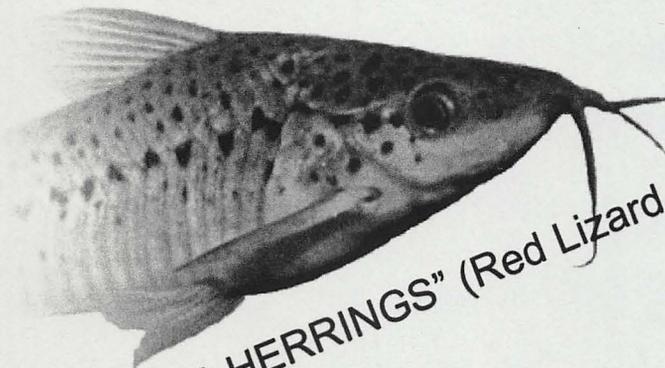


# CAT CHAT

**The Journal of the Catfish Study Group (UK)**

*The Chaca's by Steven Grant*



*"RED HERRINGS" (Red Lizard Whiptails) By Trevor Morris*



*OUT OF AFRICA (ANGOLA Part 2) by Bill Hurst*

*'What's New' December 2006 by Mark Walters*



*'An attempt to spawn upon demand?' By A.W. Taylor.*

**Volume 7 Issue Number 4  
December 2006**

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**This is the last journal of The Catfish Study Group (UK).**

**From 2007 the group will be known as The Catfish Study Group.  
However, the journal will still be called Cat Chat**

**Thank you to those of you who did contribute.**

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**Cat Chat** so that I don't treat it as spam mail and delete it without  
opening it.

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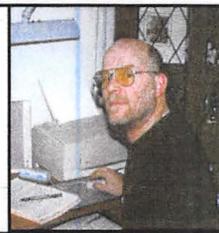
Roy & Dave Barton

**CAT CHAT**

The Committee of the CSG (UK) would like to thank the following companies for their support in the production of this journal

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# From the Chair



Terry Ward 1962—2006



It is with great sadness that I have to open this edition of Cat Chat with sad news. Terry Ward, CSG Social Secretary, died unexpectedly in late November at the tender age of 44, Terry was well known by all who came to our meetings as the "Raffle man". It was a brave man who said 'no' to Terry when he was on his rounds with his raffle book. Terry was a long-standing member of the Catfish scene from the days of the NAG to the formation of the CSG. He was a good aquarist and his favourite catfish was the Clarias.

Terry had been married for only two years when he died. His absence will not go unnoticed and we will all miss his jovial personality. On behalf of the Catfish Study Group I would like to extend our deepest sympathies to his family and friends.

At last the Breeders Award Program has a secretary in the form of Mark Walters who will be administering the program with the help of a sub committee. The plan is to start on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. There are a few rules to sort out first but details of the full program will be published on the web site by the end of the year.

The October meeting was scheduled as a discussion on new discoveries, but because of a date clash with

another local society, who were holding their auction on the same day, it meant that our turn out was very poor. After finally putting issue three of the magazine together we had a change in the scheduled program and Adrian Taylor gave us his new presentation on Hill Stream Catfishes. The following week I attended the second "All Aquarium Catfish" convention in Maryland, USA hosted by the Potomac Valley Aquarium Society. I was there to give two Cory talks and this time I attended the event along with our group secretary, Adrian Taylor. This was an event equal in many ways to our own convention and one I would highly recommend. Their next one will be held in 2008.

November saw me heading overseas again, this time to Norway and the Grenland Aquarium Club, for their Amazonian convention to give another Cory talk, this time I had fellow CSG members Brian Walsh and Stuart Brown for company. Brian was also there to give his talk on keeping and breeding Characins. At the same we were in Norway the groups November Autumn Auction meeting was held and I have been reliably informed that it was one of the best auction meetings we have had to date, both in attendance and quality of items being sold.

The Annual Convention is rapidly approaching and I have been very busy making sure that everything is going to plan. The speakers have been booked, the hotel have again done us proud with prices and of course will be providing first class meals. I have also arranged with them for the dining room to be at our disposal up until midnight on both Friday and Saturday and that while in the dining room we will have the bar at "happy hour" prices. The full details can be found on our web site as well as in this issue. Be sure to book your tickets early and make sure you have included your menu choices for the evening dinners. Rooms should be booked directly with the hotel making sure to tell them that you are there for the Catfish Convention. Anyone with any queries just e-mail me or drop me a line.



# The Chaca's

Steven Grant

This is a discussion on the identities of the species of the genus *Chaca* Gray, 1831. After a brief run down of each species, and images of them, there is a section on how to try and visually differentiate the species.

***Chaca chaca*** (Hamilton, 1822)

*Chaca hamiltonii* Gray, 1831 -

Unneeded replacement name for *Platystacus chaca*

*Chaca lophioides* Cuvier & Valenciennes, 1832 -

Unneeded replacement name for *Platystacus chaca*

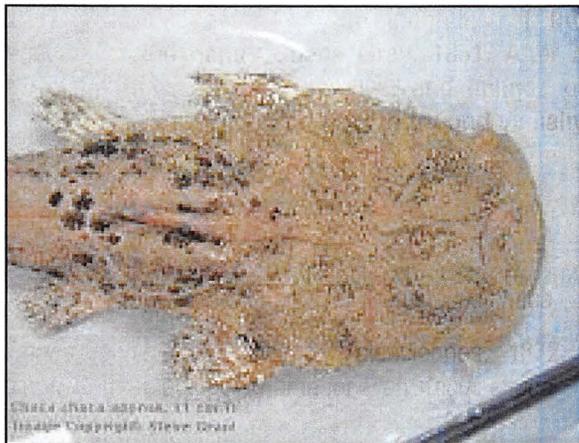
*Chaca buchanani* Günther, 1864 -

Unneeded replacement name for *Platystacus chaca*



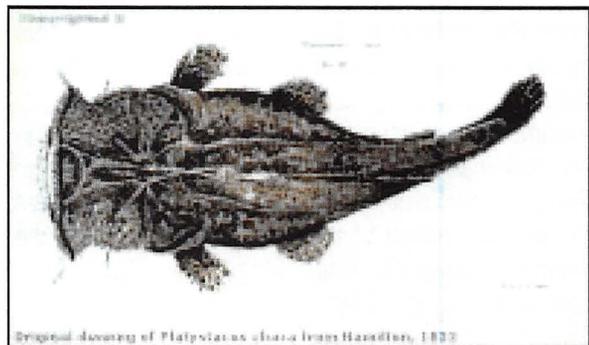
Originally described using material (not deposited in an institution) from 'rivers and ponds of the northern parts of Bengal', the current accepted range is India, Bangladesh, and possibly Nepal. There are reports from Myanmar, Malay, and Indonesia but these probably represent the other two species.

According to Roberts (1982) the name *chaca* is transliterated from a Bengali name for the fish, and that this in turn derives from the sound the fish makes when it is out of water. This species reportedly reaches 19 cm SL, but I have never seen true *C. chaca* that size.



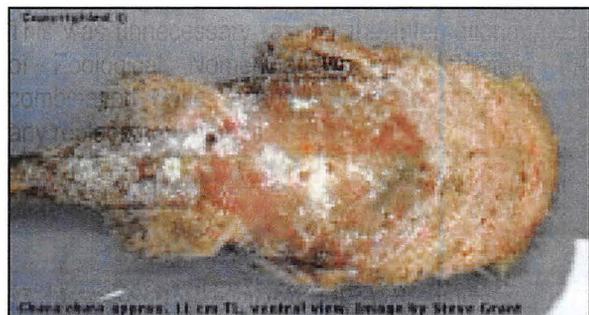
Roberts rightly points out that the three species listed above were not intended to be new species, but were

unneded replacement names for *Platystacus chaca*, which was the name originally used by Hamilton. It was customary in practice that if a species was placed in a genus with the same name i.e. *chaca* into the genus *Chaca*, that the species name would be altered to avoid tautonomy ('the use of the same word for the name of a genus and one of its included species'). This was unnecessary (as per the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature) and therefore the combination *Chaca chaca* is valid and doesn't need any replacement names.



