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- Photo by David Powell

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- Photo by Robert Shields

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The Word is “Mulm”...

I guess that I will start with my usual beg... PLEASE SEND ME SOME ARTICLES!!! Boy, do I feel better.

I have a new author, actually, he is an old member that has re-joined the PCCA after a 15 year hiatus. Albert So has written a nice article titled “*Pelvicachromis*: more than just the common kribbs”. It is not a krib article, but mostly it is about a close cousin, the *taeniatus*. I think that *taeniatus* are a great little West African that could go in just about anyone's small to medium sized tank in any type of water. Now that I used Albert's article, I NEED MORE! Oops, there I go again.

Pam Chin rounds out the rest of the issue with “Ask Pam #101” and “Cichlids in the News”. Pam just got back from the American Cichlid Association's annual convention in Washington, DC and writes a little about it in CITN. I'm sure that she will write an article on the convention for the Cichlidae communiqué (hint, hint, hint).

Ken Davis will be here Saturday talking about fish from Uruguay. Ken comes from Atlanta and he will be bringing fish for the auction, so everyone show up and support Ken, because being from Atlanta, he talks kinda funny.

- Jim



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Pelvicachromis: more than just the common kribis

By Albert So

Whenever there is a conversation on African cichlids, one would typically gravitate towards the Great Rift Lakes. It is true that Lake Tanganyika and Malawi do bolster a wide array of beautiful and interesting cichlids (ok... Lake Victoria too), we tends to overlook the other side of the same continent which has equally beautiful, if not more interesting cichlids. The first thing that comes to mind on ‘westies’ is the *Pelvicachromis pulcher*, or commonly known as kribensis. The sight of the proud parents parading a school of fry all over the tank is what keep us all hook on this money pit...I mean hobby. I first fell in love with *Pelvicachromis* when I was lucky enough to acquire a wild caught pair of *Pelvicachromis* sp. aff. *subocellatus* over 20 years ago. Even now, this species is still undescribed despite the fact that it has been in the aquarium hobby for over 60 years.



Pelvicachromis taeniatus “Moliwe” male

Photo: Albert So

Recently, there has been a resurgence of ‘westies’ in the hobby. This has invigorated my love of the *Pelvicachromis* as more and more new color morphs and species are described. As we tried to sort through all the different morphs of *Pelvicachromis taeniatus* such as “Moliwe”, “Lobe”, “Kienke”, “Lokoundje”, “Muyuda”, “Njanje”, “Bipindi”, “Wouri”, “Dehane”, “Nigerian Yellow”, “Nigerian Green” as well as some tank strains such as “Nigerian Red”, “Ogele” (I am sure I missed one or two). I find Anton Lamboj’s book ‘The Cichlid Fishes of Western Africa’ to be a very good starting point. He is also in the process of reclassifying the *Pelvicachromis taeniatus* through DNA correlation. We may soon be looking at three distinct groups instead of a dizzying array of color morphs.



Pelvicachromis taeniatus “Wouri”

Photo: Albert So

If one finds the *taeniatus* color morphs too confusing, there are other *Pelvicachromis* which may strike your fancy. If intraspecific aggression is what you want, then *Pelvicachromis rubrolabiatus* and *Pelvicachromis signatus* are your fish. They make Mike Tyson's ear nibbling incident during the boxing match look civilized. Then there is the extremely shy *Pelvicachromis roloffi* that will keep you guessing if they have turned your tank into a protein shake. Tired of looking for your fish through a magnifying glass, *Pelvicachromis humilis* with a full grown size close to 6" will suit you fine. Even my *Pelvicachromis taeniatus* "Wouri" male can reach 5". A giant compares to most *Pelvicachromis*.

While breeding the other *Pelvicachromis* may not be as easy as the common kribbs, the basic principles are the same. The sexual dimorphic of the genus indicates the different parental roles for male and female. Successful courtship is typically initiated by the female. The formation of the pair bonding is preceded by the selection of the actual spawning cave by the female. The female will tend the eggs exclusively while the male positions himself just outside the cave and resumes his guarding duty. Fry of this genus are fairly large and readily accept newly hatched *Artemia*. The parents share the brood care equally with the female usually herds the fry back into a cave at night.

