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August 2024
volume XXXI
number 6

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Series III Vol. XXXI, No. 6 August, 2024

ON THE COVER

Our cover photo this month features a breeding colony of *Neolamprologus brichardi* hovering over a recent spawn. Photo from Joseph Ferdenzi.

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From the Editor

by Dan Radebaugh

So! After years and years of attending meetings here at the Queens Botanical Garden, it is now official that beginning in **September** we will be meeting at the Alley Pond Environmental Center. I'll miss being at the Botanical Gardens, but as I recall, when my wife Marsha and I began our association with the GCAS, our meetings were for a time being held at the VFW facility, so I'm confident that we can in fact get along just fine at a different venue. For some of us our new meeting place may be slightly more difficult to get to, while for others it will likely be even more convenient than the QBG has been.

What else is new? Well, my wife Marsha has come up with a new series for **Modern Aquarium**, entitled "Who Are We?" Our first responder to this question is none other than our friend Michael Gallo. See his response to this question on page 11. What would your responses be? Inquiring minds want to know!

Occasionally as I'm putting these issues together I'm just astounded by how things sometimes work out without much deliberate planning. On the other hand, I have no doubt whatever that Jason Gold's trip to Antarctica with his mother was very well premeditated. What a great story!

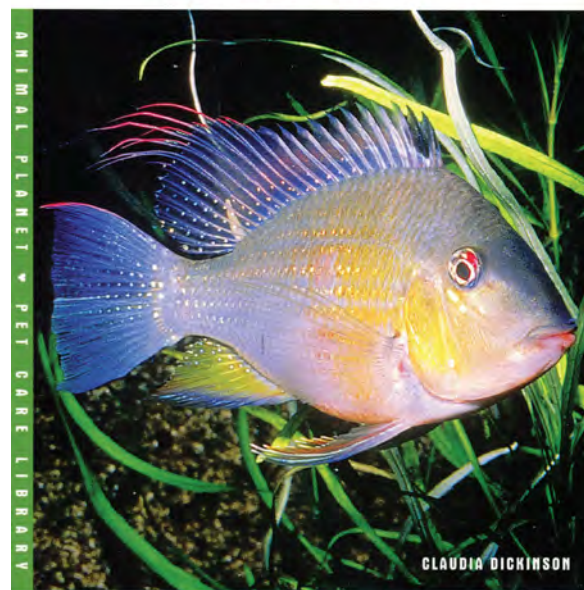
Remember, as always, we need articles! **Modern Aquarium** is produced by and for the members of Greater City Aquarium Society. Our members are our authors, and with ten issues per year, we *always* need more articles. I know several of you are keeping and/or breeding fish that I would like to know more about, and I'm certain other members would be interested as well. Share your experiences with us. Write about it! If you're a little unsure about the state of your writing technique, don't worry—that's why editors were invented!



If you have an article, photo, or drawing that you'd like to submit for inclusion in **Modern Aquarium**, it's easy to do! You may fax it to me at (877) 299-0522, email it to gcas@earthlink.net, or just hand it to me at a meeting. However you get it to me, I'll be delighted to receive it! Enjoy!



Aquarium Care of Cichlids



by Greater City member Claudia Dickinson
(Animal Planet® Pet Care Library)

Hardcover – Also available on Amazon Kindle
<https://www.amazon.com/Aquarium-Cichlids-Animal-Planet-Library/dp/0793837774>



GCAS Programs

2024

March 6	Emperor Tetras
April 3	Inside Filters
May 1	Live Food Culture
June 5	Swordtails
July 3	Aquatic Plants
August 7	Night At The Auction
September 4	Breeding Corydoras
October 2	TBA
November 6	TBA
December 4	Holiday Awards Party!

Articles submitted for consideration in *Modern Aquarium* (ISSN 2150-0940) must be received no later than the 10th day of the month prior to the month of publication. Please email submissions to gcas@earthlink.net, or fax to (347) 379-4984. Copyright 2023 by the Greater City Aquarium Society Inc., a not-for-profit New York State corporation. All rights reserved. Not-for-profit aquarium societies are hereby granted permission to reproduce articles and illustrations from this publication, **unless the article indicates that the copyrights have been retained by the author**, and provided reprints indicate source, and that two copies of the publication are sent to the Exchange Editor of this magazine (one copy if sent electronically). For online-only publications, copies may be sent via email to gcas@earthlink.net. Any other reproduction or commercial use of the material in this publication is prohibited without prior express written permission.

The Greater City Aquarium Society meets every month except January and February. Members receive notice of meetings in the mail or by email. For more information, contact: Dan Radebaugh at (718) 458-8437, email to gcas@earthlink.net, or fax to (347) 379-4984. For more information about our club or to see previous issues of *Modern Aquarium*, you can also go to our Internet Home Page at <http://www.greatercity.net>, <http://www.greatercity.org>, or <http://www.greatercity.com>.

President's Message

by Horst Gerber

As you probably have heard by now, big doings are afoot here at the Greater City Aquarium Society. Following notification from the Queens Botanical Garden that our monthly meeting rent was going to increase rather drastically, our Board of Directors has decided, beginning in September, to hold our monthly meetings at the Alley Pond Environmental Center.

We've had a long run here at the QBG, though we have had to meet at other venues from time to time. We will miss it! Their staff has been unfailingly helpful. However, stuff happens, and some aspects of our new venue – such as parking – will be a significant improvement. And we're still in Queens!

