

CATCHAT

THE JOURNAL OF THE CATFISH STUDY GROUP



Corydoras melini

Hara longissima

***Scleromystax* Part 3**

Baryancistrus xanthellus

Corydoras eques

Yorkshire Catfish Show

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Diary Dates 2011-2012

Date	Meeting	Details
Aug 21st	Summer Lecture & Mini Auction	Ian Fuller
Sep 18th	Annual Open Show & Auction	35 Catfish classes
Oct 16th	My Favourite Catfish	
Nov 20th	Autumn Auction	
Dec 11th	Christmas meeting	
Jan 15th	2012 AGM	
Feb 19th	Spring Auction	
March 16th - 18th	Annual Convention	

Pre booking for all Auctions contact: - David Barton 01942 248130

Meetings are held on the third Sunday of each Month with the exception of the December meeting, which falls on the second Sunday,
 Meetings start at from 1pm at the
 and are held at the

**Highfields Working Men's Club,
 1 Ratcliffe Street,
 Darwen, Lancashire, BB3 2BZ**

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Front cover – *Hara longissima* The first recorded spawning of this Sisoridae catfish – Image by Steven Grant

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Editorial

I hope you liked the new look April edition of the journal utilising the services of a professional print company. The price of toner and paper was making the cost of copy too great and we are now making some savings in publication by outsourcing. We also converted the edition to a PDF format with an intention to formalise the lay-out in the future. This led to a few duplicated sections in print, which we will continue to try to iron-out. Thanks to the positive comments from a few members.

The last few months have been busy for me, with the start of the auction and show season. This provides a great opportunity to see what other aquarists are keeping and hopefully breeding. I have listed some of the unusual species offered in auctions and included an article on the specialist Catfish and Loach show, hosted by Castleford AS in July.

I've also been active in the fish house, well more accurately building a new fish house. Work started in Spring and I got the first fish in by May. Later than expected, but an accident whilst glassfibring the ceiling left me with broken ribs and a 6 week lay-off. Thankfully the fish house is close to completion, although there are plenty more jobs and plenty more tanks to be installed over the coming months.

I've been keeping a photo record and will report on the build in a future edition.

The next big date in the catfish calendar is of course the CSG show in September, where all comers will have the opportunity to display their best fish and compete for the coveted prizes. The auction always promises to be one of the best of the year with hobbyists keen to pass on surplus stock. Before that, however, Ian Fuller is presenting to the club at their August meeting. A talk on Corydoradinae and an associated Catfish-only auction promises to be a un-missable event.

This edition features articles on breeding *Corydoras eques* from Ian Fuller, *C. melini* by Adrian Taylor and a unique account on spawnings of *Hara longissima* by Steven Grant. I have written my third *Scleromystax* article, presenting the '*lacerda*' types and the 'What's New' article provides details on some long awaited scientific descriptions. It is notable that the journal relies on contributions from a regular crop of writers, I would welcome articles from more CSG members who I am sure have many experiences to share.

Notices

CSG Summer Lecture

On August 21st Ian Fuller will be presenting a talk on Corydoradinae catfish. Ian has recently published a supplement to his Identification book (the Corydoradinae 'bible') and is the owner of the popular site and fantastic Cory resource CorydorasWorld.com. The talk will be followed by a Catfish-only auction, limited to 15 bags per CSG member. See the CSG forum for further details.

CSG Show and Auction

September 18th is the date for the Catfish Study Group Annual Show and Auction. There are 35 classes to compete in and promises to display many uncommon species in top condition. Schedules were issued in the last Journal.

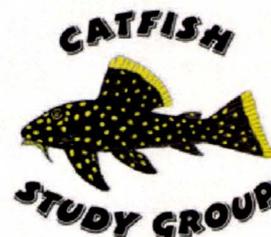
The show will run alongside the auction where there are always plenty of bargains and the opportunity to pick up rare species by top breeders in the U.K. Check the CSG website for more details

CSG Autumn Auction

Our annual autumn auction will take place as usual in Darwen on November 20th. If you would like to enter a lot, please call David Barton on 01942 248130.

Join us on the CSG Forums

at



www.catfishstudygroup.org

Spawning *Corydoras melini*. Lönnberg & Rendahl, 1930

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



Corydoras melini holds a special place for me in all of my spawning successes. It was back in March 2001 when I first managed to get a small group of *C. melini* to spawn after weeks of trying different ways to induce spawning. A week or so later I was at a club meeting in Preston, NW England, and I asked in general discussion, several of the club's fellow members that I knew were very capable and successful people when it came to the spawning of tropical fish, if they had spawned *C. melini*?

To my surprise it turned out that none of them had spawned *C. melini*, although I was informed that a guy in the Midlands region of the UK had spawned these quite a few years earlier; and I think we all can guess who that certain guy was and is. So I was quite pleased with myself, as I had been trying to get my small group to spawn like I said for some weeks.

It was around mid-May that year that I went away on a family holiday. Upon returning home I did a quick check on my fish to see if everything was alright and was pleased to find that everything was fine; however, due to unforeseen circumstances I had to go on another unplanned-for holiday.

It was a further 9 days before I managed to get into my fish house where I found I had suffered about an 70% stock death through out all my 57 fish tanks, which as every member knows is not a pleasant experience and amongst the fatalities were not only the young *C. melini* but their parents as well.

For many years after I could not find any *C. melini* that to me was either of the same quality as the ones I had lost or they were of the same sex.

In the spring of 2010 I happened to be in conversation with my good friend Ian Fuller; and he happened to mention that he was thinking of getting rid of some of his fish, which just happened to include some *C. melini*.

So I pleaded my case for first option on the *C. melini*, and some weeks later I found myself the proud owner of a group that I have to say was of such good quality the likes of which I had not seen for many a year; and maybe of a quality to rival the ones I had the misfortune to lose or maybe even outshining them.