Hamilton described the colour and pattern as "above clouded with green and black, and below with the latter colour: but all its colours are dirty and ill defined. The fins are spotted with black.". See the original drawing from Hamilton (1822). Some aquarists consider that you can easily tell *C. chaca* from the other species by the light tan colouration that we tend to see in most specimens (but which doesn't match the colour given by Hamilton!), but also mainly the pattern. This is because (as you can see from the drawing from Hamilton) *C. chaca* usually has some spots or blotches on the body (see images). However, I recently came across a specimen of *C. bankanensis* which also has pale colouration, but also the spotting/blotching of *C. chaca*. Therefore it is important that aquarists use the other methods of identifying them discussed later, and not just rely on colour or pattern.

The specimens pictured by me were imported direct





from India. The bizarre specimen pictured by Anne Waal (which I have only tentatively identified as *chaca*) has numerous cirri on the head and body, some of them being very thick. Even though these appear to be (currently) technically the same species they differ greatly in: colour, the extent of the cirri or papillae on the head and body, and also the fact that Anne's specimen has much more conspicuous cirri around the eye, than in my specimen and the one pictured by Ingo Seidel, reminiscent of *C. burmensis*. However, based on the great extent of the cirri on the head, and the fewer cirri along the inside fringe of the lower lip, I have tentatively identified it as a *C. chaca*.



*Chaca chaca*



*Chaca cf. chaca*



*Chaca bankanensis* Bleeker, 1852

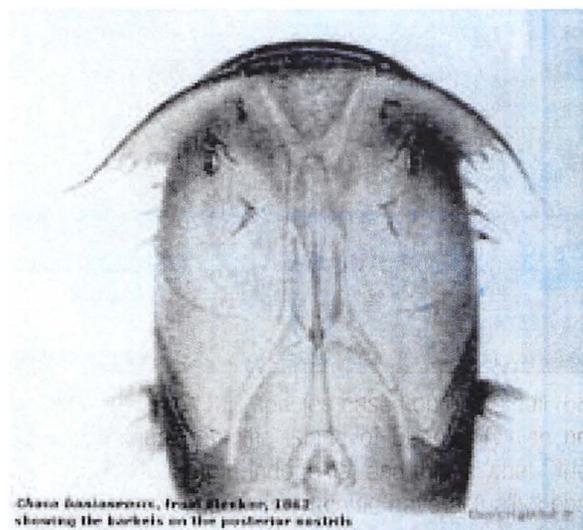
*Chaca bankae* Giebel, 1857 (emendation or mistake for *C. bankanensis*?)





Bleeker described this species based on one small (68 mm) specimen from the island of Bangka (which he misspelled Banka), in Indonesia, and this is where the species takes its name (so it could have actually been called *bankanensis*!). See exclusive images of the holotype (RMNH 5405), and the drawings from Bleeker (1862). The current distribution for the species is Peninsular Malaysia, the extreme southeastern tip of peninsular Thailand (Udomritthiruj, pers. comm., and Vidthayanon, 2004), Sarawak, Indonesia (Kalimantan, Sumatra, Bangka, Belitung, and possibly Java - Tandjong), and possibly Singapore (Bukit Merah). This species will reach at least 20 cm SL.

The colour of this species can vary from reddish brown specimens, which are usually the ones from Singapore, Thai or peninsular Malaysia (see images by Ingo and Kamphol) which I will call the Peninsular Form; or some specimens from the remaining localities (which I will call the Archipelagic Form) can be brown in varying lighter or darker shades; some specimens having greenish patches, and very few having blackish blotches (similar to *C. chaca*).



It is possible that the peninsular Malaysian, Thai, and Singapore specimens represent a new species or sub species in their own right. I have noticed that some Archipelagic Form specimens have much broader

heads when compared to others (and also when compared to all Peninsular Form specimens), and this is due to much longer maxillary bones. I thought that this may be a clue to differences that may warrant a different species or subspecies for the Peninsular Form, as this is one of the differences given by Brown & Ferraris (1988) to differentiate their (then) new species. This was because I had seen adult (19 cm



SL) specimens from different imports, of equal sizes of *bankanensis* of both forms, which had much different sized head-shapes due to the relative size of the maxillary bones. However, I have since found this difference in small specimens of equal size from the same import of the Archipelagic Form (see images).

However, none of the Peninsular Form that I have seen have the broad head. My views are then that these differences are not just related to age/ontogeny/size, or in their own right differences in species or sub



species, but are probably differences in the gender of the fish where the Archipelagic Form is concerned. Again, however, it does not rule out the possibility that the Peninsular Form is different to the Archipelagic Form, especially when none of the Peninsular ones I have seen have the broad heads, as do some of the Archipelagic Form. As well as this difference, and the difference in colour, the Peninsular Form seems to have much smaller nasal barbels, than the Archipelagic form. In some specimens Peninsular Form (particularly from Toh Daeng Peatswamp, Narathiwat Province, Thailand), there doesn't even appear to be a barbel, just a small flap of skin. This of

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course needs more work on it than I can give, but don't be surprised if we get a fourth species of *Chaca*, or a new sub species described for the Peninsular Form.

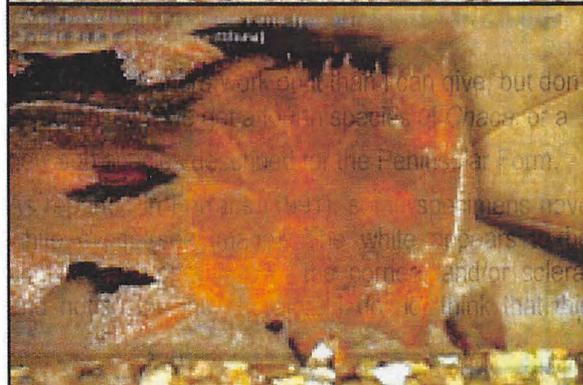
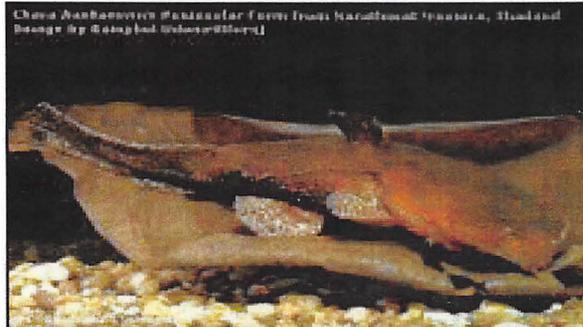
As reported in Ferraris (1991), some specimens have white eyes, (see image). The white appears to be confined to upper part of the cornea, and/or sclera, and not to the iris, therefore I do not think that this



makes them blind. One of Kamphol's photographs appears to show an albino or a xanthic (yellow) specimen.