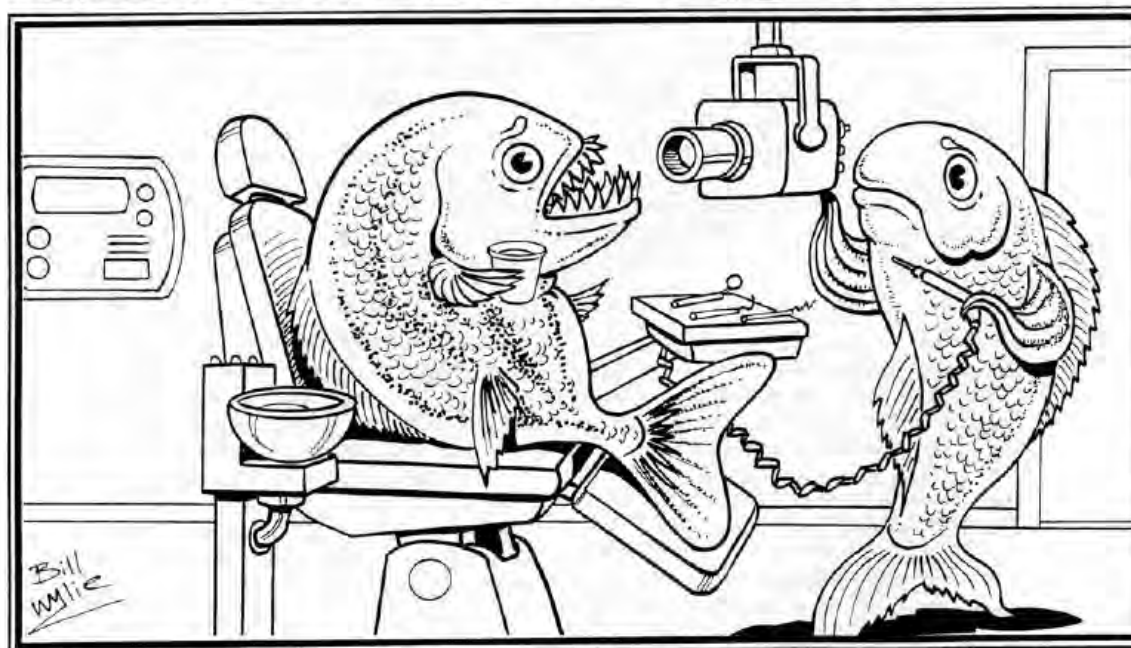


Horst



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"Doc, every time I try to floss, the string just keeps breaking!"





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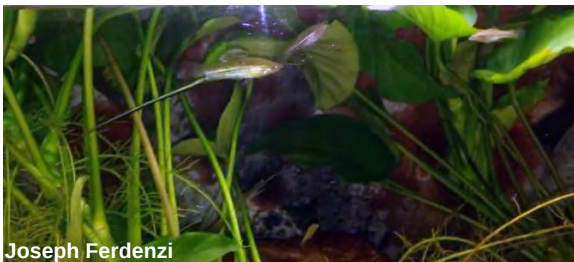
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Fishy Friends' Photos

by Greater City Aquarium Society Fishy Friends

Below are photo submissions to our “Fishy Friends” Facebook group. I’ve left the subjects unnamed, but not the photographer. If you see a shot you like, and want more info, ask the photographer about it! I’m sure he or she will be delighted to tell you!

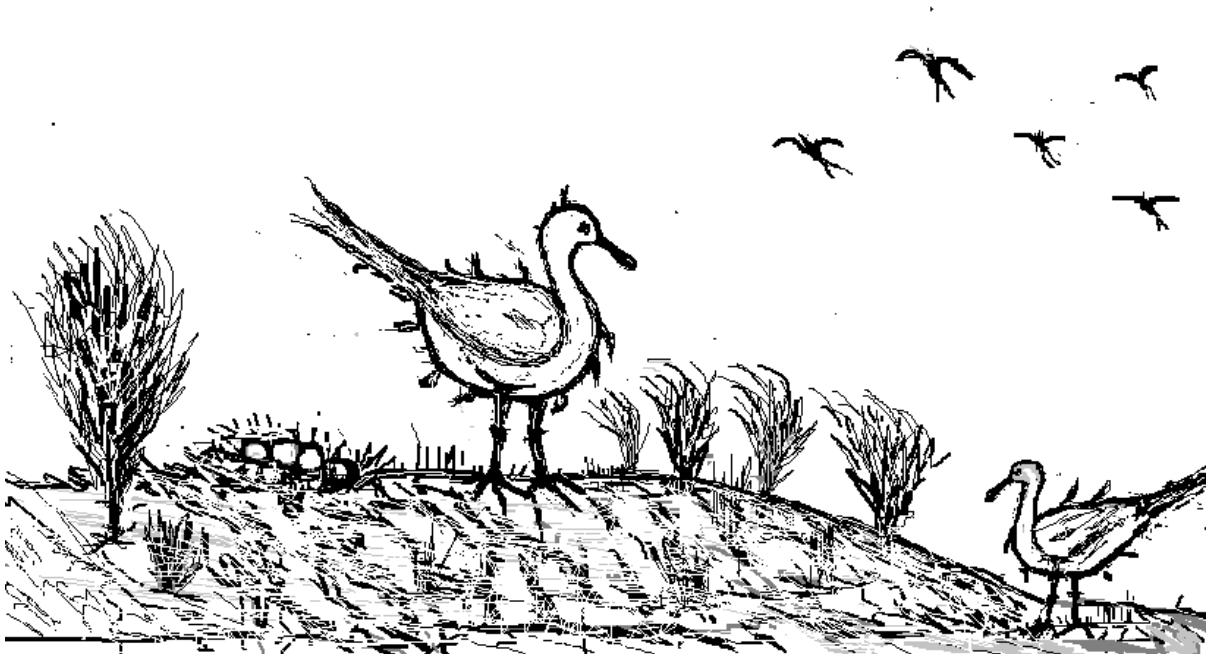


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moaph.org

<https://moaph.org/>

July's Caption Winner: Thomas Keegan



To Everything, Tern, Tern, Tern...