All six (2 males and 4 females) were housed in a tank measuring 25cm long by 38cm wide and 38cm tall. This had a sand substrate was filtered by an air powered large corner box filter. The tank was furnished by a small piece of bogwood that had a clump of Java fern growing on it, a loose clump Java moss and a few small floating plants. Over the next few months I fed them upon a diet of commercial tablet and flake food, frozen bloodworms and the occasional live foods such as grindal worm and daphnia. At this time water changes were made at 25% every five days.

It was in the autumn of 2010 whilst I was cleaning out some boxes of old fish magazines and papers, I happen to come across a file containing some old spawning notes of mine; and amongst them I found a couple of 'rough' notes, one of which was when I had spawned the ill-fated group of *C. melini*.



At that time Spawning occurring after a 50% cool water change, and the following water parameters were noted: - Temperature 76°F pH 6.2 and a GH of 6. My notes also showed that I had fed them upon a diet of live bloodworms and live daphnia for a three-day period prior to them spawning.

Filtration was carried via a large sponge filter and the eggs were laid in amongst a clump of java moss. Armed with this data I decided that the time was right to try and get this new group of *C. melini* to spawn.

Over the next week I increased the frequency of water changes from 25% every five days to 30% every third day, and their diet was changed to a feed every twelve hours or so, primarily made up of live foods, such as daphnia and grindal worms, with the occasion feed of frozen blood worms and crushed tabimin.

During the morning of the fourth of November 2010 I was just starting my normal routine of feeding and checking out my fish when I noticed that the female *C. melini* were looking rather rotund and that the males were lazily swimming around the females and at times offering their flanks to the snouts of the females.

This behaviour continued on and off for around two hours, during which time I set up a camcorder to see if I could get not only this behaviour on video but any spawning activity. It was around an hour later and with my camcorder battery in the red that I managed to get some film of *C. melini* spawning in the usual *Corydoras* 'T' position.

In total forty one eggs were laid with only one or two eggs being fertilize at a time. The eggs were laid mainly in amongst the java moss, although on one occasion one of the females attempted to lay a single egg on a leaf of one of the floating plants, reminiscent of the tale told in his talks by Ian Fuller of a *Corydoras sterbai* female who attempted the same. Needless to say due to the plant moving away from her every time she tried to attach the egg, she decided to head for the java moss.

These 1.5mmØ eggs were collected the following day and placed in a plastic fast food tray containing some water from the tank and aerated and water measurements were taken with the following results:
- Temperature 75°F, pH 5.8, KH 0, and a GH 3. The eggs hatched after three days and became free swimming a further twelve hours later.

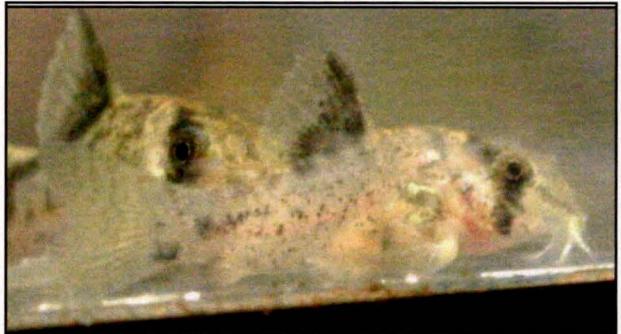
The fry were fed upon a mixture of marine invert food and finely powdered fry flake food for the first four days, with live baby brine shrimp and milli-worms and soaked powdered fry food being fed for the next month or so until they were of sufficient size as to be able to cope with crushed tablet food and small granular feed.

One thing was that temperature-wise the two groups spawned at around the same temperature, and although there were quite a difference in pH range and a small difference in GH; which may be down in part to the test kits that I used maybe being different?

test kit back in 2001 and I now use a digital pH tester. But, it just shows that by keeping records no matter how rough, that they can come in handy many years down the line.



Fry @ 1 month



Fry @ 2 month.



Fry @ 3 month.

All images by Adrian Taylor



***Scleromystax* Catfish Article 3 - 'The lacerdai group'**

Mark Walters



Scleromystax sp. CW042 – An unusual long-snouted *lacerdai* type

This third article on *Scleromystax* catfish presents some of the most desirable and attractive members of the genus, if not Corydoradinae as a whole. The group comprises at least 5, and probably 6 distinct species, of which nearly all hail from the rainforest regions of the Mata Atlantica, rather than coastal streams.

The only described member of the complex is the smallest *Scleromystax* species, *S. lacerdai* ('Baianinho I') which shares characteristics of the other members coded as C112 ('Baianinho II'), C113 ('Baianinho III'), CW38 and CW42. A sixth type, resembling *lacerdai*, is currently under observation by aquarists and was recently spawned by Danish aquarist Kim Mathiasen, although its identity is subject to further debate.

One common attribute of these and all *Scleromystax*, is the clear sexual dimorphism. Males often sport cheek bristles, intense colouration and in the case of C113 and CW038, exaggerated dorsal and pectoral fins resulting in quite striking 'super males'. Of course, *S. barbatus* and *S. kronei* are also renowned for the appearance of males, especially in breeding plumage, which epitomise *Scleromystax* as such a desirable genus.

Baianinho is Portuguese for 'little one from Bahia', alluding to the State in SE Brazil where they originate. The habitat was discussed in the first article presenting *Scleromystax*, and is covered comprehensively in the excellent publication 'Freshwater Fishes of Mata Atlantica'. To confuse things slightly, although named as a 'Baianinho' fish, C112 actually arises from Sao Paulo State so is not as typical of the assemblage described and enjoys even cooler conditions in the aquarium.

Online discussions with collectors indicate that these similar species are found in isolated pockets of rainforest habitat, which have now become 'island' populations, cut-off from historically much larger ranges. They are not found in open areas of water. The occurrence of a number of new 'species' in recent years suggest that there could be significant localised variation, with perhaps more new species awaiting discovery. However, much of this area is under threat from sugar cane production and habitats are rapidly diminishing. Other sympatric Corydoradinae species of the region include the elusive *Aspidoras virgulatus* - which closely resembles a small *Scleromystax*, *Corydoras ehrhardti* and *C. nattereri* (two closely related members of the *C. paleatus* complex).