*Chaca bankanensis* Peninsular Form from Narathiwat Province, Thailand

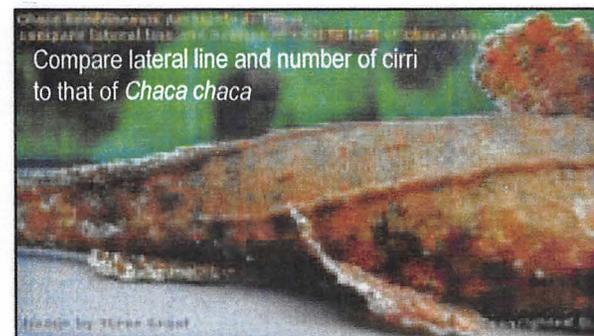
*Chaca bankanensis* Archipelagic Form



*Chaca bankanensis* Archipelagic Form



Young female?, exhibiting green colouration on upper surface of body

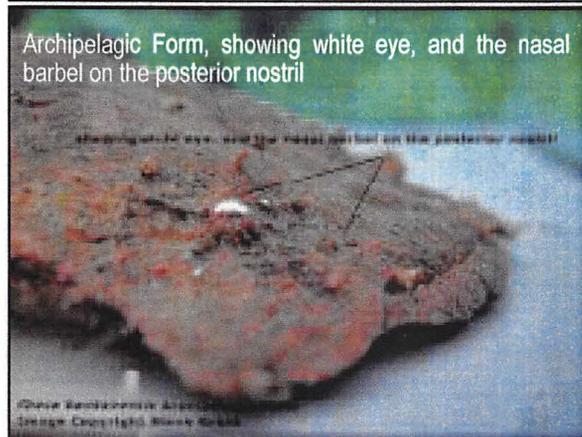


Compare lateral line and number of cirri to that of *Chaca chaca*

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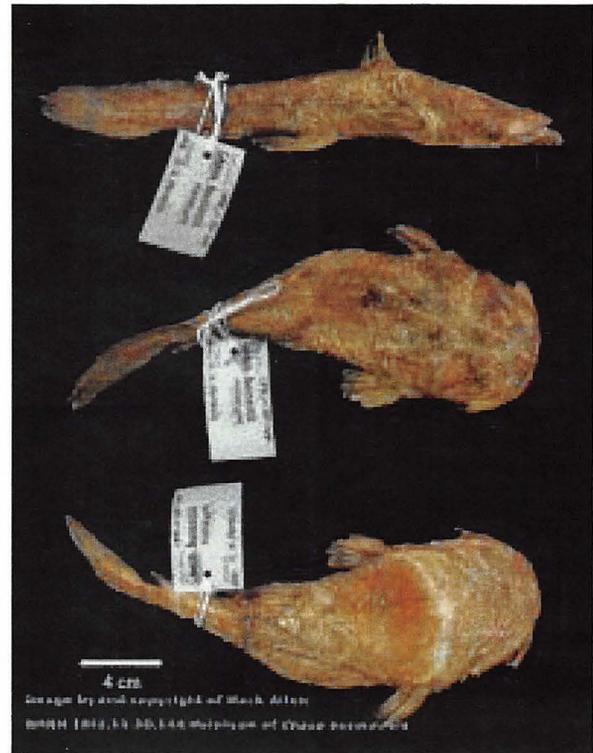
*Chaca bankanensis* Archipelagic & Peninsular Form

20.35 cm, and they originate from the Sittang River, Burma (Myanmar).



*Chaca burmensis* Brown & Ferraris, 1988

This species was described on the basis of four specimens in the Natural History Museum, London (see image of holotype). The largest type specimen is



Obviously the species takes its name from Burma.

The shape, and outward appearance of this species are more similar to *chaca* than to *bankanensis*. It tends to be a dark / black base colour, mottled with light brown to tan colour, which can be the case for some *C. chaca*.

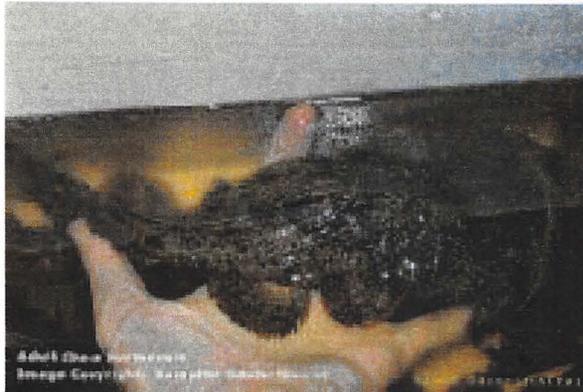
I have found that a small (approx. 7 cm TL) specimen from Pegu, Myanmar, killed two *Hypostomus* and almost killed two *Bunocephalus* species within a week of being put in their tank (which was approx. 12 inch by 10 inch). The *Hypostomus* died first, and at the same time the *Bunocephalus* started to develop open sores/burns in their skin and were hanging in upper water, but within a day of removing the *burmensis* and doing a 25% water change, they quite obviously started to pull round and return to normal. I considered whether it was the water parameters crashing, but the *burmensis* was absolutely fine, so I consider that it was releasing a poison into the water.

Roberts (1982) states that there is an axillary (pertaining to the axilla - literally the 'armpit', so in fishes, near the junction of the pectoral fin and the pectoral girdle, more specifically the cleithrum - Diogo et al 2004) pore in all *Chaca*'s but there was no evidence to show that it secreted a poison.

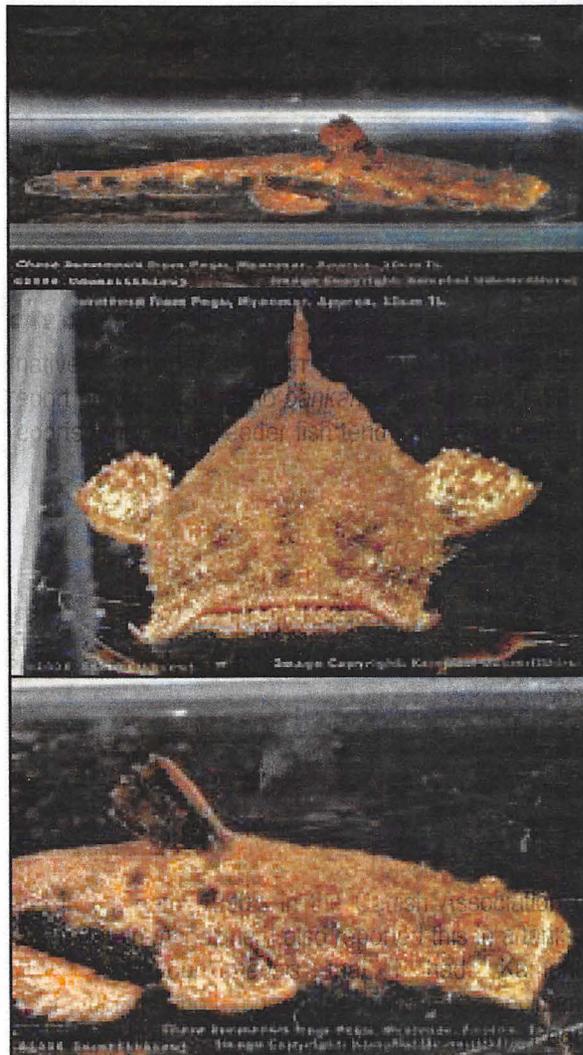
Based on my observations I would guess that it does. He does state that earlier authors had written that the

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"natives" consider its flesh poisonous, although this report probably relates to *bankanensis*. Ferraris (1991) reports that certain feeder fish tend to die if not eaten,



and in the early 1990's in the Catfish Association of Great Britain magazine, I also reported this in a tank of *chaca* and *bankanensis* that I had. Kamphol Udomritthiruj (who exported the *burmensis* specimens pictured), has seen many specimens from Pegu, Myanmar. He informed me that he has witnessed *burmensis* curling the maxillary barbels to lure prey.



*Chaca burmensis* from Pegu, Myanmar

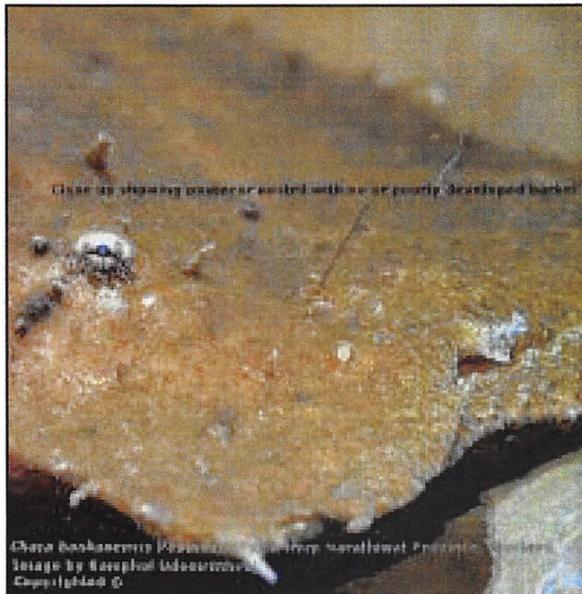


*Chaca burmensis* from Pegu, Myanmar

**Differentiating the species**

As mentioned earlier, colour and/or pattern alone is not a reliable indicator. Ferraris & Brown give some characters, but some of them can only be accurately used by utilising dead specimens and having knowledge of their anatomy (for which Diogo et al 2004 is useful).





