



APRIL 2008

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# Showfish *coast*

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

## APRIL 4<sup>TH</sup> SPEAKER: Sabrina Fullhart

### *Topic: Freshwater Shrimp*

Sabrina, current president of the Pacific Coast Cichlid Association, will be giving a presentation on a subject that is all too rarely addressed: those important and often beautiful janitors of water habitats—freshwater shrimp.

Sabrina has written articles for the Wet Web Media website, served as president of the Silicon Valley Aquarium Society, and kept *Betta macrastoma* in photogenically- red good health.

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photo from PCCA at  
<http://www.cichlidworld.com>

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**Species Profile—**  
*Microctenopoma ansorgii*  
*The Ornate Ctenopoma*

Three or four years ago (ok, make that decades ago), I was new to the hobby and bought a great big, thick book by Innes on tropical fish. It was the second edition, gaudy in its yellow cover, and full of information for an enthusiastic young aquarist. I must have read that book over a hundred times, cover to cover. The color pictures were really black and white pictures that were colored in. I guess since my TV was black and white that seemed fully acceptable!

I kept guppies, sword-tails, and kribensis, mainly, but I was struck by one "color" picture, the Ornate Ctenopoma. Elongate in shape, with fins like a cichlid and vertical bars of black and red the entire length and the entire height of the body and fins, this fish definitely made a lasting impression, especially since I was not to see one for over 30 years!

Fast forward to last

summer at the American Cichlid Association Convention (2008) in Sacramento, California. Looking over the fish that were to run in the annual fund-raising auction (for conservation,) I noticed a familiar name long before I saw the fish. As I searched the tank full of active cichlids, I found one, a small grey pencil-shaped fish sitting on the bottom. It was definitely not happy, and it did not look like the picture I remembered. I managed to get four of the fish at the auction, one of which died before it was time to leave for home.

Once at home I placed the 1.25 inch long fish and a large clump of Java moss in a small quarantine tank where they could be observed, or so I thought.

I couldn't find the fish the next day and had no more luck the following day! By the weekend, I decided to take apart the tank and found them all, deeply buried in the Java moss.

More than once, I've removed Java moss to find no fish in the tank and the



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 Photos by Tony Pinto from <http://www.bostonaquariumsociety.com>

Java moss moving! Unfortunately, one had developed a bad case of fungus and didn't live past the next day. Deciding that this was my last chance at a pair, I separated the last two to be sure that each was safe from the other. I had no idea if these were a pair, and the information available on their care was so scarce that it was obvious that few had ever really kept this fish, much less bred them!

I kept them in their one-gallon jars complete with sponge filter and java moss. After six months, they were about two inches long and higher in body. They did well on black worms, and I never did see them eat flake food.

I eventually lost one right after the fires in San Diego. I'm not sure if that was coincidence or not, it was the only fish I lost. Being labyrinth fish, they may be more exposed to airborne pollutants I

suppose. Now I had one left. When the remaining fish was happy, his colors came through with clear distinct black and red bars. Feeding and displaying brought out his colors. "Cool fish," I thought and wished I had more.

Art North, when we were talking at one of the COAST club meetings, referred me to a wholesaler/retailer in Texas. Sure enough, he had the fish! By the time we had exchanged several emails, the seller was out of the fish and for several months never received more of the fish. Apparently these were all wild caught in Africa! Eventually I gave up, then a month later found the fish on Aquabid, from the same seller!

I bid on and won a dozen of my prized *Ctenopoma*. Through a great number of frustrating email delays, I finally got the order straight and bumped the total order 25 to help defray the shipping cost. The fish arrived the next day, well packed and in excellent condition. They settled in well, and I had no losses.

They were placed in a 20 gallon long tank with three sponge filters and some leaning pieces of egg crate to give shelter to fish who might want to get away from the rest. I fed black worms and a small pinch of flake food each time. I still couldn't see them eating the flake food but I didn't see any collecting uneaten either.