In general terms, I maintain all the mentioned *Scleromystax* species at between 19-23C in well aerated, slightly acidic (pH 5.5 – 6.5) conditions. All benefit from a strong flow, although the compromise between including an internal filter or powerhead, and the probable elevation in water temperature needs to be considered. The usual substrate would comprise fine sand, to enable the fish to forage with their long snouts and occasionally 'bury' up to half their bodies – an unusual habit of such catfish.

Although they generally prefer warmer temperatures than other *Scleromystax* (i.e. the cold loving species *barbatus*, *kronei*, *prionotus*, C112, *macropterus*, *salmacis* – best maintained between 16-22C), the 'lacerdai' types do not enjoy typical tropical temperatures, much above 25C for prolonged periods. In maintaining all *Scleromystax*, we need to be careful to identify the two groups of species, one preferring 'cold' conditions and one preferring 'temperate' conditions. Also, the *lacerdai* types hail from more black-water typical habitats.

I have been fortunate in spawning eight out of the ten known species (either described or with 'C' or 'CW' numbers), although I wouldn't claim to any special secrets to this success. Rather, my fish house fluctuates in temperature throughout the year and conditions will vary from month to month. The species respond to these changes and spawn when conditions suit them. All I do is ensure optimum water quality, space and quality frozen and dried foods. All my *Scleromystax* catfish are in single species tanks with plenty of flow and aeration.

The Species *S. lacerdai* (Hieronimus 1995) – 'Baianinho I'

The only described member of the 'Baianinho group' of *Scleromystax* and the smallest member of the genus (males to approx 50mm SL), *S. lacerdai* is a highly desirable species which until recently hadn't been seen in the hobby for around 10 years.



Male *S. lacerdai*, 4 months after import

Originally given the code C015, *S. lacerdai* was described in 1995 (as *Corydoras lacerdai*), before the revalidation of *Scleromystax* in 2003 and identification of *lacerdai* as one of the genus in 2005. The species arises from Bahia state in the Rio Ribeira da Terra Firme, near the towns of Canavieiras and Ilheus. An account of their spawning in 1998 was made by Scottish aquarist Jim Makin, whose identification of *S. lacerdai* was verified by Hans Georg-Evers. Although there are no photographs, Jim also refers to the sympatric *Aspidoras* which came in with the *lacerdai* – could this be the enigmatic *A. virgulatus*?

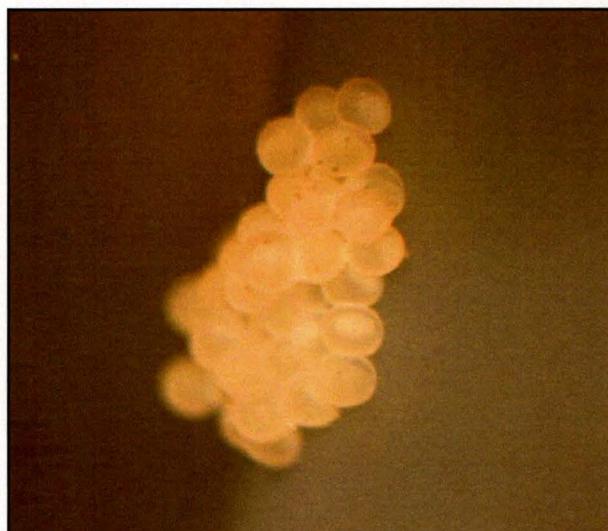
In 2009, fellow aquarist Allan Vaissiere acquired a pair of *S. lacerdai* from Aqualife in Leyland, U.K. He subsequently had four spawnings, and finally successfully raised youngsters in February 2010. Shortly afterwards, Pier Aquatics managed to import a good number of *S. lacerdai* and amongst other aquarists I picked up half a dozen. These developed into three pairs and to date (June 2011) measure around 50mm TL.

In addition to spawning reports from other fishkeepers, I've had 3 or 4 spawnings and have raised a small number of youngsters.

They certainly respond to cool water changes and breed every 3 or 4 weeks given the correct conditions.



Newly imported *S. lacerdai* digging in the sand



S. lacerdai egg cluster

Typical of many *Scleromystax* (but not all) they deposit a tight patch of eggs, close to the water line, usually in the flow of a powerhead outlet. Eggs are best left in the tank for 4 days before removing for artificial hatching and raising.



6 month old *S. lacerdai*

C112 – Baianinho II

As discussed above, C112 is not a Bahia species but hails from Sao Paulo State. It's 'Baianinho' tag could be as a result of it's resemblance to the other lacerdai types.

As it happens, genetically C112 is very closely related to C113 – more so than *S. lacerdai* - indicating historic linkage between the species. C112 was assigned by DATZ in 2003.

The origin of the specimens in captivity in the U.K. and continent appear to be from fish imported by Aqualife, Leyland, U.K. Again, Allan Vaisiere was one of the first to witness success in spring 2007, although fishkeepers in Canada also reported spawnings – the origin of those fish is not known.



Male C112

I had to wait until September 2007 before acquiring my first group, bred by fellow CSG member Adrian Taylor. These F1's first spawned for me in May 2008 and I have raised many youngsters since.



Female C112

They are a species that appear to make a link between the Bahia 'lacerdai' types and the more southerly 'barbatus' types of *Scleromystax*.

They appear like a dwarf, and streamlined, barbatus (males to approx 60mm) with a more golden sheen to their bodies. They share the typical *Scleromystax* characteristics of cheek bristles and extended fins (in the males). Female fish are hard to distinguish from other species.

Additional images of C112 can be found in the introduction to *Scleromystax* catfish Part 1.



C112 egg mass

I have found they are susceptible to deteriorating water quality or high temperatures, and have lost a few due to prolonged temperature above 25C.



Close up of male C112 cheek bristles

Contrary to other reports, I haven't experienced any conspecific aggression between males.