Roberts visually differentiated *C. chaca* from *C. bankanensis* by the fact that *C. chaca* has 5 soft pectoral fin rays, versus 4. This can quite easily be seen if you look at the fish from above (see images), even without counting the rays you can see the different shape and relative size of the fin.

Unfortunately *burmensis* can also sometimes have 4 rays, so the number of rays themselves are not indicative. The first indicator to use then, is to look for the tiny barbel on the rim of the posterior nostril (see image). *C. chaca* and *burmensis* do not have this, but unfortunately some Peninsular Form *bankanensis* don't either, so if the fish has no posterior barbel, also then look at the shape of the pectoral fin when viewed from above. If it has a posterior nostril barbel, or the shape of the fin is that in the image above, you have a *bankanensis*. There are some other minor visual differences that are sometimes quoted, but I find it more reliable to use the ones I have given.

*Chaca chaca*



*Chaca bankanensis* Archipelagic Form *Chaca burmensis*

Differentiating *chaca* from *burmensis* using the naked eye is not as easy. Most of the differences listed in Brown & Ferraris use information inaccessible for aquarists using live fish. The number and extent of cirri is very variable in *chaca*, so although *burmensis* appear generally to have less, some *chaca* do also. *C. burmensis* tend to have a blacker base colour, but again this can be seen in *chaca* also. Brown & Ferraris state that "On the head, flattened flaps of skin, usually branched at the tip, occur laterally in the region of the cheek and opercle. None is found along the dorsal surface of the head or immediately posterior to the eye, as in *C. chaca*". However, in some *C. chaca*, there aren't any flattened flaps of skin on the head, or associated with the eye either (although there are cirri, but there are also some cirri in *burmensis*). The easiest way I have found to differentiate them using live specimens, is to look at the number and relative size of the cirri along the inner edge of the lower lip. In the *C. burmensis* I have seen, they usually number around 10 or 11 small cirri, and they don't tend to have them near the corners of the mouth. In the *C. chaca* that I have seen, they tend to number at 14+ and tend to be relatively longer and/or thicker.

**Acknowledgements**

Kamphol Udomritthiruj, Ingo Seidel, and Anne Waal for the kind permission to use their images. Roy Blackburn for permission to photograph his fish, and Mr & Mrs Pygott for permission to photograph their

fish. Martien van Oijen of the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Leiden for the images of the holotype of *Chaca bankanensis*. Mark Allen, for permission to use his image of the Holotype of *Chaca burmensis*. To Dr Carl Ferraris for his advice

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## Thieves Sought in Catfish Caper

LAST UPDATE: 10/5/2005 5:24:09 AM

Posted By: Walker Robinson

More than 100 live catfish were ripped off from a tank set up to teach young children all about fishing, and the theft has left organizers in New Braunfels scrambling, News 4 WOAI learned Monday.

"I couldn't believe it," Darlene Cook with the Coastal Conservation Association said. The group had scheduled a fun fishing experience for children at the Elks Lodge last weekend.

But, the fun turned into frustration Friday night when they found out thieves had stolen the childrens' catfish. The 8,000 gallon tank of catfish was drained and someone took nearly 100 catfish, organizers said.

"Someone had come and let a lot of water out of the tank so they could get to the catfish," Cook said. The other 50 or so catfish were left behind in the shallow water to flop around to their deaths. The mess was cleaned up over the weekend, and the tank was taken away.

Police were searching for the thieves Monday.

Officials with the CCA said they have learned a lesson from the many fish that got away.

"Were going to camp out," Cook said. "Unfortunately that's what we'll have to do to make sure it's safe enough for the kids."

CCA officials said they were still able to teach the children how to cast and reel in fish, but they said the event will be handled differently next year.

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Sunday: - 10 am -4-30pm

# “RED HERRINGS” (Red Lizard Whiptails)

By Trevor Morris (images by Danny Blundell)

Over the many years that I have been involved in the fish keeping hobby, I have been a member of a number of specialist groups. One of things that I like most about the CSG is the interchange of information between it's members. People help each other and there are no 'secrets' to their successes, or failures.



A prime example is the *Leliella* sp. 'red' or the 'Red Whiptail Catfish', which was first shown to us at a CSG meeting by Danny Blundell from images taken by Ian Fuller who had acquired said fish in Germany.



The unusual bright red colour triggered a long intensive discussion on sexing the trio projected onto the screen. Members involved decided that the trio were all males due to the presence of bristles on the head and the pectoral fins.

In between this meeting and the next, I went to a Garden Centre where I saw some 'red' whiptails. Needless to say, I bought some and took them along , in a show tank, to the next meeting. Because this



meeting included photography, a number of photographs were taken of them and again there followed a discussion about their habitat. It appears that these 'whips' prefer to live on leaves and stems of plants.



It has been said that on the continent, in order to increase broods, breeders have actually crossed *L. heteroptera* sp. with *Hemiloricaria lanceolata*. It seems that although size is increased, colour is reduced.

Joan Davidson, said that spawning took place on the uplift stem of an Algarde Bio 200 foam filter.

The idea to use a filter to spawn 'rare' fishes isn't a 'red herring' but a valid tool to aid breeding.

You just don't know what to expect when a bunch of get together at our monthly catfish meetings.

Reference:  
Hans-Georg Evers & Ingo Seidel "Catfish Atlas"





# OUT OF AFRICA (ANGOLA Part 2)

by Bill Hurst  
(all images Bill Hurst)



Although the catching of *Synodontis* on standard fishing tackle was the easy way, there were some catfishes that couldn't be caught on hook and line. These were often caught by the local workers by hand after the rivers were diverted and drained.



This picture shows the newly drained river bed. The river has been diverted to the other side of the manmade dyke where the grading machine is.

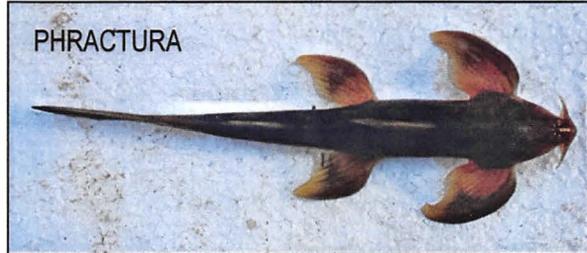
The drained river bed is a source of diamonds so security was strict with armed guards on patrol watching the workers. The workers were allowed to catch fish to eat and some large cichlids and *Clarias* were manhandled on to the bank. It was quite hilarious to watch a grown man wrestling with a slippery three foot fish with his bare hands.



Some of the workers looking for fish before the rocks are blasted. The chap at the front is showing me what he has caught. This is the Rio Cuango.

When they saw me watching they would often offer the small fish up because they knew I was interested and I would photograph them.

The smaller fish were found in holes in the rocks which had been carved out by diamonds caught in small whirlpools and back eddy's and it was in places like



I hadn't a clue what this fish was until I brought the photos home. Dave Sands told me that it is a *Phractura*. TFH pictures don't help with ID.

this that diamonds could be scooped out and swallowed. Suspected workers were arrested and taken to hospital where they were given sedatives. In this way stolen diamonds were subsequently recovered. This would have been illegal in the UK. Needless to say that the workers were very careful when allowed to catch fish to eat. There were no shops at all in this part of Angola and all supplies were flown in from South Africa via Luanda, the Angolan

**CAT CHAT**

capital. Foodstuffs were issued at the beginning of each month, so after about three weeks most were looking for something to supplement whatever was left, if anything at all.