The Modern Aquarium Cartoon Caption Contest

by Denver Lettman

*In this contest, you, the members of Greater City, get to choose the caption! Just think of a good caption, then mail, email, or phone the Editor with your caption (phone: 347-866-1107, fax: 877-299-0522, email: gcas@earthlink.net). **Your caption needs to reach the Editor by the third Wednesday of this month.** We'll also hand out copies of this page at the meeting, which you may turn in to Marsha or Dan before leaving. Winning captions will earn ten points in our Author Awards program, qualifying you for participation in our special "Authors Only" raffle at our Holiday Party and Banquet. Put on your thinking caps!*



Your Caption:

Your Name:



<https://www.amazonasmagazine.com/>

Pinkie Zero Update

by Stephen Sica

In the April 2024 issue of **Modern Aquarium** I wrote about the adventures of a *Betta splendens* called Pinkie Zero. I also mentioned my misadventures in trying to properly take care of this little fish.

When Donna and I were in a PetSmart in early March shopping for dog or cat food, Donna sauntered over to the display rack holding all the various *Betta* fish in their little containers that were for sale. Some of those fish are beautiful and have prices of \$20 or more. I'm not certain, because I avert my eyes when looking at the prices of these fancy fish. Look at the fish and not the price is my methodology. This is easy to do, since the container lids are color coded. The colors are so numerous that I cannot match the color and cost.

If you want an inexpensive fish, look for a red lid. I look at the prices as well as the lids, for all red lids are \$3 or \$4 fish. Most are \$4, but you can occasionally find a tiny baby for only \$3. While I was in another area of the store, Donna called me over to show me the twin sister of Pinkie Zero. It was accurate even down to the size. In fact I looked around at the inexpensive fish and saw there were triplets!



To the left of Pinkie Zero is a tiny food pellet. I think she's going to save it for dinner later.



Pinkie Zero doesn't need too much space on its leaf.

Donna indicated that I should purchase a twin, and I did. Of course when we got home I had nowhere to put the fish. I like to house bettas in the 5.5 gallon size tank. I put the new fish in with Pinkie Zero so she would have company.



Pinkie Zero balances her tiny body on a strand of java moss next to her betta leaf.

The next day I saw Pinkie Zero chasing the new fish, which was a struggle for her since she has flawed fins from when I left her in a tank full of larger mean tetras who decided that they should eat her or maybe even worse! The next day, the new fish was chasing Pinkie Zero. What's going on? Since Pinkie doesn't swim very well, I

started to worry, so I purchased a small 2.5 gallon tank. Lately, the chain stores have been selling Aqueon and other various brands for \$9.99. I purchased one and quickly set it up with aged water, some substrate, moss and plants, and a heater. After the water warmed up, I put Pinkie in this new home and even set up an artificial betta leaf for her. The moss almost came to the surface so Pinkie, who enjoys floating near the surface, had a nice soft and wet bed to rest on all over the little aquarium's surface.

I have actually seen her taking afternoon naps on her leaf. I thought that this was unique behavior, so I checked up on her on different times and days, though always in the afternoon, to find her on her leaf. Sometimes she prefers to rest upon the surface on strands of java moss.

When I feed her, I drop a single bit of Hikari Betta Bio-Gold floating pellets right in front of her face. She usually lunges forward to eat it. The pellets are tiny; I estimate each is smaller than a pin head. This small fish

has a very slight appetite, so I try to feed her at least twice each day when we are home. She usually only eats two or three tiny food pellets at each meal, unless she's hungry. No more than five will suffice.

As far as I can tell, Pinkie Zero seems to be adapting well to her new home, where she lives a solitary and peaceful life. I think that she is happy, so I am too!



Pinkie Zero has a new home in a 2.5 gallon aquarium on the right. She has another female betta "roommate" in the tank next to her.



Who Are We?

by Marsha Radebaugh

In its 100+ years of existence, Greater City Aquarium Society has had a membership of thousands. Each month, with the exception of those during the Pandemic, our meetings have an average of 40 – 60 members and visitors in attendance. We all know who the “stars” are, the officers, presenters, regular runners etc, individuals well known to the rest of us. There are those, however, who quietly and consistently attend most, if not all meetings. We sit beside each other, sometimes chatting, sometimes not, without any idea who our neighbors are outside of this room. Well, I think it’s time we found out! As Membership Chair, I have the opportunity to meet and greet each of you, checking you in and handing you your **Modern Aquarium** issue, your door prize ticket and collecting dues. I know who you are! But does everyone else? I think not! So going forward, as often as I can I’m going to select a loyal member and introduce him or her to the rest of you in this column. And so, in his own words:

Meet Michael Gallo!