C113 – Baininho III

This still undescribed species was presented by DATZ in 2003, at a location 200km south of Salvador Bahia. In a personal e-mail, Hans Georg-Evers recounts the discovery of the species:

'It was some years ago that I received a phone call from Brazil. It was an Italian living in Bahia since a very long time. He was fishing a little river close to his house and found that strange looking Corydorax. He, as an old aquarist without any deeper interest in Corydoradinae, was asking around and finally received my phone number from an exporter.'

On the phone he described - in Italian/Portuguese language... - a long snouted fish reminding him on "Corydoras" lacerdai, but bigger. Finally, months later, I received some fishes and gave them the C 113 code number. They were in the trade then. The Italian preserved some of them and sent them to Brazilian scientists for description (after him). But so far nothing happened, yet. Even Britto, when resurrecting Scleromystax, did not mention this fish'

The images first presented in the Aqualog series caused quite a stir. The males possessing extremely long snouts and extended fins.



C113 Male

The same species arrived in the U.K. in 2006 and were acquired by experienced aquarists at Bolton Aquarium (Bolton, U.K.). They achieved success with this species and the first recorded spawnings in 2006/07. At the time, the fish were kept next to an often open window and would enjoy quite cool conditions.



C113 Female

I acquired a group of 5 youngsters from the Bolton Aquarium source in autumn 2008 and spawned them for the first time in July 2010. They thrive in temperatures around 20C and will often spawn following cold water changes. Males have attained 70mm in size and exhibit extended pectoral and dorsal fins, similar to CW038.



C113 eggs

CW 038

The appearance of this fish in November 2006 caused real excitement amongst hobbyists. My first encounter was viewing the new species at Pier Aquatics in Wigan, U.K. I acquired three 50-60mm specimens which turned out to be all male. A second shipment from the same source in March 2007 yielded the first female in my group. Shipments of the same species arrived at Glasers in 2007 and 2008.



Male CW038 showing extended pectoral spines

The second U.K. shipment led to Bolton Aquarium also acquiring specimens and their observations indicated variations between their original C113 fish and the new ones. This information led aquarists to ensure the two 'types' were kept separate.

At the time, it was assumed these fish were true C113 and there was no reason to dispute this. It wasn't until direct comparisons with confirmed C113 by Hans George-Evers that they were determined a new species and following display at the 2009 CSG convention Ian Fuller assigned them the code CW038. They were described at the time as most similar to true *lacerdai*, despite the obvious size differential.

Subsequent genetic analysis has confirmed their validity as distinct from C113. In fact, they appear to be the closest relative to true *lacerdai*.

I was fortunate to be the first aquarist to record the successful spawning CW038 in May 2007 and have raised many youngsters to distribute to other aquarists. I have since spawned F1 and F2 groups.



CW038 depositing eggs

The articles published in *Practical Fishkeeping* (April 2008) and *CatChat* (December 2008) describing the success, referred to the species as C113, although we now know this fish is distinct. A detailed spawning account is referenced.

With regard to their husbandry, they do need good quality water with flow and a temperature around 22C. It is against the flow that the female will deposit a tight patch of 40-50 eggs.

One aspect of their behaviour is that the males can be quarrelsome and in my group there was a definite hierarchy. This was apparent from the alpha male whose appearance was more 'bullish' than the other males.

Males have been recorded at 75mm SL and often spar with each other and the pectoral spines are frequently damaged by the interactions.



Dominant 'super' male CW038

CW042

A call in November 2008 alerted me to the possibility of true *lacerdai* appearing in the country. A fishkeeping friend, Stuart Brown, had spotted just a pair of unusual *Scleromystax* hidden in a tank at Pier Aquatics. I took off and met with the proprietor Neil Woodward who informed me that out of nine imported only two survived.

Even though the capture location was confirmed as close to the described area for *lacerdai*, the confirmed identification was questionable. We struck and deal and I took what I believed to be a true pair back to my fish house.



CW042 pair

The subsequent interest in these unusual *Scleromystax* led to excited e-mail and forum exchanges and the subsequent identification, based on the unique morphology, of them as a probable new species, assigned the code CW042 in 2009. They were indeed a pair and the male turned into one of the most stunning fish (at a max of 65mm SL) I had seen.

Although the fins were not elaborate, like CW038 and C113, the intense black colouration and torpedo shape was quite unlike any other *Scleromystax* species.

The first spawning was witnessed in 2011, but disastrously resulted in the death of the male, who may have been injured by the female during the event.

The eggs failed, marking the end of any hopes of maintaining the species further.



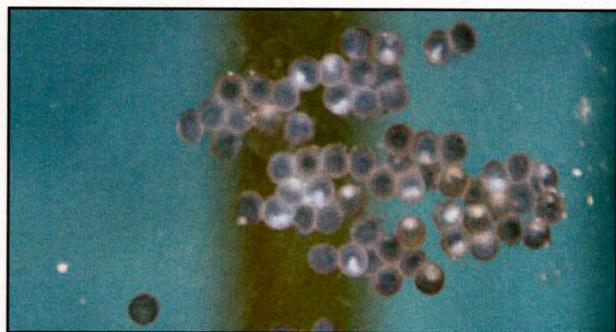
Female CW042 – Image by Steven Grant

Interestingly, the lone female laid another batch of eggs, without the presence of other fish but any faint hopes of parthenogenic viability were to nothing.



Snout of CW042 male

Following a tank move the female died in June 2011, possibly marking the passing of this species as we briefly knew it.



CW042 eggs

No more shipments of this species have been seen and it is possible (although only speculation) that their habitat has been destroyed by development.

New lacerdai types

Through the hard work of Neil Woodward of Pier Aquatics, contact is ongoing with collectors in the Mata Atlantica and even more species are turning up.

Ian Fuller purchased a new group of *Scleromystax* from Pier Aquatics in December 2010. Some fish made their way to Kim Mathiasen who spawned them in April 2011.