However much I tried, I couldn't keep the fast water fishes alive in my tank nor could I find out what they fed on.



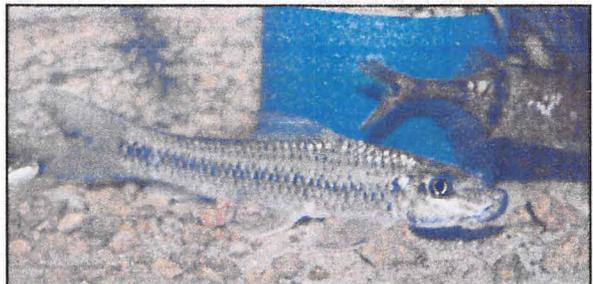
*Euchilichthys*. This is another fast water catfish from the Rio Cuango which couldn't be caught on rod & line. I used to find these fish in small water holes in the drained river bed, sometimes days after the river had been diverted. Often there were small cichlids in there & characins in as well.



*Schilbe marmoratus*. This was one of the fish that I brought home in my hand luggage. My mother used to tell me 'Those fish are dead again' because they would just lie still on their side until dark when they became active.



Frequently, when checking the holes for illegal diamond activity, I would find very tiny *Synodontis*, less than 1½ " long. Although I would have loved to have collected them, on these sort of patrols I only carried weapons, food and water, so I could only admire them.



On my fishing days, I caught all sorts of fish that I could not identify, not because they were rare but because I had never seen them in the hobby. Since I've been back in England, Pete Liptrot, from Bolton Museum, has shown me pictures identifying some of the characin fishes that I have photographs of.



Children from a nearby bairro (village) with some of the fish they caught for food. I got them to pose for the picture by giving them some fish hooks and line. They actually tie the worm onto their string and wait until the fish swallows the lot then they snatch the fish from the water before it can spit the worm out.

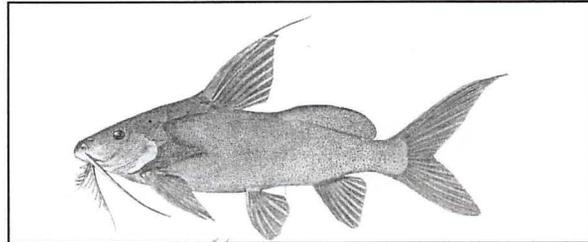
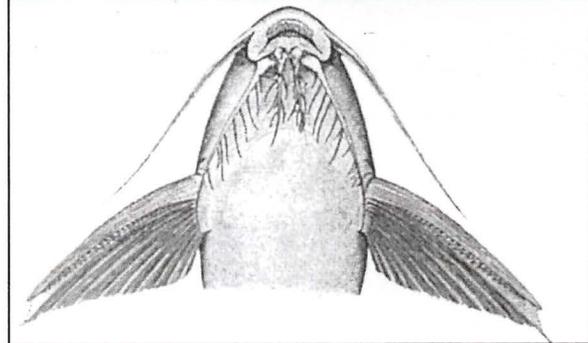
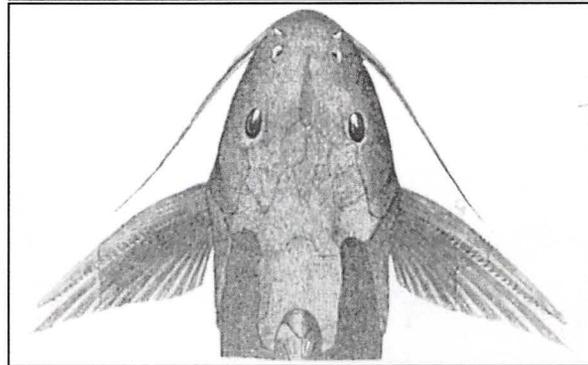


Fig. 208. — *Synodontis cuangoanus* POLL, holotype, 268 mm, Cuango, Cafunfo (R.G.M.R.A.C. 172253).

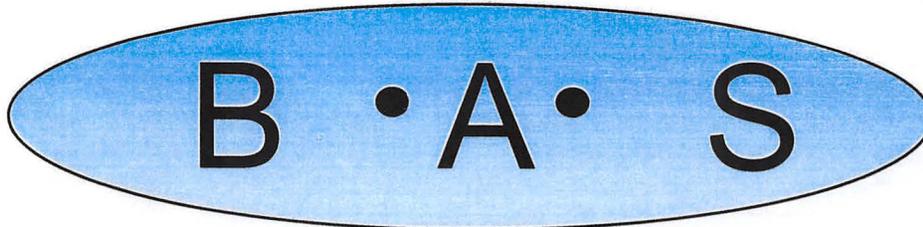


These drawings are from Poll, kindly supplied by Trevor Morris.

The picture below is, hopefully, better than the one printed in the previous edition of Cat Chat and shows the fine spots on the body



*Synodontis cuangoanus*



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## Scientist: Broken Jaw Likely Cause of Death for 'Splash'

Texas Record Blue Catfish at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens Like thousands of other people, Dr. Andy Gluesenkamp, Ph.D., saw news photos of a world record blue catfish in the arms of the man who caught her in January 2004. "I was blown away by such a huge fish," Dr. Gluesenkamp said of the 121.5-pound giant. Cody Mullennix of Howe, Texas, pulled the fish from Lake Texoma on January 16, 2004. While the fish is no longer the world record, it remains the record Texas blue catfish.

When he first saw Splash, as Mullennix named her, Dr. Gluesenkamp had no idea he would someday be involved in her story. But he works as a skeletal preparator for the Texas Natural Science Center (TNSC) in Austin, and after Splash died of unknown causes at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens in December 2005, her remains were sent to the Texas Natural History Collections, part of the TNSC, to be skeletonized.

In the course of his work, Dr. Gluesenkamp and his colleagues discovered the probable cause of Splash's death: severe damage to bone in her jaw area. "It's hard to tell if the injury was a break that got infected, or if the bone became so infected it simply fell apart," Dr. Gluesenkamp said. "She sustained that injury a long time ago. The bone basically rotted away. I would not be surprised if that was where she took the hook, and bacteria got inside the bone. I'm not a fish veterinarian, but I would bet dollars to doughnuts that the injury was what killed the fish."

An examination of the bones by Dr. Dean Hendrickson, Ph.D., Curator of Ichthyology for TNSC, confirmed Gluesenkamp's suspicions. "Andy was definitely right. Splash clearly had a nasty infection that had been festering for some time," Dr. Hendrickson said.

Dr. Hendrickson's analysis showed that the damage occurred in an area where two bones join. "This area is called the hyoid arch and is between the lower jaw and the gills," he explained. "The arch is involved in creating the pumping action that keeps water flowing over the gills and the strong suction used for predatory feeding. Infection from the injury apparently penetrated the bone and consumed it. At some point blood loss would have been extensive. While we don't know for certain that the initial injury was due to being hooked, that seems to be the most likely explanation." Presently Dr. Gluesenkamp and Jessica Rosales,

Ichthyology Collection Manager for the Texas Natural History Collections, are working to prepare Splash's skeleton for display at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center.

Following hand removal of as much flesh as possible from the bones, the skeleton was placed in plastic tubs with larvae from dermestid beetles. These flesh-eating insects, which are also found on the floor of bat caves, are the most effective way of removing all the flesh from a skeleton. "Splash probably has 5,000 to 10,000 beetles on her right now," Dr. Gluesenkamp said. "We've never worked on a fish this large. We had to delay the start of work until we built up our beetle colony to be sure we had enough to do the job."

