectible ammonia or nitrites. The last water change was about 4 weeks prior with 20 gallons straight rain water (in Southern California this stuff is almost impossible to get!). There is still only one fish actively taking care of the eggs and territory. She has a rounded dorsal and her stripes under her eyes are only broken by a very dark vertical bar. I have noticed that the dorsal fins do vary between *Cupido* and this may indeed be a good way to sex the fish. Broken lines don't seem to have any relevance. I have not found broken lines either. I do have one that has greatly elongated rays on the dorsal. "He" also has more of a red flush whereas the rest have a greenish iridescence. I have always wondered if he was a different type Biotodoma. No others show this dramatic finnage...out of eight adult Cupido.

By the 22nd of December the *Biotodoma Cupido* eggs in the tank were off the rock. The female was carefully watching the egg area this morning but she had dug down to the undergravel plate. Interestingly, the female tended the eggs again with no male help! The male swam among the two other Cupido in the tank regularly and showed no tendancy to defend the nest. He alone is allowed to enter the breeding territory while the female chases the rest off. I hoped the fry in the tank were still ok, as I could not see them. The artificially hatched fry are wriggling!

Unfortunately an upcoming trip to Europe was approaching fast. In 3.5 days I was leaving for England and would not be able to tend to the fish

personally for 2 weeks. Local fish help is hard to come by so my thought was to put the fry (hopefully free swimming) in an established tank of their own and add some live plants. I managed to get a large amount of hair algae from the local water garden center. My hope was that there would be enough small creatures in the algae to feed the fry. I can't say there was no possibility of any harmful creatures in the plants also. My son would add some microworms daily. I had no green water available, so this was the best feeding schedule I could arrange. The morning of my trip I added the barely-free-swimming fry into the tank and hoped for the best. They survived for some time, according to my son, but when I returned there were none left.

During the month of January, the other *Cupido* in the tank showed red in their anal fins where last spawning period their body color was only green with rather clear fins. On January 31st, 2001 they spawned the second time. I siphoned off 2/3's of the eggs after taking pictures. The remaining 1/3 were gone the next morning, probably due to the disturbance of removing the eggs and multiple flashes of the camera.

While the first spawn didn't survive my two week vacation I had high hopes for the eggs that were now being hatched artificially. The eggs hatched and after a few days the fry absorbed their egg sacks and started swimming around in a school. They were kept in a small container hanging on the inside of the tank that cycled water from the tank into the container continuously. This kept the water relatively “fresh” while giving them a small area in which to search for food. I was impressed with the way that the fry stuck together and continually were on the swim in search of food. I fed them well on microworms and powdered fry food and they started to grow. Unfortunately I lost this group of babies almost overnight. I assume that the build-up of wastes overcame the ability of the incoming amount of water to keep conditions to their liking. They fry may be very sensitive to water conditions but to that point they looked very robust.

I had one more spawn and left them in the tank with the parents. There was the possibility that it would be necessary to leave the fry with the parents for a while in order to raise a spawn successfully. As usual the male showed little interest in protecting the family but at the same time the other fish showed little interest in entering the spawning area to eat the fry. The female continued to raise the fry on her own. I saw a few fry swimming around for a couple of days but there was no herding of the fry at all. After a few days no more fry were sighted and the regular spawning ended.

Could the spawning be seasonal? This is quite possible, however the availability of rain water is very seasonal here also. I continue to use R.O. water but the courtship is so drawn out and "low-key" that I am not able to draw any conclusions yet. The fry do appear strong enough to be raised separately from the parents but the water conditions must be kept optimal. The biggest secret to spawning the *Cupido* seems to be very simple…lots of patience.

2009 PROMOTIONAL GIVE-AWAY

Whenever you submit a 500+ word, orginal article for the Showfish, you get one year's membership free!

MEMBERSHIP STATUS

Due	Mbr No.	Name
11/08	390	Mike Ganotisi
12/08	3	Marc & Barbara Allen
1/09	**47**	**Stan Sung**
1/09	**395**	**Rick Handfield**
1/09	**288**	**Richard Lin**
2/09	97	Charlotte, Rick Marelius
2/09	156	John Fuqua
2/09	391	Kyle Le

December Meeting was our Holiday Banquet.

We enjoyed a turkey dinner with traditional and new side dishes. Tony Mazeroll's claim that he cooks a good turkey has been upheld. Did you try Kim Chi's traditional Russian salad of beets, vegetables, and meat? It was delicious! We all ate so much it was hard to stay awake for Vin Kutty's excellent presentation on Bolivia and Bolivian fish.

Many members participated in the Fish Exchange game, but no one was happier with the results than Cesar Mora's son, who won a fine crayfish.

Michael Moore, Cesar Mora and son

Vin Kutty (L), Brian Downing (Rt)

Billie Gilbert and wife

Showfish 2009 January

Front row: Bill Scott's daughter, Name unknown (blue/grey plaid shirt), Name unknown (white Tee-shirt), Kristian Downs

Next rows, L to Rt: Name unknown (black sweatshirt), Name unknown (auburn-haired lady), Name unknown (plaid shirt), Name unknown (dark shirt), Larry Guillow (orange shirt), Kathy Van Dam? (purple sweater), Name unknown (gray Tee-shirt), Barry Heller (light green Tee-shirt).

Name unknown (windbreaker with white on sleeves)

Showfish 2009 January

Name Unknown, Ken Hengstebeck, Art North, Jeff Long

Craig David displaying Vin Kutty's NPO Tee Shirt, Duncan Mahoney