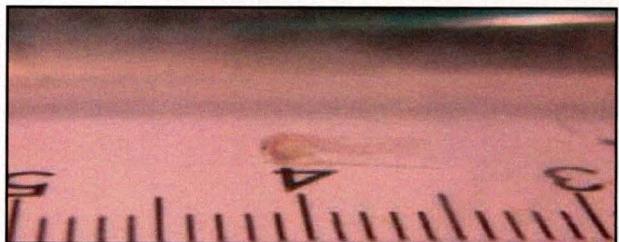
S. cf. lacerdai – Image by Kim Mathiasen

Discussion is ongoing to establish the identity, but it is likely these are something new, closely related to *S. lacerdai*.



S. cf. lacerdai eggs – Image by Kim Mathiasen

Ian Fuller notes that they possess cheek bristles, akin to other *Scleromystax* but not noted on the males of *S. lacerdai*.



S. cf. lacerdai newly hatched fry – Image by Kim Mathiasen

The final installment on *Scleromystax* will introduce the remaining known species – *S. macropterus*, *S. prionotus* and *S. salmacis*.

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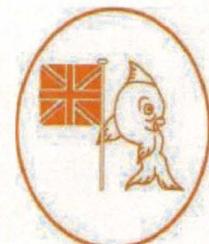
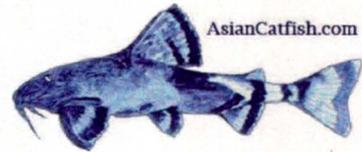
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The First Recorded Aquarium Spawning of *Hara longissima* Ng & Kottelat 2007

Roy Blackburn (text and images by Steve Grant)

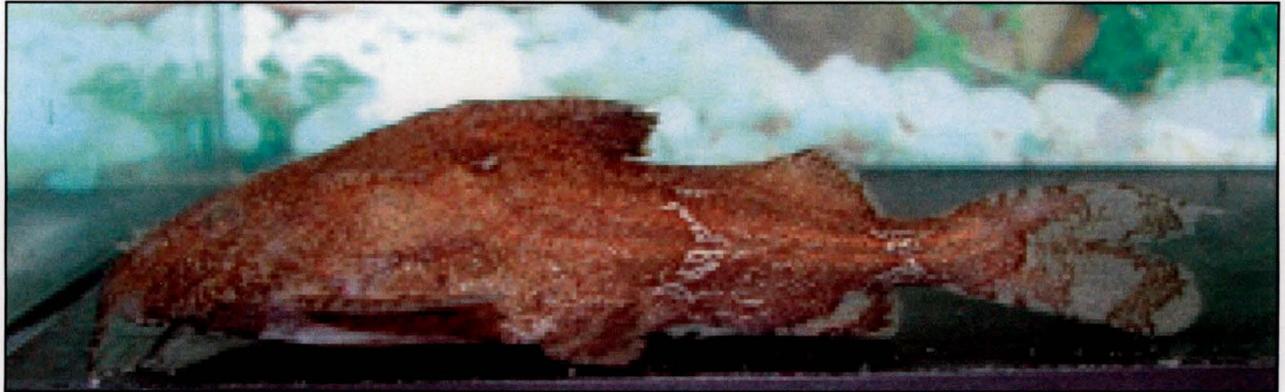


Fig 1 *Hara longissima* male

After showing an adult female *Hara longissima* at a local fish show on 3 July 2011, Roy Blackburn noticed movement in the bottom of the showtank. Upon further inspection he found that it was unmistakably the fry of a catfish. When he looked into the aquarium he found numerous fry of at least two different spawnings.

This brief spawning report explains the basics of the tank set-up and provides some (poor!) photographs of the fry.

Hara longissima Ng & Kottelat 2007

This fish currently belongs in the family Sisoridae (Ng 2010), but in the past has been placed by some authors in Erethistidae. The generic name is not fully resolved with most authors placing it in *Hara* Blyth 1860 (notably Ng & Kottelat 2007), some in *Erethistes* Müller & Troschel 1849 (i.e. Thomson & Page 2006) by way of alleged synonymy of *Hara* with *Erethistes*. I personally consider *Hara* a valid genus based on the comments in Ng & Kottelat (2007) so will use the name *Hara* here.

The type specimens of *H. longissima* were found in hillstreams of the Irrawaddy River drainage in Myitkyina District, Kachin State, northern Myanmar. The specimens in this report have been identified as *H. longissima* based on the key in Ng & Kottelat (2007).

H. longissima is very similar in appearance to *H. filamentosa* Blyth 1860 and *H. mesembrina* Ng & Kottelat 2007. Roy has had specimens of all three aforementioned species. *H. longissima* and *H. mesembrina* have both been available recently in the aquarium trade whereas I have only ever seen 3 live specimens of *H. filamentosa*.

H. longissima differs from *H. mesembrina* by having a proportionately shorter posterior process of the coracoid (see fig. 2 and 3), and from *H. filamentosa* by having a slenderer caudal peduncle and shallower body depth.



Fig 2 *Hara longissima* posterior processes of the coracoids (shorter) – tip indicated by arrow



Fig 3 *Hara mesembrina* posterior processes of the coracoids (longer) – tip indicated by arrow

Breeding of Erethistini

So far the following have been bred in aquariums:

Erethistes pusillus - Adrian Taylor; Roy Blackburn

Hara minuscula - Adrian Taylor

Hara jerdoni - Adrian Taylor

As far as I am aware there has been no published spawning report for *H. longissima* so this could well be the first spawning of this species.

Sexing the fish

Roy has a group of six adult specimens. Based on relative body depth, darker colouration (females) it appears that he has 2 females (fig. 4) and 4 males (Fig 1 Title image). All of the 6 specimens have different colours and have retained these colours throughout the time Roy has had them.



Fig 4 – Female *H. longissima*

The set-up

The tank is approx. 20 inches long, approx. 10 inches high and approx 8 inches wide. It has an undergravel filter, with medium sized gravel. The tank is furnished with a large piece of bogwood with only a small amount of Java Fern growing on it and there are two caves made of halves of small clay plant pots.