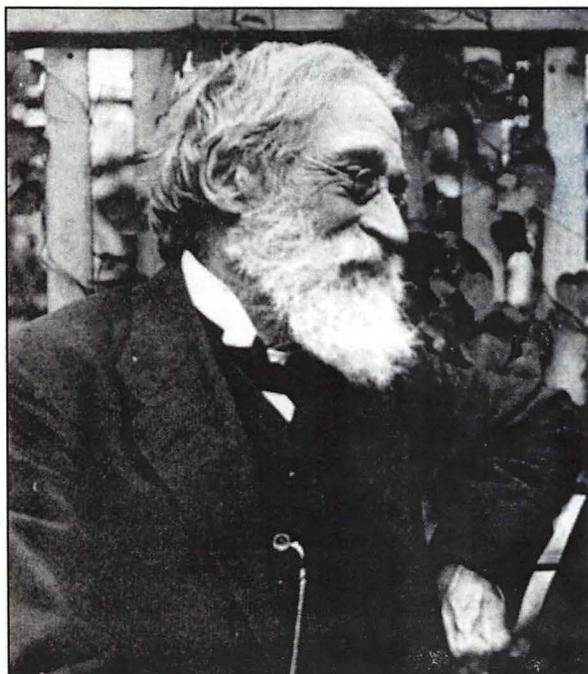
Once Dr. Gluesenkamp and the beetles finish their work, Rosales will rearticulate the skeleton-put it back together with hot glue, posed in a lifelike position. "It takes time, patience and modeling clay in addition to lots of hot glue," Dr. Gluesenkamp said. "I estimate it may take a week of painstaking work to put the skeleton back together." "It will take time, but the process is fun and is something that I really enjoy doing," said Rosales. "Splash had such an impact on TFFC," said Allen Forshage, director of the East Texas facility. "Her first year here she increased our visitation by 43 percent. She was an amazing fish to look at. She would look at you eye-to-eye from her home in the dive tank. Her death saddened everyone here at the center, plus we had inquiries from around the country about her death. The findings about the hooking injury helped us understand why she died so quickly after we moved her in December 2005 because of repair work on the dive tank. We are going to add a new display which will have her replica (done by Lake Fork Taxidermy) and a really unusual display of her skeleton, thanks to the work now being done at the Texas Natural Science Center."

Dr. Gluesenkamp said working on Splash has been the highlight of his career. "I have to say it's been really exciting. I saw photos of that fish in the arms of the man who caught her, and to be involved with that fish two years later is a joy. I am really thankful to be able to work on a fish with celebrity status. Splash: Everyone knows her name."

# AQUARIAN®

# Franz Steindachner (1834-1919)

By A. W. Taylor.



Franz Steindachner was an Austrian Ichthyologist and was born on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1834. After completing his legal studies, and having been fascinated by natural history, Steindachner at the suggestion of his friend Eduard Suess, who was a palaeontologist, took up the study of 'fossil fishes', but it wasn't before long that studying present day fishes took a hold of him, as at that time he was dealing also with specimens brought back on the Austrian 'Novara expedition' at the Vienna Museum of Natural History. The Novara expedition was the most ambitious venture undertaken at the time by the Austrian navy, which was the circumnavigation of the globe by the Austrian Frigate S.M. Novara and lasting just over two years, bringing back some 25 000 Zoological and Botanical specimens. Due partly to his work on the Novara expedition, in 1860 he was appointed to the position of the Director of the Fish Collection at the museum, a post that had remained empty since the death of Jakob Heckel in 1857.

From 1859 to 1868, Steindachner went on collecting trips to the Canary Islands, Spain, Portugal, and Senegal. Publishing some fifty-five ichthyological

papers along the way. It was during this time that Franz's reputation grew as an ichthyologist of some renown; and Louis Agassiz invited Steindachner to Harvard University in America, and upon arriving he was offered a position at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at the university. Steindachner took two years leave to consider the offer, and went on to work on the 'Thayer expedition' and in particular specimens collected of South American freshwater fishes. Steindachner went on to take part in the 'Hassler expedition' of 1871-1872, which circumnavigated South America, starting in Boston and ending in San Francisco, collecting along the way more than 100 000 fish. Steindachner feeling that by staying in America he would always be in Agassiz shadow, returned to Vienna In 1874, taking quite a few preserved specimens without hindrance from the 'Hassler Expedition' with him.

During the next few years Steindachner toured Europe visiting many of its finest museums not only to look upon their collections, but also to study the ways in which the museums were being run and administered. In 1887 Steindachner was appointed as the Director of the Zoological department of the Natural History museum in Vienna, undertaking some expeditions of his own between the years 1891-1898. In 1898 Steindachner was promoted to Director of the museum. Although this didn't stop him going on collecting trips and in 1903 aged 69 and suffering with malaria went to Brazil. In 1919-aged 85 Steindachner decided to retire; however illness followed him and in the same year on December 10<sup>th</sup>, Steindachner succumbed to his illnesses and died from pneumonia.



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## An attempt to spawn upon demand?

By A.W. Taylor. F.N.A.S. Dip; MB.



As someone who, over many years, have had some success in spawning many species of tropical fish, I always get a little nervous when asked the question, "How do you breed a certain species"? Answering this sort of question, no matter how sincere one is; can be a tad precarious. There are some people who think that there is a magic formula and that you are keeping it to yourself. I tend to look at things as "You are keeping water not fish". Get the water conditions right and the fish will for the most part be healthier and more willing to spawn. All that is needed is a healthy diet and/or a "triggering" event such as a water change with cooler water or a change in water depth or a warmer temperature in order for them to spawn.

One fish that I have had little trouble in spawning over the years is the peppered cory (*Corydoras paleatus*). This also happens to be one fish that is readily available at most local fish stores and one which I already had in my possession. I had a small group of five fish, two females and three males, The largest female used was 45mm SL, and the largest male was 40mm SL. Due to this, I decided to use this small South American catfish as the subject of this article.

In mid June I transferred these fish to an unheated 25-gallon (UK) capacity tank, which had been placed in an area that received plenty of natural sunlight. It had been 'seeded' with a small amount of daphnia the previous month and was bereft of any filtration. Due to an unusual prolonged hot summer the temperature hardly ever dropped below 20°C even during the evening and on occasion the temperature reached 32°C but for the most part, during the months of July and August, the temperature ranged between 23°C and 26°C. Apart from the daphnia that were already present in the tank I only fed them one catfish tablet once a week and I never gave these fish a water

change, although on occasion I topped up the water to counter the effects of evaporation. However, I did keep a close eye on them to make sure that they were not showing any signs of distress, illness or malnutrition. Although these fish never showed anything to be concerned about, they did seem to show more intense colouration and markings during this period.

When the weather became cooler towards the end of August, I decided that they should be moved into a tank that was heated and an attempt to spawn them started.

The water parameters taken of the un-heated tank at the time of the transfer were: - pH 7.65, GH 9° & a temperature of 17°C. The tank into which they were placed had a capacity of 9-gallon (UK) that contained mature aged water, filtered by a large box filter, that had the following water parameters: - pH 7.2, GH 6° and a temperature of 23°C. I duly caught the five catfish and placed them into a polythene bag which contained water from the tank that they had been living in for the past couple of months and floated it in the proposed spawning tank. After an hour or so I emptied one third of the water from the polythene bag and replaced this with water taken from the designated spawning tank, I repeated this over the next few hours and then I released the fish into the spawning tank.

For the next four mornings I fed these fish on a diet of bloodworm and grindal worm and I gave the tank a 10% water change using tap water that had stood for 24 hours or more which had water parameters of: - pH 6.6, GH 0-3° and a temperature of 18°C. Just prior to turning the fish house lights off in the evening, I dropped half of a proprietary catfish tablet into the tank.

On the fifth day I carried out a 40% water change that effectively dropped the temperature to 20.4°C and added a nylon-spawning mop. That evening I noticed that some of the fish had started to rapidly move up and down certain places on the glass sides of the tank. Although I sat in attention for the next hour or so there were no other signs that one could take as an indication that they were about to spawn.