Eventually I went to move them to a 40-gallon tank I had just cleared out. It was then that I found the heater in the tank was set to barely the low seventies, and the water was cool. Apparently this was causing them no problems. I placed several 6-inch plastic plants throughout the new tank. Several guppies were added to give them a sense of security and the occasional live food.

After the *Ctenopoma* became more comfortable in their new setting, I started to observe their behavior. The fish began to color up, and the more colorful ones started displaying to one another. No damage occurred as a result of their interaction. They do like to

"sit" on and around plants much of the time but are instantly up and around at feeding time. They showed an interest in flake food and started eating it as it fell and as it sat on the bottom. They're not a problem feeder as I had been prepared to expect.

The research I have done shows them to come from shallow water around Stanley Pool in West Africa. They reach just over three inches in length, prefer water temperatures in the upper 70's to low 30's range, a neutral pH, and low hardness. The fish is peaceful as long as its cohabitants are too large to fit in its mouth. It should be kept with fish that do not have an aggressive temperament. Males may have slightly longer anal and dorsal fins with white edges.

They have no problem living in cool water for short periods of time. In addition, they're perfectly comfortable in hard alkaline water. Whether or not they'll breed in hard water remains to be seen. I've found only one article on breeding this fish; it is from a fellow ACA member. Ctenopoma apparently are bubble nest breeders, and their babies are extremely small, requiring the smallest of foods. Water conditions in the low 80's, soft water and a slightly acid pH appear to be the right combination of factors for breeding.

I have only just started to learn about these fish. They aren't difficult to keep, and they appear to be relatively hardy. I'll continue to share information as I learn more. If anyone else is interested in keeping and breeding this fish, please feel free to contact me.


The Ornate Ctenopoma is a fascinating fish, well worth the 30+ year wait!

**AUTHOR: BRIAN DOWNING** 

### ***Looking for the Auction Registration Form??***

It is now available on our website at <http://www.coastfishclub.com> and in the Files section of our online discussion group at <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/coastfishclub> .

There is a version of the form to print out and fill in by hand and another version in an Excel spreadsheet file that partially fills an auction registration form on one of the two worksheets comprising the Excel file in when you enter data in the bag labels on the other worksheet.

The form will not be printed in the Showfish anymore; we will try to keep a few on hand at the regular meetings. 

## Summary of February 2008 Meeting

### Featuring Steve Ehrlich talking about oddball species

Steve Ehrlich expressed his journey over the past two decades in the fish hobby. Steve showed a few pictures of his first fish and his juvenile involvement with fish it was unwise to keep. As his passion for fish keeping matured he started collecting smaller, uncontroversial fish. He brought several fish to the meeting for sharing as well as a few other visual aids. He gave away two bags of



This is the proper way to bag up a pair of cichlids— put each fish in a double bag with lots of air, then tape the two bags together to make one auction lot with one bag label.

*Crenuchus spiritus* (sailfin tetras) to audience members when he discussed cave brooding tetras. He also gave away two other bags of fish, one with a pair of killifish and the other with a *Thalassophryne amazonica* (Peru monster fish). Today Steve is extremely interested in killifish. He discussed several varieties and their breeding habits. His job at Southland Aquatics offers him a unique ability to help import unusual fish and to educate club members on such varieties, including the Pearl Danios he brought for the auction.

### **The Board of Directors meeting:**

The primary focus of the board meeting was to encourage new membership and to increase involvement among existing members.

President Brian Downing opened the meeting with an inquiry about the newsletter. He asked if we could avoid publishing the auction forms on the last page so we might include more content. After several comments, we moved to put the forms on-line and keep a small supply at the meetings.

Brian asked for suggestions to encourage more involvement among our members.

1. Volunteers needed for a booth at the Orange Co. Pet Expo on April 11-13.
2. A membership Chair and Welcoming Committee are still needed.
3. Someone needed to bring Soda's each month.
4. Contributions for the newsletter on anything dealing with the hobby.
5. Find a speaker. The program committee is even open to suggestions for a speaker.
6. Web advertisers needed to promote to club on blogs or web pages.
7. Club photographer to take pictures of meetings, fish or members.
8. Laminating badges for club members with auction numbers.
9. Reports on collecting field trips with pictures for the newsletter gossip column.