My name is Mike Gallo. I have been a member of the Greater City Aquarium Society for over twenty years. I grew up in Brooklyn and my family always kept a twenty gallon aquarium. In those days the prices for fish were great. I can still remember platys and swordtails were twenty-nine cents and four for a dollar. In those days angelfish were thirty-nine cents each and three for a dollar. We had all the bread and butter fish: guppies, mollies, neons, corys, platys and of course my favorite, my Oscar. The Oscar was my most expensive fish. He cost forty-nine cents, but he lived longer and got bigger than the rest of my fish. He was always happy to see me!

In 1994 I bought my nephew Marty an African clawed frog. When I went to the pet store to get worms for the frog, I noticed some African cichlids. At first I thought they were saltwater fish. I was shocked to find out they were freshwater! I started to do some research, bought several books about them, and subscribed to several magazines like **Tropical Fish Hobbyist**, **Practical**



Fishkeeping, and **Amazonas**. After six months, I went out and bought a 125 gallon aquarium, thinking if I bought a big tank I would never need another aquarium. Boy was I wrong!

In the June 2001 issue of **Tropical Fish Hobbyist**, I read about an American Cichlid Association convention sponsored by the North Jersey Aquarium Society. I decided to attend. Everyone at the convention was very friendly and anxious to discuss fish over a few beers. I was in my true element. In speaking with the people at the convention they all told

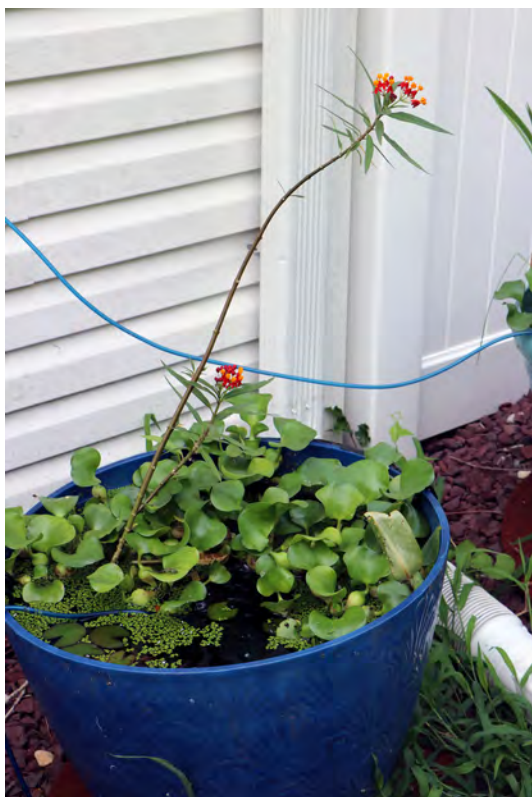




me they belonged to their local aquarium societies.

After the ACA convention, I sought out and joined The Greater City and Brooklyn Aquarium Societies. I found the people to also be very friendly and anxious to discuss fish over pastries, cake and soda pop. I am still in my natural element.

I find my experiences with both clubs to be both rewarding and very educational. My knowledge of the aquarium hobby has greatly expanded, mainly due to my interactions with club members and speakers over the years.



I currently have about twenty-five tanks ranging from two gallons to one hundred twenty-five gallons. Many of my tanks are powered by a Jehmco air pump. Most of my tanks are single species tanks. The only exceptions are tanks that I use dither fish in to promote breeding. I find that every year in the hobby my interests have expanded. When I first started I was only interested in African cichlids, then American cichlids, now I am interested in many different types of fish and invertebrates. I currently keep cichlids, livebearers, danios, tetras, ricefish, catfish, plecos, paradisefish, bettas and shrimp. I have never been shy about adding a tank.



Recently my main focus has been on tubbing. I currently have 2 tubs outside that contain white cloud minnows and orange ricefish. The tubs are about 20 gallons each and contain pond plants such as water hyacinth, golden club, milkweed, dwarf water lily and Louisiana iris. These are very attractive in the back yard.

When not fishkeeping or working for Delta Airlines, I enjoy gardening, traveling, going to movies, and attending sporting events. I am a fan of the Yankees, Giants, Knicks and St. John's Basketball.





In the Community

Who's This Lotl Guy?



**The Beckemeyer Axolotl Project
A Lotl Love to Go Around**

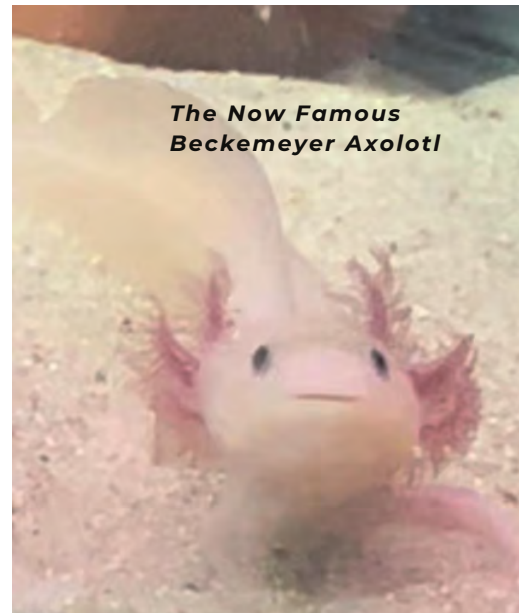
By Lora Watson

*This article previously appeared in the March/April 2024 issue of **The Darter**, Vol 50/Number 2.*

IN JANUARY, a few of us MASI member donated a tank, filter, chemicals, water and AN AXOLOTL to Mrs. Hoffman's Third Grade class at Beckemeyer Grade School in Hillsboro, IL.