The next morning I carried out another 40% water change, fed the fish and went about my daily routines. In the early evening I re-entered my fish house and thought 'yippee! they're spawning' as one female had

two males in close attention. On closer inspection I noticed that she had her two ventral fins clasped together, so grabbing my camera and unfolding my chair, I sat down to observe them spawning! But there was a slight problem, although the male(s) and female(s) were assuming the classic "T" mating position and the females had their ventral fins clasped together, I could not see any eggs either on the glass sides of the tanks, in the nylon spawning mop or between the clasped ventral fins. This activity continued on and off during the rest of the evening with not a sign of an egg being laid, so I locked my fish house for the evening and retired.

The next day I only carried out a 15% water change, reasoning that the water parameters must be very close to the optimum spawning conditions and that I didn't want this to change too much. It was later that day that I noticed that the males and females were again assuming the classic "T" mating position but this time I saw about four to five eggs in the pouch created by the clasping of the females ventral fins. After a quick glance around the tank I noticed that there were a dozen or so eggs attached to one of the sides of the glass, so again I grabbed my camera, unfolded my chair and settled down to observe them spawning. It was during this period that I checked and made notes of the water parameters, which were as follows: - pH 6.7, GH 3°C and a temperature of 23°C and took some photographs. Over the next 24 hours I collected a total of 124 eggs and placed them into hatching trays.

Due to limited 'growing on space' at the time, I effectually stopped the spawning by moving the fish into another tank which had a higher temperature and a neutral pH, and that contained other fish. The eggs hatched some 36 hours later and after a further day, with their yolk sac no longer evident I moved them from the hatching trays into a small 3 gallon (UK) growing on tank and fed the fry on a diet of liquid fry food and micro worms.

After five days I stopped feeding the liquid fry food and fed the fry micro worms fine flake powder in the morning, carrying out a 10% water change using aged water that had the same pH and temperature of that of the fry tank. I fed newly hatched brine shrimp every evening. This continued for two weeks and as the fry were growing rapidly they were moved into a larger 'growing-on' tank.

The main things that I advocate are: - Good water quality, a balanced diet, healthy fish, time and patience. Good water quality, diet, and healthy fish explain themselves, time and patience is down to the individual. I chose *Corydoras paleatus* for this study in



spawning by design, not only because I had a small group already in my possession but because as I have said, I find that I can usually get these to spawn without great difficulty. Although, I have to say, that I used to have another group of *C. paleatus* many years ago that I could spawn readily, as long as it was between September and November; they simply refused to spawn in any other period, no matter what I tried and this is where time and patience comes into it.

One has to be willing to wait and not expect instant success, if one thing doesn't work try something else. If, by carrying out cold-water changes, it doesn't happen to trigger a spawning; try altering the pH at the same time, or altering the hardness. The tap water in my area is soft, whereas in other areas of the country, the tap water is hard, so changing the hardness may work on certain types.

What apparently works for me might not necessarily work for you. Remember only change one thing at a time and be patient, give each change time to take effect. It is a hobby and no matter how good one thinks he or she is at breeding tropical fish you won't become a millionaire, so just enjoy your fish and delight in any successful spawning that comes along. Other Corydoras catfish that I recommend for aquarists wishing to try their hand at breeding, along side *C. paleatus* are *C. aeneus* and *C. pygmaeus*.



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## 'What's New' December 2006

by Mark Walters

This article presents abstracts for five scientific papers and references to another five papers for which further details are available.

**Catfish sightings:** Following on from the list of not-usual or new species available in the hobby, the following have been sighted: *Scleromystax* sp. C113, *Corydoras guapore*, *C. cf. treitlii*, *C. loretoensis*, Indian 'marbled cat', *Parotocinclus maculicauda*, *Paraloricaria vetula*, *Amaralia hypsiura*

### Selected scientific papers:

Luisa Maria Sarmiento-Soares, and Paulo A. Buckup (2005) - A New *Glanidium* from the Rio São Francisco Basin, Brazil. The new species has been named ***G. bockmanni*** and lives alongside *Glanidium albescens*. The two fish can be told apart from their adult sizes, fin ray counts, number of ribs and vertebrae and the serrations of the pectoral fins.

Britz, R and CJ Ferraris Jr (2005) - A new species of *Glyptothorax* from the upper Irrawaddy River basin, Myanmar, with comments on sisorid and erethistid phylogenetic relationships. At just 3cm in length ***G. panda*** is believed to be the smallest known member of the genus so far.

Ng, HH and Freyhof, J. (2005) - A New Species of *Pseudomystus* (Teleostei: Bagridae) from Central Vietnam. *Copeia*: Vol. 2005, No. 4, pp. 745-750. - ***Pseudomystus sobrinus*** is similar to both *siamensis* and *bomboides*.

Parisi BM, Lundberg JG and C Donascimento (2006) - ***Propimelodus caesius***, a new species of long-finned pimelodid catfish from the Amazon Basin,

*P. caesius* grows to around 17cm and has a silvery-blue body, very long maxillary barbels, an elongated caudal fin and a very long adipose. It is believed to be widespread and has been recorded from the Amazon in Brazil and Peru. It is closely related to *P. igenmanni*, from which it differs by its relatively larger eye, violet or blue colour and higher number of vertebrae.

Reis RE, Pereira EHL and J Armruster (2006) - ***Delturinae***, a new loricariid catfish subfamily, with revisions of *Delturus* and *Hemipsilichthys*. The

*Delturus* and *Hemipsilichthys* species are all robust, wide and squat-bodied fishes broadly similar in overall appearance to *Ancistrus*. *Hemipsilichthys* typically reach around 10cm/4" in length, while *Delturus* normally grow to about 20cm/8".

The *Hemipsilichthys* genus currently contains three species, *H. nimius* and the sister species *H. gobio* and *papillatus*. The *Delturus* genus includes *D. anguillicaudatus*, *D. parahybae* and *D. carinotus*. A new species, ***Delturus brevis***, is also described in the paper from the waters of the Rio Inhonha basin in the east of Brazil.

The distribution of all known delturine catfishes is believed to be limited to the south-eastern side of the Brazilian Shield. The authors say that this means that the south east of Brazil either acts as a 'refugium for basal loricariid taxa' or might be the point at which they evolved.

Papers describing new species in the following Genus have been also been published:

*Caelatoglanis* - (Ng, H. H. et al 2005)

*Harttia* - (Provenzano R., F., A. et al 2005)

*Pareiorhina* - (Chamon, C. C., A. T. Aranda, and P. A. Buckup. 2005)

*Acestridium* - (Retzer, M. E. 2005)

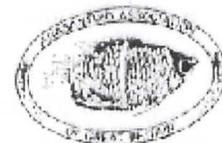
*Rineloricaria* - (Rodríguez, M. S., and A. M. Miquelarena. 2005)

If you have any sightings you would like to share or would like to track down a paper, contact me for the full reference: [mark.walters70@ntiworld.com](mailto:mark.walters70@ntiworld.com)

*Acknowledgement is made to Planet Catfish, Practical Fishkeeping and the All Catfish Species Inventory (ACSI) database for the original source of information on papers*

# CATFISH STUDY GROUP

Would like to thank all our **Convention** sponsors for their valued support.



