Texas Area Killifish Organization

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

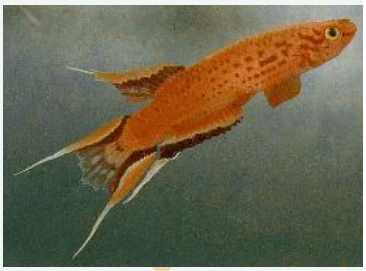
Best wishes to all club members and friends. Hopefully 2013 will turn out to be a very successful year for all TAKO members and friends, as well as their fish populations.

It is time to be thinking about what young fish you have that will be 'just perfect' for Nationals and our own July show.

Find some live food and start coloring and fattening them up now so they are ready.

The show weekend will be July 12-14th (Friday—Sunday). I will be working with the subdivision homeowners association to attempt to obtain the clubhouse once again for the phenomenal fee of $0.00. 2012 was the first year we managed to get it for such a low price.

Stephen Rabke (TAKO President) and I will be sending in our sanctioning form in February with the particulars so as to get all paperwork completed well in advance.



Inside this issue:

Keeping *Fundulus cingulatus,* Milton, Florida—Doug Austin

I have been keeping *Fundulus cingulatus,* Milton, FL location in my pond since 1992. This is a total of twenty years. This is the strain that was collected by Pat Polanski, and I got a pair at a monthly meeting of the Texas Area Killifish Organization (TAKO). A pair of my *F. cingulatus* won the New World Non-Annuals class at the TAKO Annual show in 1993, and then again 19 years later in 2012.

I would catch some out of my pond from time to time and bring them to the Houston Aquarium Society (HAS) or Greater Houston Aquarium Club (GHAC) auctions. After one of the GHAC auctions someone who was glad to buy the fish, posted on the GHAC page of www.houstonfishbox.com a link to an article about the taxonomical status of *F. cingulatus.* There seems to be some question

Lamprichthys tanganicanus—Easy as 1,2, 4?

This Lake Tanganyika dwelling killifish is a potential source of simultaneous joy and frustration. It demands very clean, frequently changed, well filtered, moving water.

Water changes should be frequent and consistent in occurrence and regular in volume exchanged. This is understandable as it is a large lake species, and should be treated as a pelagic fish which seldom encounters radically different water conditions due to the volume size of their habitat.

They feed off of the surface and mid water but almost never touch anything that touches the bottom. The plus side is that they will taste test nearly everything that hits the water's surface to check its edibility. Small insects, flake food, beef heart for the cichlids with whom they share one of my tanks, pellets for the catfish, any small fry that happen by—any and all are considered edible by the Lamps.

The eggs are large and easy to find. I prefer utilizing a mop (see photo by S. Rabke below) that has been segregated into three sections for final braiding. The *Lamprichthys* will wiggle into the braided net and mistake the braided yard for naturally occurring crevices. Pulling this mop is so much easier than pulling rocks from your aquarium to pick eggs!

Photo at bottom of page—lower right—by A.. Leuterman

Lamprichthys continued

The fry, even if fed only once per day grow at an impressive rate when contrasted with their non-annual killifish brethren.

When just hatched the fry need to be fed at a minimum once per day. Many other killifish fry can go the weekend munching bacteria off of plants the first weeks to a month of life whereas the *Lamprichthys* cannot. Yes, a few will survive the weekend of fasting but a good percentage will not. Fewer frequent feedings of baby brine with small changes of water will noticeably increase their health and growth rate dramatically over one heavy feeding per day.

Fundulus continued

as to whether the type material to *F. cingulatus* is really *F. cingulatus* or if it is a *F. chrysotus.* If *F. cingulatus* is not a valid name, then these fish maybe *F. auroguttatus* or *F. rubrifrons.* At times the taxonomists seem more like lawyers than scientists. Therefore I have decided to use *F. cingulatus* until/if another name becomes widely accepted. I keep these fish outside in a 'liner pond' of about 600 gallons. To breed *Fundulus* they need to be kept outside during the winter. Without some cold weather, and where I live here in Texas we have mild Zone 9 winters, their sex organs will not mature. Also in the pond the fish got plenty of natural food; most of the time I did not feed; these fish worked for a living eating mosquito larvae and small aquatic life.

The pond was planted with a water lily and *Elodea canadensis* when a pair of *Fundulus* where first introduced to the pond. Over the years *Najas guadalupensis,* Louisiana Iris and other plants were added to the pond. In the early years there were Koi in the pond. The Koi did not disturb the smaller fish.

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Fundulus continued

I do not know where the *F. cingulatus* were laying their eggs, but *Elodea* and *Najas* are the types of plants that plant spawners are likely to lay eggs on. I was told by a HAS member that floating leaves, like Water Lily leaves, were a good environment for starter food for baby fish. I do not know if this is true, but when I first saw fry in this pond, they were near lily leaves.

I believe that raising fish in a natural-like environment will produce strong healthy fish that are more likely to keep the behavior that wild populations exhibit.

I have also kept these fish in a light blue container pond and a 45 gallon aquarium. They do not do well in the container pond. I have trouble keeping anything except *Gambusia affinis* in that pond. I think that the light blue color makes the fish feel vulnerable.

My experience with this fish in the aquarium is interesting. After a time I had lost interest in my aquariums and the tanks only had plants in them and no fish.

Photo at lower right by Doug Austin

So I put my minnow trap in the pond and a couple of hours later I pulled the trap out and found five males and one female for my aquarium.

This group lived in the fish tank for two or three years until one of the fish died. The population then dropped one by one until just one male was left. If you keep these fish in a tank, have one male or five or more, to spread the aggression around.

There are plenty of native killies you can keep outside year round here in the south. Also there are killifish species from the Mediterranean and Middle East regions that can also be keep outside. Some killies come from the temperate region of South America. I believe the South American Killies are all annual soil spanwers and would be an interesting project for a pond.

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