Next time as you are looking for a fix for your addiction in a LFS and see an albino kribbs in the LFS, think of all the possibilities genus *Pelvicachromis* has to offer and dig a little deeper into your pocket for a pair or two of these other *Pelvicachromis*. You may find yourself ridding some of the Rift Lakes setup and going to the 'Dark Side'. As Darth Vader put it, 'The force is strong with this one.'



Pelvicachromis roloffi "Samba" with fry

Photo: Albert So

Ask Pam #101

By Pam Chin

Pam@cichlidae.com

Hi Pam,

*I am going to try and explain this as in depth as possible. My 220-gallon tank has been set up for the past seven years and as of about two months ago I decided to get a few more fish to add to the list. I purchased a 4 inch tank raised male *Champsocromis caeruleus*, and wild *Buccochromis rhoadesii* and a *Nimbochromis fuscotaeniatus*. I kept them in a quarantine tank for a month and a half. Everything between them was going well. I observed no weird symptoms from any of the fish. As of last week I added those 3 fish to my existing tank.*

The first week has gone by absolutely fine. But, as of last night I noticed a lot of flashing, each fish I would say is flashing between 5 and 6 times a minute, I have never noticed this behavior in any of these species to date. I am responsible on upkeeps and water changes, my bigger tank gets one every 3 days, and since adding new fish I have done a 25 percent every two days just so I didn't mess any beneficial bacteria up with adding the extra fish. Water is testing out fine besides nitrates, which are very low, nothing that has bothered me in the past.

Temp- 76 (checked and verified)

ph- 7.8

Am- 0

Nitrates- 10-15

If you could point me in the right direction, should I wait, should I begin doing some kind of medication? I feel like if I did have to do a meds I would have to medicate the whole tank, I just don't know how realistic it would be to separate each fish.

I have looked at all fish, some fish have very minor scratches from a chase, mostly just the champs, but everyone else has nothing. I have monitored breathing and everything appears to be fine, gills do not seem inflamed or bulging from the sides. The fish still have a very strong appetite as usual. I feed my fish once a day and skip feedings once a week.

Maybe I am just being paranoid about all of this, but this is my favorite and most invested tank that I have and I would be absolutely sick if anything happened that could have better been prevented.

Since I have noticed this just happening I did a 35 percent water change, added a bit extra dechlor cause of the heavy rain in the area and added a bit of stress coat. I don't want their bodies becoming raw from flashing. I also started feeding NLS Thera A non medicated anti-parasite food.

*If this was your tank I want to know what you would do to fix this or correctly diagnose this. My hunch is if you think something is wrong it probably came from the wild *Buccochromis rhoadesii*.*

*Thanks,
Steve*



Champsochromis caeruleus

Photo: Pam Chin

Hi Steve,

Unless I actually see Ick, I don't worry about flashing. It could be from your water changes, it could be the copper in your pipes? Maybe your fish just have an itch?? You have done everything right, you have quarantined your new acquisitions, and you have added multiple fish so no one would get singled out. If they are acting normal otherwise i.e., no one is sitting on the bottom of the tank, folded fins, breathing hard, etc. then I wouldn't worry.

The last thing you want to do is to treat this tank since it is already established. Keep an eye on them, and go from there, but again, if they are acting normal, and eating and only flashing I wouldn't worry about it. The only red flag I see is your pH, it is really low in my opinion, and if you want to see the full potential color and action from your fish, you need to figure out how to increase it. Whether you add a media to your filter, or even a pH upper, you will be amazed at the improvement in color. Happy fish always look better!

Feeding your fish a food that has meds in it, is a good way for your fish to build up a resistance to meds. Then if something does hit your tank, there isn't much you can do, because the antibiotics will not be effective. And did you know that even YOU could build up a resistance to antibiotics as well when you use products like this?

Often these fish will flash after water changes, and you can add some water conditioners that help promote the production of slime on your fish and that will sometimes make a difference in their flashing. I would work on increasing your pH and go from there!