# **CATFISH STUDY GROUP (UK)**

**Sunday 18 March 2007**

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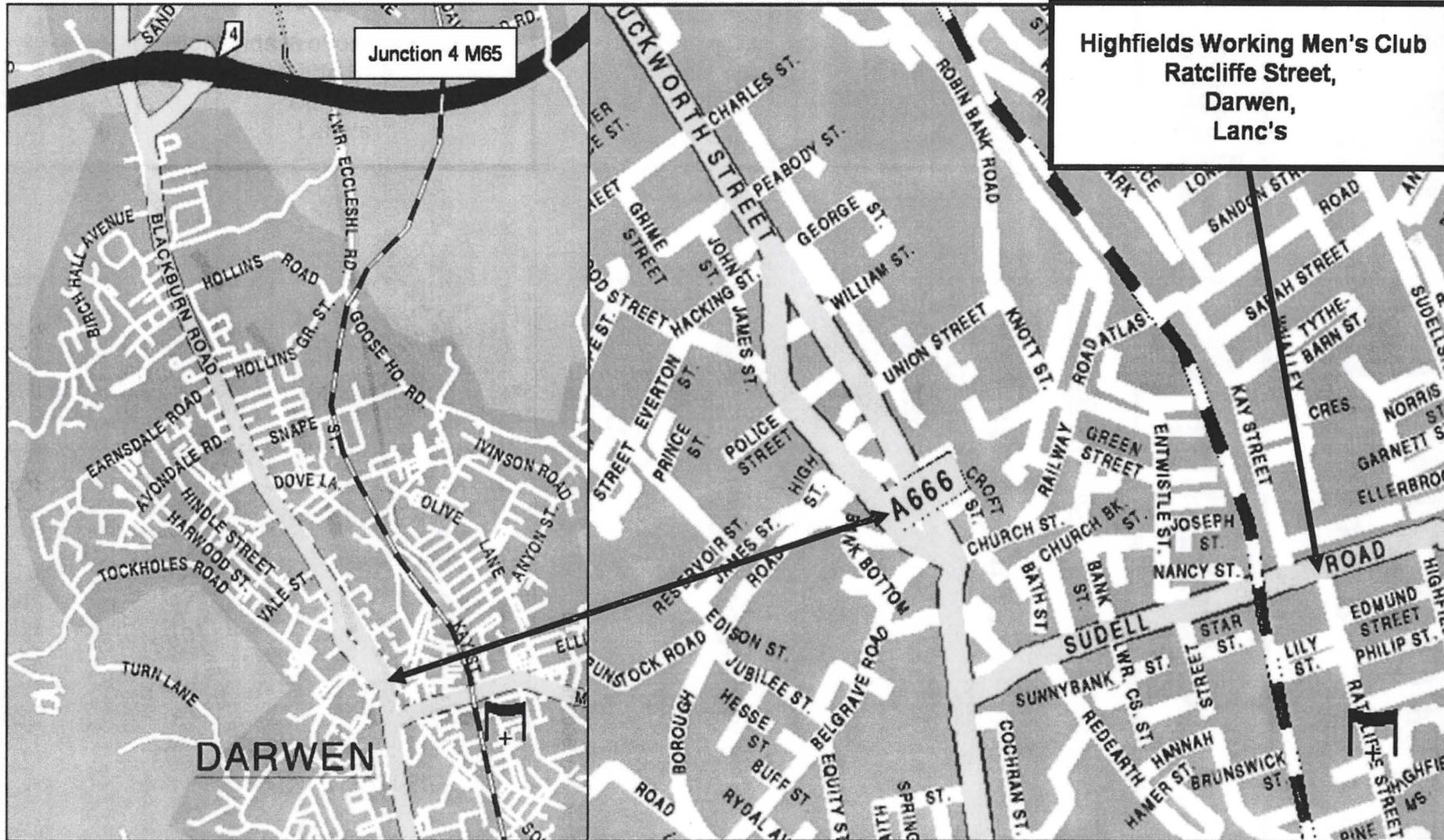
All plants and fish to be auctioned should be in clear plastic bags, or jars large enough for them. Large fish may be offered in plastic containers/buckets. Fish should be identified (Common or Latin names). 'Painted' fish will not be auctioned.

There is a 15% commission to the Catfish Study Group on all sales. Payments to vendors will be made at the interval or at the end of the Auction.

**The CSG is in no position to accept responsibility for the condition of any item sold at the auction or to exchange any item purchased.** If in doubt, bid for an item 'as seen'. The vendor's name will be available to the purchaser, in the event of a problem, on the day only.

# CATFISH STUDY GROUP

New meeting place starting 20<sup>th</sup> November 2005



# CSG Convention 2007

16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> February 2007

at

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<b>Friday</b>	Informal Dinner	7.00 for 7.30	
	Forum	9.00 -	Catfish Happy Hour

oOoOOoOo

<b>Saturday</b>	Doors open	9.30 am	
	Program start	10.00	Introductions -
	Workshops	10.15 -12.30	BCA - Live foods - AAGB - Diseases & Parasites - BLA - Water Quality - BKA
	Lunch		
	Talk 1	2.00 -3.15	Marcelo Britto - The catfish collection at Museum National University Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
	Tea break 30 min		
	Talk 2	3.45 -4.45	David Price — Genetics.
	Announcements		
	Convention Dinner	7.30 for 8.00	
	9.30	Catfish Question Time (Forum)	

oOoOOoOo

<b>Sunday</b>	Doors open	9.30 am	
	Program starts	10.00	Introductions -
	Talk 3	10.05 -11.00	David Armitage Habitats of Labyrinth fishes.
	Break		
	Talk 4	11.30 -12.30	Marcelo Britto - Phylogeny of the catfish super family Loricarioidea: a synthesis of its knowledge.
	Lunch		
	Talk 5	2.00 -3.15	Chris Ralph - African Catfishes.
	Tea break		
	Talk 6	3.45 -5.00	Ian Fuller - Breeding Corydoradinae Catfishes.
Presentations	5.15	Closing address	

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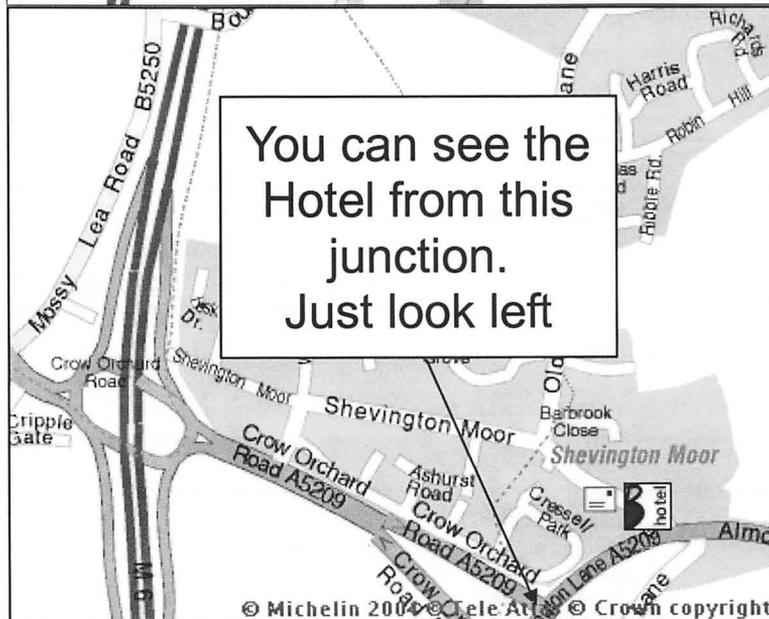
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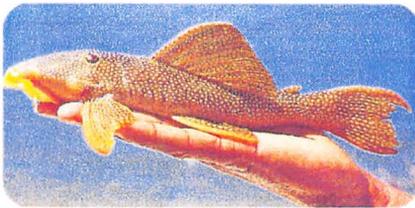
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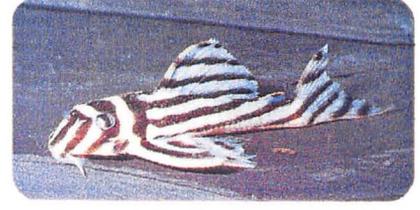
L024



L29



L270



L46



L49



L47



L75



L264



LDA02

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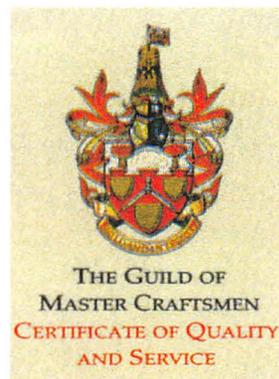
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