A 10% discount coupon would be added to the newsletter that many of the local fish stores would accept for discounts on fish and supplies. This may also be added to the membership cards when they are available.

Donated items for the drawings and the possibility of club Tee shirts are still in development. ▲

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## Two major conventions coming up

*One in Maryland, one in Texas, both with exceptional speakers*



They're selling 50 tickets (\$50 ea) to a raffle for a Margarita Tours ecotour to registered conventioners.

**October 16-19, 2008**  
**Laurel, Maryland**

<http://www.catfish2008.com/index.htm>



**The American Livebearer Association**

Presents:

**The 2008 ALA Convention Show and Auction**

**May 1st-May 4th  
Hilton San Antonio Inn  
San Antonio, Texas**

**4 DAYS OF FISHY ACTIVITIES INCLUDING:**

- **A Dazzling Array of Speakers**
- **Fish Farm & XGSC Tours**
- **Collecting Expeditions**
- **Fish Show & Plant Auction**
- **Vendor and Product Expo**
- **Awards Banquet**
- **Vern Parish Fund Reception**
- **Late-Night Hospitality Room**

**For information & registration  
Visit: [www.ala2008.info](http://www.ala2008.info)  
Phone: 361-645-2252**

**Member Gossip:**

***Nathan Okawa***

Nathan has been invited to speak in June to the Sacramento Aquarium Society. Way to go Nathan!

**Membership Dues Status**

***Due in April***

- Frank Chang
- Craig David
- Kristian Downs
- Craig Fries
- Barry Heller
- Nathan Okawa
- Alfred and Selma Paul
- Charles Pratt
- Phil Rodriguez
- Kenaan Tabikh
- Richard Woon

***Past Due (Jan, Feb, March)***

- Ryan D'Cuz
- Ron Harlan
- Rick, Charlotte Marelius
- Tom Varin

**EXPIRED (2007)**

- Marc, Barbara Allen**
- Art North**
- Wesley Wong**



Lots of goodies!



## **New and Renewing Members—*wow, welcome, all at once!***

Stan Sung (January)  
Rick Handfield (New-January)  
Richard Lin (January)  
Kyle Le (New-February)  
Terry Hemmert (March)  
Owen Layugon (New-March)  
Jim Sanchez (New-March)  
Miriam Scadeng (New-March)

Suman Kapil (March)  
Sandy Binder (January)  
John Fuqua (February)  
Vin Kutty (March)  
Billie Gilbert (New-March)  
Sal Oseguera (New-March)  
Ben Ivy (New-March)  
Sandy Vuong (New-March) ▲

## **Summary of March 2008 Meeting**

*Featured speaker: Paul Loiselle talking about Malagasy species*



Dr. Paul Loiselle spoke to our club on Malagasy fish; here he is showing some that have proven amenable to captive breeding. Much of Madagascar's flora and fauna are imperiled by both natural and man-made events. Some of these fishes are ones where our efforts can make a difference in the race for their survival.

Loiselle is a gifted speaker—experienced, organized, exceptionally knowledgeable, and enjoyable. We always look forward to his talks.

**General Meeting Summary:** Brian Downing and others were able to convince a few brave people to be –gasp–

## volunteers

and handle some of the business of the club.

**We are pleased to announce:**

### **1. Jeff Long is taking a turn at being Membership Chair**

Jeff will handle membership applications, maintain the currency of the spreadsheet, and make sure McCabe Printing gets a copy of it in time to print all the mailing labels for the Showfish. If he gets a couple of people to help work on a project here and there, he may be able to put together a New Member Orientation package, which we haven't had in years.

By the time the April meeting rolls around, Jeff will have the spreadsheet of member data—be sure and stop by to verify the spreadsheet has your current mailing address, phone number, and email address. The club directors need your email address to contact you in the event of surprise opportunities, or last minute changes.