The kids had been begging for an axolotl for the entire year and, during their Christmas break, their teacher Mrs. Hoffman reached out on Facebook looking for one to buy. Our daughter Rachel Sturgeon contacted me to ask for help with finding one, which led me to contacting Mitch Wendel for information on the subject.

Mitch suggested that we contact Chad Brockmeyer (who lives just up the road from us in Raymond, IL AND is an active member of MASI). Mitch got ahold of Chad and he told Mitch that he would donate the axolotl since it was going to a school classroom.



Bob and I donated the tank, filter, chemicals, and water to get them started. I got with Mrs. Hoffman just before the kiddos returned from break and we got the tank all set up and cycling. Then, as a surprise to the kids, I showed up during their Science Class time (not even our granddaughter knew I was coming in that day).



This classroom is learning both about aquatic life and about the joys of collective ownership as they take care of their new community pet!

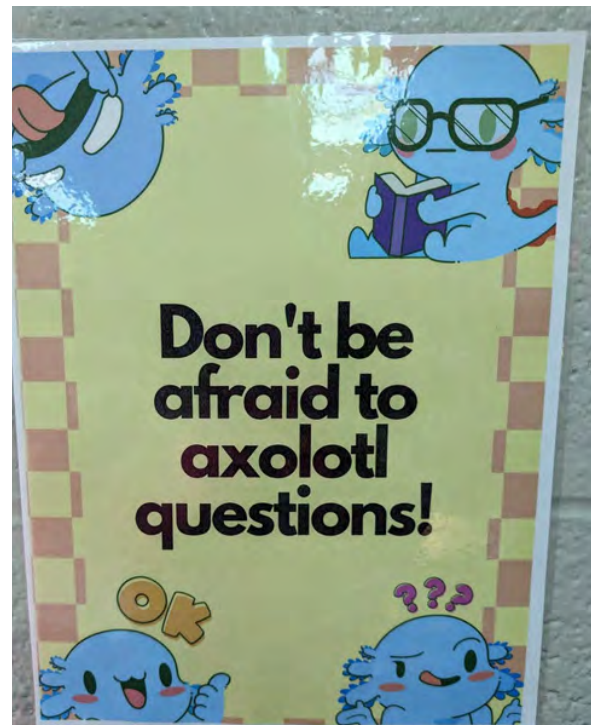
Their faces lit up like it was Christmas morning all over again. They were all so happy and excited to meet their new little friend!

HOWEVER, I was the one who was really surprised! These kiddos had more knowledge than most adults do on the subject of axolotls! My goodness they are some smart cookies!

They are absolutely in love with this little guy.



They named him...
PINK FLOYD!



Signage decorating the room where the Beckemeyer Axolotl now lives.



DO FISH PARENTS USE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT?

Ryo Hidaka, Shumpei Sogawa, Masanori Kohda and Satoshi Awata

While there is an increasing consensus among humans that corporal discipline of children does more harm than good, fish may disagree.

Ryo Hidaka, Shumpei Sogawa, Masanori Kohda and Satoshi Awata from Osaka Metropolitan University have demonstrated that a fish species employs physical punishment to elicit helping efforts from their offspring, indicating advanced social and cognitive skills previously thought to be unique to higher vertebrates.

The results of their study were published online in **Animal Behaviour** on April 6 of this year.

For millennia, human societies have used punishment to promote cooperation and maintain social order. But humans are not the only species seeking better cooperative behavior. So how do other animals achieve this?

Seeking an answer, the research team from the Graduate School of Science at Osaka Metropolitan University took a look at a rather taciturn animal: fish, more specifically, *Neolamprologus savoryi*, a cooperatively breeding cichlid fish.

“Even though punishment in cooperatively breeding cichlid fish has been studied, there is limited evidence that they use punishment to encourage cooperative behavior,” said Satoshi Awata, a professor at Osaka Metropolitan University and lead author of the study.

N. savoryi subordinates, or helpers, assist dominant breeders in, for example, defending territory against intruders or maintaining the breeding shelter. By observing the behavior of *N. savoryi* in a controlled laboratory setting, the researchers were able to manipulate and measure the effects of punishment on helping behavior.

Their results showed that dominant breeders physically attacked idle helpers — including their own offspring — to promote the latter’s participation in cooperative activities. Indeed, those experiencing such aggression subsequently increased their efforts in helping behaviors.

In contrast, helpers who engaged proactively in helping behaviors avoided aggression from dominant breeders.

“Our study demonstrated that nonhuman animals also use punishment to elicit cooperative behaviors in group members,” Awata said.

The study’s findings highlight that punishment is not exclusive to human societies but is also present in how other animals enforce

cooperation and maintain social relationships.

This research bridges a gap in understanding the evolution of cooperative behavior and the mechanisms animals use to sustain it.

“Our findings reveal that fish, like humans, employ advanced cognitive abilities to sustain their societies. This compels us to reconsider the notion of ‘intelligence’ not only in fish but across the animal kingdom,” Awata said.

Animal Behaviour

Volume 211, May 2024, Pages 99-109 Osaka Metropolitan University.