Hey Pam,

I finally found someone that has all of the fish I wanted! It has taken so much time, but at least I will be able to get them at some point. Believe it or not this guy has tank raised, F1's and F2's along with WC. My question is what would you get? I understand the meaning of all of the terms, and you would obviously have better "genes" to work with WC species, but because this guy is selling tank raised fish should I shy away from to opportunity to save money and get them? Instead of paying 80 dollars for a wild caught 5-inch fish I could get a tank raised for 35.

I know WC fish can have better coloring than other fish, but is there much of a difference between the rest.

*Thanks,
Scott*

Hi Scott,

There is a lot of hype about wild caught fish. First just because a fish is wild caught doesn't mean its perfect. Responsible breeders who work with wild fish can offer f-1 and f-2's that look as good

PCCA

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or better than wild caught fish. You don't know how old a wild caught fish is, where it has been, etc. There are some wild fish that never recover from the ordeal. There are fewer issues with tank-raised fish, they aren't as skittish, and they eat anything offered. The foods that are available today can also bring out a lot of color in your fish.

Personally, I am the lazy aquarist; wild caught fish can be a lot of work. I am cheap! I would rather save the money, and then I can buy more! Some people can't do that, and have to have wild fish, they have to be the first guy on the block to work with a certain species, and there is nothing wrong with that either so it is really a personal choice.



Cape Maclear, Malawi – Inside the Malawi National Park

Photo: Pam Chin

Hey Pam,

*I recently purchased (10) juvenile *Neolamprologus brichardi* in hopes they would pair off and I would be able to get somewhat of a colony going. I am very interested in their breeding and colony behavior. They are all doing fine and eating well, but I was wondering what would you suggest for their total diet? I have been feeding them flake, sinking cichlid pellets, and various frozen foods. Are there any live foods that would do them good?*

Thanks for the help!
Matt

Hi Matt,

They are a zooplankton feeder, so they like little shrimp, invertebrates, and bugs etc., which are in their habitat. Some may even be seasonal. They really like live foods, and freshly hatched baby brine, daphnia, black worms, small red worms, etc., are excellent choices. I don't like to feed frozen foods; I think freeze-dried foods are much better, so if you can find mysis shrimp and smaller krill that are freeze-dried, I think they will really like it.

Doesn't take too much to spawn this stunning fish, just keep your water clean and feed them good foods, and they will reward you with tons of fry!

Hi Pam,

*I thought I would update you on my *Neolamprologus brichardi* species tank. It seems that 2 to 3 pairs have formed and have had a brood each. It is hard to tell exactly how many pairs there are as the parental care is so loose. I'm used to seeing cichlids having their fry in a tight little bunch and the parents taking over the tank*



Neolamprologus brichardi

Photo: Kurt Zadnik

with aggression. The fry seem to have the run of the tank, with no other adults bothering them. I know that this is the brichardi colony behavior shining through, but it's just so interesting to see it in action. Not sure how old the fry are, at least 10 days I would say. I have been feeding them lots of baby brine shrimp to get them fattened up so they get big enough to start to take daphnia.

*Thanks,
Matt*

Hi Matt,

Thanks so much for the update!!! Isn't it a sight to behold! It is fascinating to watch the group all help in the fry rearing. I am so glad you are getting a chance to see this first hand!

Congrats on the spawns!



Until Next time... Keep your fins up!
Questions and Comments are welcomed:
ASK PAM, P. O. Box 28145, San Jose, CA 95159-8145
Check out "Ask Pam" on the Web: www.cichlidae.com

Upcoming Programs

September 10, 2011
Sarah Roberts
Tropheus, Petrochromis, and Other Oddballs

October 8, 2011
TBA

Cichlids In The News

By Pam Chin
pam@cichlidae.com

Cichlids Rock Washington DC!!!!!! Five Star Event *****

Whew, what an ACA convention!!!! Capital Cichlid Association really put on a fantastic event! Congrats to all who worked so hard, so we could have so much fun! I am still in recovery mode; thank goodness I only had to work 3 days this week! When you have over 500 cichlid people gathered in one place it could only mean good times! And believe me we took advantage of it, celebrating cichlids 24/7 for 4 days in a row!

Now that ACA is a mere memory, the next event that we need to prepare for FOTAS/CARES in San Antonio, it will be the first weekend in November. Last month I neglected to give you the website so you could check it out for yourself. There are a lot of people from all over the US and even Europe who are planning to attend. Lets show everyone how serious we are about conservation by attending.