The temperature in the tank is normally around 78 degrees Fahrenheit but upon finding the fry the temperature was measured at 82 degrees F. There are no other species of fish in the tank. Water changes are a third every month, topped up with cold treated water. The fish have been exclusively fed on frozen bloodworms.

The spawning(s)

Unfortunately the physical act of spawning was not observed. Based on non observance of eggs on the bogwood and plants by Roy when looking at the tank each day, there are two likely possibilities:

1. The eggs were laid in the caves and guarded by the male (the caves are usually inhabited by one male in each)
2. The eggs were indiscriminately scattered in the gravel.

When Roy's *Erethistes pusillus* spawned they did so in a tank that had a sand substrate, but the fry were found in the top of an open top homemade box filter that had gravel as the upper medium. However, I understand that Adrian's spawnings were in wool mops.

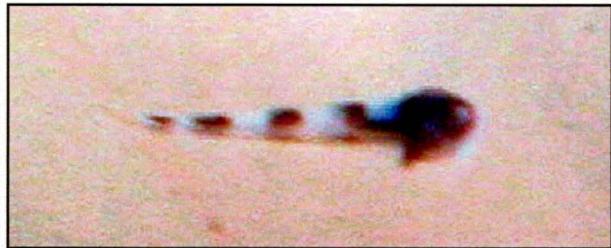


Fig 5 *H. longissima* fry at 2mm

Fry of at least two growth stages are in the tank. The smallest are around 2mm in length (fig. 5) and can be seen staying (usually still) on the top of one of the plant pots and some in the gravel.

They have a black head (with some white on the top of the snout), black pectoral fins, and then alternating black and white vertical body bands. No egg sac can be seen. The other sized fry are around 4mm (fig. 6) and can be seen moving around the bottom of the tank.



Fig 6 *H. longissima* fry at 4mm

They could still quite easily be eaten by the adults but appear to be left alone. At this size they are predominantly black, but with white-ish barbels. The body appears to have rows of small tubercles.

The head, pectoral fins, and the upper keel of the body have some gold and greenish metallic pigmentation which looks like a broken golden stripe when viewed from above.

The upper and lower keels of the body are mainly transparent, with the lower keel showing some early formation of the anal fin. The caudal fin is contiguous with the upper and lower keels of the body, and has just one lobe, with black and white markings.

The basal half of the dorsal fin rays are black with the distal half being white. The pectoral fins are quite large (they cannot be seen on fig. 6, but can be seen on fig. 7) and the outer rays are blackish, the inner clear, but all with some greenish and gold metallic colouration.



Fig 7 *H. longissima* Dorsal view of 4mm fry

Feeding

The fry had survived to this size with no food being put in the tank specifically for them due to them not being seen. Roy has decided to leave the fry in the tank and the larger fry can be seen eating very small chunks of frozen bloodworm.

References

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Ng, H. H., 2010.
The monophyly and composition of the Asian hillstream catfish family Sisoridae (Teleostei: Siluriformes): evidence from morphology.
Ichthyological Exploration of Freshwaters v. 21 (no. 3): 247-278.



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Breeding the "Horseman's" Cory

Ian Fuller



Corydoras eques adult pair. Image by Ian Fuller

Corydoras eques Steindachner, 1887 gets its name common name the Horseman's Cory from the Latin Eques, meaning Knight. Horseman? whether this is in reference to the large saddle shaped pattern on the body I am not quite sure. What I do know is that it is certainly a species that stands out when displaying its full colour and one that was on the top of my 'Must have' species list for many many years.

I eventually acquired a group of five in the autumn of 2008. Three specimens came from a friend of mine who owned a tropical fish wholesale business; they were contaminants in a shipment of two hundred *Corydoras rabauti*. The other two were given to me by a friend who had had them for a while and discovered that they were both females, so he offered them to me to go with the three that I had, which turned out to be two males and a female.

The group was put into one of what I term as my 'quiet' tanks; these are ones I have situated directly on top of the lower rack of tanks in the three back corners of the fish house. This particular tank measures 70cm x 27cm x 18cm high and was furnished with a ten to twelve millimeter layer of very fine, smooth grained sand and a two to three centimeter layer of waterlogged oak leaves.

For filtration there are two air driven 10cm x 10 cm x 5 cm deep sponge filters, one at each end of the tank.

The feeding regime followed my normal Cory feeding program, which is either tablet, granular or pre-soaked flake given once a day and a selection of live food, either daphnia, tubifex, white worm or finely chopped earth worm, given two or three times a week.

Routine weekly thirty to fifty percent water changes were made as is the norm with most of my tanks, but it was soon evident after a few

weeks that these fish did not like the frequent influx of new water and were visually distressed after a water change was made.

Water changes were subsequently reduced to just ten percent once every three or four weeks and the filters cleaned alternately every two weeks. This seemed to improve the situation greatly and the fish soon started to look their bright, sharp former selves.

In late December of 2008 while doing a routine filter clean and removing some of the decomposed leaf remnants that I discovered there were fry present, so I immediately prepared a small tank for them using thirty percent of the water from the main tank to minimise the risk of shock. I also took one of the sponge filters from the main tank and added a few oak leaves to complete the set up.

Effectively the fry would be going into exactly the same conditions they were used to in the main tank. The leaf litter was then removed and the youngsters, twelve in all, were caught and placed into their new tank.

A new replacement sponge filter was added to the main tank along with a fresh layer of oak leaves and the water topped up with aged mains water.

One of the things that did stand out when catching the youngsters was the fact that there were two distinct sizes, seven specimens were between five and six millimeters in body length, with their fins still only partially developed, based on many years experience keeping and breeding *Corydoras* catfish, I estimated these small ones to be no more than three weeks old.

The colour pattern of these little fry was almost exactly the same as that of *Corydoras rabauti* at the same age.