If we had your correct email address in March, for instance, you would have known that Art North was inviting people to visit him Saturday night for a casual evening, one-on-one, with Loiselle, and you would have known there would be no newsletter printed in March. Did you miss out?

### **2. Mike Khalid is accepting the job of gathering Member Profiles.**

He will be talking to members for this new occasional feature column of the Showfish.

So many of us know each other by sight, and the more extrovert of us know each other by what plants or fish we keep, but most of us



Catching up with friends provides reasons to attend mtgs.

don't know each others' names, fish and plant goals, or accomplishments. Mike will be working on changing that.

**3. Vicki and Dan Acosta did a one-month stint as photographer and article hunter,** respectively—most of the photos this month were taken by Vicki.

**We need a couple of people to do photos/article hunting monthly. These are two of the most enjoyable positions the club has to offer**—please try them, even if only for a month.

Speaking as the editor of the Showfish, it is becoming patently clear—all my best intentions and love of the job notwithstanding—that if I don't get some regular and timely cooperation in the area of being provided with photos and articles, I won't get your Showfish to you in a regular and timely manner. It's time; step up.

Charlotte Marelius [rcmarelius@verizon.net](mailto:rcmarelius@verizon.net)

**4. Kristian Downs will develop and moderate our upcoming website forum.** He is also seeking ways to promote our club to other forums and to companies which advertise on forums. Please share any information or forum experience on these subjects that you have.

Kristian participates in our discussion group on Yahoo now and then, so you can strike up a conversation anywhere, anytime.

**5. A Welcoming Chairperson is still needed.** Don't you appreciate a bit of help when you walk into a new situation? So would our guests and brand new members.

Territorialize a table as THE WELCOMER and help someone fit in a little more easily. One of these days some sixteen year old is going to walk into the club with *Betta macrastoma* fry he spawned or a true-breeding trio of magenta-and-lime-plaid delta tail guppy with platinum-and-

turquoise-houndstooth body—only to walk out because no one even said hello.

We welcome interesting or oddball fish into our tanks—one of us can welcome a new, interesting and oddball-like-us person and teach him the ropes for a couple of meetings. If only to get the guppies or the bettas.

### *Auction views*



Runners get the last, best look at auction lots.



Some auction lots draw serious attention.



Junior members checking the bags, checking the winnings, and checking out.



COAST's version of an exercise program—  
lift it, hold it, take it away.



For more information on *Rorippa aquatica*, see

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/wildlife/tes/ca-overview/docs/Plants/Lake%20Cress.pdf>



*Rorippa aquaticus*, emergent form (photo from <http://www.vaquariumplant.com/plant/r1.htm>, Thai exporters, fish & plants)

### Plant Profile –*Rorippa aquatica*

(Eaton) E.J.Palmer & Steyermer

#### *Lake Cress, a North American*

*native* is a white flowering perennial dicotyledon of the *Brassicaceae* (mustard) family that thrives in rich substrate and clean water. Synonyms: *Neobeckia aquatica* (Eaton) Greene; *Armoracia aquatica*; *Armoracia lacustris*.

#### *Requirements:*

**Difficulty:** Medium; sensitive to pollution. **Light:** medium

**pH:** 7.0–7.5 **Temp:** 20–26 C

**Water hardness:** medium hard –hard

**Propagation:** From seeds, leaf

division, but most commonly adventitious shoots

**Habitat:** Midwestern states bordering the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers and eastward; from the Great Lakes south to the Gulf of Mexico. Greatest population density is in the small riverine systems of the Midwest floodplains where the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers meet.

The submersed form has pinnate leaves that break when support from water is removed. The plant uses this characteristic to propagate. During seasonal flooding, the older pinnate leaves are ripped off by the fast water; when the water level falls, these leaves settle into soft mud and the leaf buds put forth a new plant.

Conservation status is dependent upon locale. ▲ Line drawing from USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. Vol. 2: 164. [Usage Requirements](#).



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