“Fishy parenting? Punishing offspring encourages cooperation.” ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 18 June 2024. <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/06/240618115647.htm>



A Life in Fish — Antarctica!

by Jason Gold

A lot of my fish stories here in **Modern Aquarium** have involved travel. That's no accident! My wanderlust has a fish-y source. From the age of eight, I yearned to emulate the globetrotting adventures of my **Tropical Fish Hobbyist** superheroes, and pored over the gridded world map endpapers of Innes's **Exotic Tropical Fish**.

Those were two of the main drivers of my early curiosity about the world and my desire to explore every corner of our astounding planet, near and far. Not just the fish, but the places and people too. And that ichthyologically inspired wanderlust has never abated. Just days ago I drooled over an account in **Amazonas** of a 10-week overland voyage from South Africa to Tanzania in search of rare *Nothobranchius*.

Thanks to those early influences, I've been able to share stories about my first scuba dive in Barbados, diving with my kids in Destin, touching the Universe on the spectacular reefs of Raja Ampat, and feeling a new personal connection while fishing with my cousin off an Everglades levee. I've written about realizing a childhood dream in the granite mountains and blackwater rivers of Borneo.

I've also written about finding global adventure with my kids right here in New York City and being transported to the

Amazon or the Irrawaddy by looking into the aquariums in my own living room. Some adventures start by crossing an ocean, others by looking through a pane of glass.

My family also often plays a role in my stories—my parents' mostly-passive support of my hobbies, the lessons conveyed to my kids

through my hobbies, and the eventual family connections and understandings that grew out of my hobbies. But there's one story that combines all the above: travel, family, and yes, fish.

The year was 2019. I received a call from my 87-year-old mom. "Jason, I know your 60th birthday is

coming up in a few months, and I'm guessing you're planning to celebrate with some sort of an adventure."

"Yeah, Mom, I actually have been thinking about that, but I haven't planned anything definite just yet..."

"Well, wherever you're going, I want to help. As a 60th birthday gift." "Wow, Mom, that's amazing!!!"

"But I have a kind of strange request, or rather, a condition." Hmmm. "Wherever you're going, I want to come with you. I want us to have an adventure

together."

That was kind of a shocker. "But why, Mom? Why at this point? And where do you think we might go?"



Arriving in Ushuaia, Argentina, southernmost city in the world, at the foot of the Patagonian Andes.



“Well, Jason, your sisters both stayed here in Atlanta. I’ve spent loads of time with them for all these years. But you left here when you were 17, and since then you and I have never spent more than maybe a day or two together, just the two of us, without spouses or kids or the rest of the family around. And now you’re almost 60, and I’m 87, and there might not be that many more chances to do that—to spend time together just you and me. So that’s why. And as for where, well, that’s up to you. I want to share *your* adventure.”

Deeply touched by the “why,” I said “Yes. Absolutely, yes.” It was that simple. Every adventure starts with a Yes.

I have a travel wish list. It’s not that long—it’s on a Post-It—and it’s mostly not the usual popular tourist destinations. Every place on my list is either a biodiversity hotspot (the DRC’s Rwenzori Mountains, Yemen’s Socotra Islands, the Philippines’ Tubbataha Reefs), a natural marvel (Yellowstone, Nyiragongo, Atacama, the aurora borealis), or an architectural or cultural masterpiece (Dhaka, Chandigarh, Isfahan). A few are on the travel industry radar. Some are basically inaccessible right now because of political conflict. Others are just crazy-remote or have minimal tourism infrastructure, making travel there a seat-of-the-pants operation no matter how much you think you’ve worked it all out in advance. I have no illusions that I will get to every place on even that fairly short list. But that deep yearning to go—it’s like a tug just under the diaphragm—is built into me now. These are places that have very personal meaning to me and my particular set of passions. So particular, in fact, that I’ve done a good deal of my traveling solo. At this point traveling solo is practically an assumption. But there was one place on my list that, as much as I yearned to go, I just couldn’t imagine going alone, not having someone there, someone close, to share the wonder of it all. Antarctica. I knew even before I’d hung up the phone that that was where Mom and I should go on our mother-son adventure.

I hunkered down into super-nerd research mode, one of my happy places. Traveling to Antarctica generally involves a cruise ship, and most Antarctic cruises start and end in Ushuaia, Argentina, the “southernmost city in the world,” the “*fin del mundo*,” on the tippy tip of Tierra del Fuego facing the Beagle Channel. I called several different operators to ask the same questions. “Would this be a feasible trip for my 87-year-old mother, who’s in fantastic shape for 87, but is still, you know, 87?” And its corollary: “Would my mom be able to participate fully?” I mean, what’s the point of a mother-son odyssey if I’m off odysseying while she’s sitting alone on the ship? The replies were all reassuring. Travel to Antarctica is more adventurous in spirit than it is physically strenuous. If your mom can get in and out of a bobbing Zodiac, she’ll be able to participate in almost everything, minus maybe a couple of icy hikes to penguin colonies. The passengers skew older anyway.

These trips are on the expensive side, and Antarctica is usually a place that well-travelled folks go after they’ve already checked a lot of other destinations off their own travel wish lists. The trips also sell out well in advance, so digital nomads can’t find themselves in Ushuaia and decide on a whim to blow their travel budget on a voyage to the frozen continent. I also prudently looked into a couple of other options, in case this idea was just too far out for Mom.