The other five specimens were considerably larger measuring twelve to thirteen millimeters in body length making them around six or seven weeks old, this was an indication that there had been at least two separate spawns and probably that they were from two different females.



C. eques 1 month old fry. Image by Ian Fuller

The young fish were given a basic diet of newly hatched brine shrimp alternated with grindal worm and powdered tablet food. Because of the initial stress problems with the adults, water changes were kept to a minimum, with only around ten percent changed weekly.

The growth rate was fairly rapid and by the time they were three months old they had reached a body length of twenty-three millimeters and were showing almost full adult colours.

At six months they were a healthy thirty five millimeters long in the body and were easily to sex, four were females and the other eight were males.

Up until the time of writing no more known spawning activity has taken place, although it is possible that there may have been, but with the amount of leaf litter in the tank and the position it is in, it is almost impossible to see any activity at all, save for the odd feeding frenzy when they are given live tubifex or blood worm.

After two years I still have six of the original twelve fish, all males, these are now housed in the main tank along with three of the original group. A male and female were lost when the airline valve supplying air to the filters of their tank became blocked.



C. eques 3 month old. Image by Ian Fuller

Recently, and for the first time, a shipment of *Corydoras eques* was imported into the UK, all previous specimens had turned up as contaminants in shipments of other species, or were purchased from European wholesalers. This import into the UK caused quite a stir and many enthusiasts were quick to take advantage, me amongst them. I now have another group of ten, six males and four females, which are housed on an easily viewable 76cm x 30cm x 25 tank with a forty millimeter matt filter at one end and a 10cm cube sponge filter at the other.



C. eques juveniles. Image by Ian Fuller

For cover the group has been given several pieces of bogwood with *Anubias nana* plants attached and a layer of oak leaves over a thin layer of fine sand on the bottom. It only remains to see if my strategy to encourage the group to breed will work, if it does then I will report again with my findings.



What's New?

Mark Walters

Recent trips have yielded a number of new species. I met up with Jools Dignall at Ferrybridge Aquatics recently and between us we bagged *Peckoltia vittata*, *Synodontis nigriventris*, *Chiloglanis congicus*, and *Euchilichthys* sp. There were many other catfish available including *Chaetostoma milesi*, *Hypancistrus* sp L199 and L066, *Peckoltia brevis* and *Panaqolus* sp. L205.



Euchilichthys royauxi – Image by Steven Grant

A trip to Pier Aquatics yielded *Auchenipterids* including *Ageneiosus* and *Centromochlus heckelii* Plus Dorads – *Leptodoras* and *Opsodoras*; *Parakysis* sp. and even the 'unavailable' *Corydoras*, *C. lamberti*.

The not-so-common Sisorid, *Erethistoides infuscatus* has also been seen in stores, and is pictured below.



Erethistoides infuscatus – Image by Steven Grant

At the recent Yorkshire Association of Aquarist Societies Open show and auction a few interesting tank bred species were available including *Loricaria simillima*, 'LG6' and *Hemiloricaria lanceolata*. Other fish included *Liosomodoras oncinus*, *Aspidoras* sp, *Corydoras habrosus* and *C. weitzmani*.

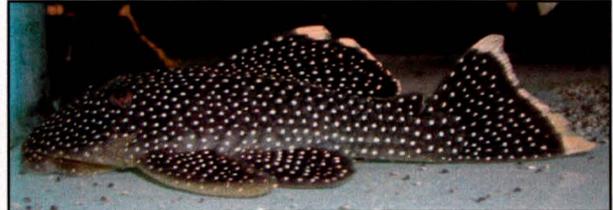
New Descriptions

Description of the Gold Nugget and Mango Plec

A very exciting description of some well-known L-numbered catfish has been published. The fish we know as L18, L85 and L177 have been presented as the same species – *Baryancistrus xanthellus*. The final gold nugget 'type' - L81, was not mentioned in the description, although from the description it can be assumed to be another *B. xanthellus* type.

The paper also presents the fish we know as L047 or the mango plec as a second new *Baryancistrus*, *B. chrysolomus*.

Both species are found in the Rio Xingu complex of rivers, likely to be affected by the construction of hydroelectric dams in the future. It is hoped that the descriptions will highlight the importance of these lotic riverine habitats to the survival of such enigmatic species.



Baryancistrus xanthellus – Image by Steven Grant

The full description, with an invaluable key for other *Baryancistrus*, and detailed habitat and location details can be found in the paper:

Lúcia Rapp Py-Daniel, Jansen Zuanon and Renildo Ribeiro de Oliveira, Two new ornamental loricariid catfishes of *Baryancistrus* from Rio Xingu drainage. *Neotropical Ichthyology*, 9(2):241-252, 2011

New Genera of Ancistrini

Two new ancistrini genera and species are described from the upper Orinoco River in Venezuela. *Micracanthicus vandragtii* is black with white spots and is restricted to the lower Ventuari River and portions of the Orinoco River.

The second species *Soromonichthys stearleyi* is green with small yellow-gold spots on the head and thin vertical bars on the body and is known only from Soromoni Creek, a northern tributary of the upper Orinoco draining southern slopes of Mount Duida. Full descriptions can be found in the paper:

Nathan K. Lujan¹ and Jonathan W. Armbruster. Two New Genera and Species of Ancistrini (Siluriformes: Loricariidae) from the Western Guiana Shield. *Copeia* 2011, No. 2, 216–225



Club News

Mark Walters



Mochokiella paynei – CAS Catfish and Loach Show Winner of the Mochokidae class – Image by Steven Grant

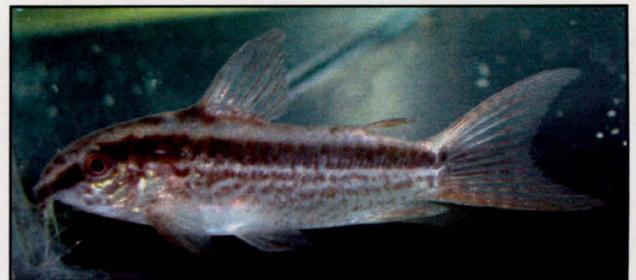
Castleford Aquarist Society Catfish and Loach Show and Auction

On the 10th July 2011, Castleford Aquarist Society (CAS) hosted its third specialist Catfish and Loach Show and Auction. There were 137 entries in 19 classes, and aquarist dug deep into their fish houses to display many unusual and extremely well conditioned fish. The judges, CSG Show Secretary Brian Walsh and Yorkshire A Class judge David Marshall had their work cut out to deliver their verdicts on the top three fish in each class. In addition to special sponsored classes, including the Breeders classes sponsored by the CSG, cash prizes were given for all places. Bonus cash prizes of £25 each were given to the highest pointed catfish and loach, in addition to the perennial trophy and woodcarving.