FOTAS/CARES, the largest conservation themed convention ever organized for the aquarium hobby in North America will take place November 4th - 6th 2011 at the Airport Doubletree Hotel in beautiful San Antonio, Texas. The speaker line up is to die for!

Ad Konings, Les Kaufman, Anton Lamboj, Paul Loiselle, Melanie Stiassny & Kathy England. Join conservation minded people and learn more about the status of habitats around the world.

Species Maintenance is where it's at. We must start maintaining species, we can't continue to keep letting fish slide thru our hands never to be seen again. I am so excited for this event, and to be able to see fish experts that are rarely seen, like Kaufman & Stiassny. This 3-day event will also include a large Texas size auction on Sunday.

All the information you need is at this site:



Here I am getting my Free ACA T-shirt from MonsterFish.com Thanks Li!!!

<http://www.hillcountrycichlidclub.com/fotascare/index.ph>
On to the Exchanges....

Breeding *Herotilapia multispinosa* by Ken Seiders – May 2011 – Publication of the Atlanta Area Aquarium Association

Ken shares his experiences with this wonderful little Central American Cichlid. He covers maintenance and breeding.

Spawning *Pseudotropheus saulosi*, Konings, 1990 - Jeff Bulmahn – Lateral Line – May 2011 – Publication of the Hill Country Cichlid Club.

This is a nice article about *Pseudotropheus saulosi*; it covers diet, maintenance and breeding on this Lake Malawi cichlid.

Wet Leaves by Susan Priest – The Modern Aquarium – May 2011 – Publication of the Greater City Aquarium Society, New York.

In this month's installment Susan reviews a new book that may be of interest to all fish keepers. "Do Fish Sleep?" by Judith S. Weis. She liked the question and answer format, and concluded that it was an enthralling book. In her own

words:

“The cover of the book is a study in contrasts. The title will make you feel like you are among the goldfish in a pond, insulated from predators and happily sucking up duckweed from the surface. However, once you start reading you will soon discover that you are actually swimming with the lionfishes—in other words, fully immersed in the wide world of all things piscine.

Ms Weis has given me a strong sense of the interdependence which every fish on the planet has with every other fish on the planet. She has carried me far beyond the walls of my aquariums, as well as drawn me deeper within them. It is a wonderful feeling to find a fresh perspective on a subject with which I am so very familiar.”

Sounds like a must read to me!!!!

Local Cichlid Gets Rave Reviews!!!!!!!!!!

Reprints

Controlling Insect Pests In The Fish Room by Kevin Kelley – #181 Cichlidae Communiqué July/August 2010. Reprinted by **Darter**, January/February 2011, and publication of the **Missouri Aquarium Association**.

Reviews

Keeping and Breeding *Placidochromis* sp. “phenochilus Tanzania”- The Star Sapphire Cichlid by Sam Borstein– #185 Cichlidae Communiqué March/April 2011. Reviewed by **Aqua Antics**, May, 2011, and publication of the **Sarnia Aquarium Society**.

Ask Pam #99 by Pam Chin – #185 Cichlidae Communiqué March/April 2011. Reviewed by **Aqua Antics**, May, 2011, and publication of the **Sarnia Aquarium Society**.

Cichlid In The News By Pam Chin - #185 Cichlidae Communiqué March/April 2011. Reviewed by **Aqua Antics**, May, 2011, and publication of the **Sarnia Aquarium Society**.

Chitande Island, Lake Malawi by Pam Chin – #184 Cichlidae Communiqué January/February 2011. Reviewed by **Tanks Topics**, April/May 2011, and publication of the **Greater Akron Aquarium Society**.



Chris Biggs debuts his new tattoo at ACA!

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BACK ISSUES AND REPRINTS

Some issues of *Cichlidae communique* are still available. Issues 11, 12, 15-120, and 121-171 are \$2.00. Issue 32 is \$3.00 and issues 62, 91 and 121 are \$5.00. Reprints of issues 11-15 are available in sets of five and are \$5.00 per set. Send your back issues order with check or money order to:

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