A week later, I gave Mom a call. “I have a first choice for our adventure.” A mental drumroll, please. “Antarctica.” “What? Like the South Pole???” “Um, not exactly....” I went into a long explanation, telling her about the trip, the operator I thought would be the best, what we’d be seeing and doing, who we’d likely be meeting on this sort of journey, reassuring her that the austral summer weather would be cool but not frigid, and how this would give us a chance to have a truly unique experience together and amazing tales to tell of our bottom-of-the-worldly mother-son adventure. She said Yes. The adventure was on!

I'd had a fabulous experience traveling with Intrepid in Borneo, and that's who we were going to use for this trip too. They work with Quark Expeditions as their cruise operator. Quark originated modern polar tourism in the early 1990's. Their website was all about the land and the ice and the wildlife, not about luxurious staterooms and Epicurean cuisine. So our priorities matched. (Don't get me wrong, the accommodations and food were great, but they weren't the *focus*.) I booked us for five days in Ushuaia before we'd get on the ship. Mom asked, "Why are we spending five days in that place I can't even pronounce?" "Because we're not in a hurry," was my reply. But I also knew it would take some time to get my Energizer Mom to slow down, get into the rhythm of nature travel, where it's important to take the time to notice the little things, the magic in the details, rather than just running around checking famous stuff off a famous-stuff checklist.

And of course I went online to see what there was to do in Ushuaia. Nature preserves, penguins, national parks (Ushuaia is at the southern tip of Patagonia), museums, restaurants, a colonial era prison, and... scuba? My inner fish nerd perked way up at that. I called my guy at Intrepid. "Do you know anything about scuba diving in Ushuaia?" He asked around. "Nope, no one here has ever heard of such a thing, but if it's for real, let us know!"

I emailed the link on the Wikitravel page, Ushuaia Divers. Next day, I heard back from Carlos. "Yup, I've been running dive trips to the kelp forest in the Beagle Channel for years. I'll provide the dry suit and will teach you how to use it. All you need is a valid PADI certification. We'll do two dives. Next time, come in December, and you can dive with the

sea lions, before they head out to the ocean with their pups. Will I see you in January?" Yes! I told the team at Intrepid it was for real. Talk about an unexpected turn of events!

Four months later, the expedition was upon us. Mom flew from Atlanta to JFK, and I met her at Delta baggage claim. Then we headed to Buenos Aires for a brief layover and on to Ushuaia. As the plane dropped down through the clouds, we could see the glittering harbor, surrounded by the stunning dark pinnacles of the Andes. Ushuaia has a sort of funky, frontier feel. The look was Alpine ski town. The mountains come right down to the water, so roads parallel to the shore are fairly level, while those perpendicular are incredibly steep, many with stairs for sidewalks. It was both adorable and surreal. Wes Anderson would approve.

With its short growing season everything was in bloom at once. Extravagant masses of lupines and ferns and evergreens filled the black mountains with lush color. It was great that we had time to get into the town's hippie rhythm, with its mix of well-heeled tourists headed to the cruise ships and backpackers exploring Patagonia and beyond. On our first full day it was unusually warm (around 70°F!), and the snowcaps vanished from the mountains. We took a boat trip to see a colony of Magellanic penguins. It is impossible not to smile when you see penguins, awkward and argumentative on the shore but agile acrobats

in the water. Aquatic show-off's. And that was when Mom and I looked at one another and all doubts melted away. This was gonna be great! That night it drizzled, and in the morning the peaks were once again magically and exquisitely capped with snow.

On day three I woke early and headed to Carlos' dive shop on the rocky shoreline adjacent to the airport. There were three



Mom and I on the adventure of a lifetime!

other takers—two young Israelis who were backpacking around the world for a year after their mandatory military service and a 40-something French guy who was living in New Caledonia and would soon be heading down to Antarctica for a month as a crewman on a private sailboat. Carlos was awesome. He showed us how the dry suits worked and helped us gear up. We clambered aboard his dive boat and headed out to the Beagle Channel, just beyond the harbor, through wheeling flocks of migratory shorebirds in their thousands that summer in Tierra del Fuego to feed and breed.

For my part, I looked and felt like a dayglo Michelin Man. I wanted to feel like James Bond, but I felt neither dashing nor daring. In fact, I was quietly in crisis. Would this crazy orange get-up really prevent me from becoming a human ice cube in the near-freezing water? Wearing so much buoyant polypropylene and an inflatable suit, Carlos had loaded my pockets with lead weights. It all felt so heavy that surely I'd just sink. I decided I'd be the last one to hit the water, just to see if anyone else flinched from the cold or, you know, just sank. But no, everyone was all smiles and AOK signs bobbing there among the kelp. So in I went. And sure enough, the water was fine!

I quickly learned why Carlos always plans dives in pairs. None of us, save Carlos, had ever used a dry suit before, and that first dive we spent the entire time trying to get our buoyancy right. I alternated between

dropping to the bottom (only about 30' on that dive) and bobbing to the surface. By the end of dive one I kinda had the hang of it, and could pretty much keep myself where I wanted to be in the water column. But I'd been so preoccupied with the equipment, I'd barely even noticed where we were. On dive two, the trepidation and clumsiness were gone, my inner James Bond made a comeback, and I could really experience this amazing world into which I'd plunged.