Best Catfish went to the Bagrid, *Pseudomystus heokhuii*, (entered by P&L Moore) by half a point to the runner up a *Scleromystax kronei* (entered by Mark Walters). Best loach was a *Yunnanilus* sp.

Selected Catfish winners were: *Brochis* / *Aspidoras* Mike Kirkham (*Brochis multiradiatus*); Small Cory, Mark Walters (*Corydoras gracilis*); Large Cory, Mark Walters (*Scleromystax kronei*); AOV Callichthyidae, DJAY (*Callichthys callichthys*); Small Loricariid, Mark Walters (*Peckoltia braueri*); Large Loricariid, DJAY; AOV Cat, DJAY (*Hara longissima*); Doras, Roy Blackburn (*Agamyxis pectinifrons*); Breeders Corydoras, Ian Wallbridge (*Corydoras concolor*); Breeders AOV, DJAY (*Synodontis petricola*); Aspredinidae, Steve Grant (*Bunocephalus amaurus*); Mochokidae, Roy Blackburn (*Mochokiella paynei*); Auchenipteridae, Steve Grant (*Auchenipterichthys punctatus*); Pimelodids, DJAY (*Microglanis carlae*); Bagrids, P&L Moore (*Pseudomystus heokhuii*).

The following images are examples of the high quality of just a few of the Catfish exhibits entered in the show.



Corydoras, *Corydoras gracilis* Image by Steven Grant



Corydoras pantanalensis Image by Steven Grant



Orinocodoras eigenmanni Image by Steven Grant



Pimelodus maculatus Image by Steven Grant



Hypoptopoma sp. Peru. Image by Steven Grant

Auction

The club had imported fish especially for the auction, and with another 10 lots, the Catfish and Loach-only sale was a fantastic success. Species on offer included:

Corydoras concolor, *C. undulatus*, *C. paleatus*, *C. aeneus*, *C. ortegai*, *C. julii (true)*, *C. trilineatus*, *C. acrensis*, *C. rabauti*, *C. panda*, *C. sp.* Green lazer, *Aspidoras C125*, *Scleromystax sp. C112*, *S. barbatus*, *Imparfinis minuta*, *Panaqolus maccus*, Red lizard cat, *Leporacanthicus heterodon*, *Hypancistrus sp. L066*, *H. sp. L201*, *LDA10*, *LDA16*, *Ancistrus cirrhosus*, *L056*, *Centromochlus perugiae*, *Tatia dunni*, *Tatia strigata*, *Tatia sp D*, *Tatia intermedia*, *Auchenipterichthys coracoids*, *Pseudolaguvia*, *Heteropneustes fossilis* and many others!

My Favourite Corydoras

Ian Fuller

This is a question I have been asked many times and over the years my choice has never changed. What I do tend to have are two categories, one is my all time favourite and what I would term as my catfish of the moment. This is usually a species that has either recently been discovered, or one that I have been trying to obtain for a long time.

To get back to the original question, my all time favourite catfish is the diminutive *Corydoras pygmaeus* Knaack 1966. I first obtained a group of six of these tiny fish in 1974 and because of a contamination problem with my then one and only tank, I had to house these little guys in a couple of 4 x 4 sweet jars sat on the mantle piece. I put them in two groups of three and they actually seemed very happy in their new little homes.

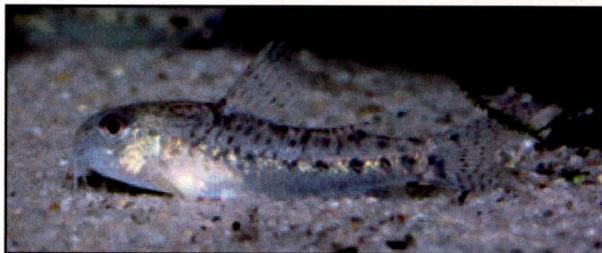
Because of the fact that there was no real way to filter such small containers, a third of the water was changed morning and evening, an action that going by their response excited them very much. The following morning before leaving for work another water change followed by a little food. On returning from work my intention was to make another water change, but was stopped short when I saw a number of small creamy coloured eggs on the sides of both jars, I was totally gob smacked as they say. This little fish, all of one inch long, triggered something in me that has turned out to be a life long passion.

My current catfish of the moment is, yes another *Corydoras* and is one of the un-described members of the group and has the unglamorous title of C144. This is also a dwarf species and is very rare, with only a few specimens known in the hobby. The females grow to a body length of no more than 36 mm, with males somewhat smaller at around 26 to 28 mm SL.

These little fish originate from Rio Tapajos in Brazil and have a unique swimming habit unlike any other Corydoradinae species that I know. It tends to skip around the substrate using its pectoral fins for propulsion more in the style of a Goby than a *Corydoras* and when it comes to rest, it will often sit arched upward perched up on its pectoral fins, again just like a Goby. However once disturbed they will dart away and go into hiding just like any other *Corydoras*.



Corydoras pygmaeus Image by Ian Fuller



Corydoras sp C144 Image by Ian Fuller

'Eds note:

Great piece Ian, lets hear from other CSG members on their favourite catfish in future editions. For the record mine is *Scleromystax barbatus*'



G.B.W

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