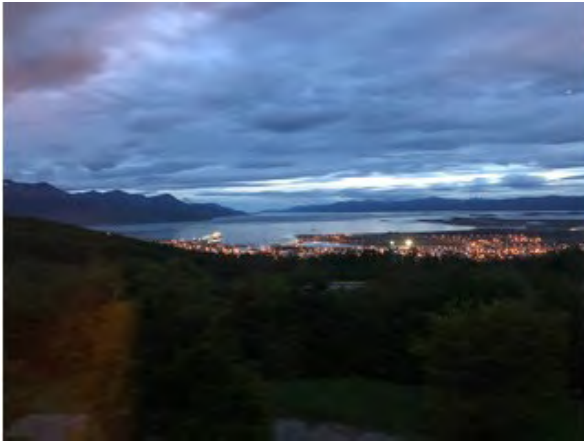
The most obvious thing about the kelp forest is, of course, the kelp, *Macrocystis pyrifera*. The kelp functions much like the corals on a tropical reef or the trees in a terrestrial forest. It provides the overall structure for the biotope, the physical and ecological framework within which all the other members of the community find their place. The stalks of these monumental brown algae reach from the rocky bottom all the way to and along the surface. The stems (or "stipes") are wrist-thick but flexible, the leaves (or "blades") rubbery and translucent, with an inflated bladder at the base of each blade that keeps the whole thing afloat. But unlike coral, the kelp itself is perpetually in motion, reflecting the wind-driven chop of the waves just below the surface and the flow of the tides and currents as you descend below the wave base. The water is icy clear, and the network of blades fractures the high-latitude, low-angled sunlight into facets and beams, giving the swaying olive and brown groves a luminous, unearthly beauty.



Uhuaiia is a funky frontier town with a hippie vibe.



With the short growing season, everything is in bloom at once, like this gorgeous patch of giant lupines. (They're almost as tall as I am!) Lupines like this are everywhere, both in cultivated areas and in meadows and roadsides.



Ushuaia harbor in the long, deep-latitude dusk. The camera clocked this photo at 10:31 pm. That's the Beagle Channel beyond the harbor and the southernmost Chilean Andes beyond that. Turn right at the Beagle Channel for the Pacific, turn left for the Atlantic.

Not a whole lot of other life is immediately evident. But in every leaf axil, wonders await. A light touch on the edge of any blade reveals a whole community sheltered where it meets the thick stipe. Little mollusks and crustaceans the size of your pinky nail in fluorescent magenta and orange busy themselves there, another little universe in each translucent leaf. Moving down the wall of kelp, the creatures in the blade axils are bigger, maybe a silver-dollar-sized crab speckled red and brown with long spiny legs or a glowing white nudibranch sporting a crop of lemon yellow cerata. At the bottom, where each stalk has its knobby anchorage, the denizens are larger still. Urchins are abundant, red with white spines, as are starfish in implausible shades of lavender and peach. There are only a few fish, occasional schools of little silver torpedoes, maybe 8" long, with big silver-black eyes. They fearlessly approach to investigate us, then vanish around a bend in the living wall. They were so plain and generic that it was hard to positively identify them afterwards, but the best fit was *Sprattus fuegensis*, the Patagonian sprat. Sardines, basically.

The open spaces between the stands of kelp feel almost geological, like cliff-flanked channels or canyons, sometimes broadening into craters or calderas. There, the sunlight streams right down to the



The Ushuaia Divers dive shop, on the harborfront adjacent to the airport.

bottom, illuminating meadows of seaweeds, a spectacular psychedelic quilt of purple and pink and lime green, punctuated by the pastel yellow mounds of sponge colonies and jagged chunks of black basalt. The biggest surprise of the entire dive: the seaweed carpet is more colorful by far than even the most vivid tropical reef. But with most of the animal life hidden within the vegetation, there's also a contemplative calm, accentuated by subtle and hypnotic pulse of the perpetual current.

The whole assemblage is so alien and weird that it seems like something dreamed up by CGI or AI, rather than a real, living Earthly biome. And yet there it was, and I in it. Again, picking up the edge of any leaf reveals the animals living in its shelter. Under one leaf I might find spindly young king crabs or fat little black lobsters that back away into the canopy of the seaweed when discovered. Under another I found a football-sized snail carrying its spiraling pearlescent white shell on its glowing pink foot. Under another, a colony of more rounded snails with golden yellow shells. Under another, a pair of orange, many-armed sea stars. Oh, the wonders of this world! And way too soon, with a glance at my air gauge, it's time to head to the surface.

Back at Carlos' dive shop, we compared our life histories and dive histories over coffee and donuts. Five people from the four corners of the globe—five people who'd said Yes—chatting and laughing like old friends,

bonded by the amazing aquatic experience we'd just shared. I also called Mom to let her know how everything had gone. She seemed very relieved to hear from me. *Very.*

A couple of days later, having enjoyed the sights and tastes (by the way, the Argentine food and the local seafood in particular were fantastic!) and laid back charms of Ushuaia, we boarded our ship, Quark Expeditions' *Ocean Diamond*, for points south. We spent our first two days at sea crossing the notoriously rough Drake's Passage, where the Atlantic, Pacific, and Southern Oceans meet. Then the waters calmed and we first laid eyes on Antarctica, the Seventh Continent.

At first it was just a foggy streak on the horizon in the perpetual yellow-gray dawn of the austral summer. But as we steamed

closer, we could make out the glinting blue and white of glaciers and black crags of rock. All 189 passengers were on deck, staggered by the immensity and majesty of what lay before us. All were in a stunned hush, some moved to tears. Mom and I were standing next to one another in silence. I felt her take my hand and give it a squeeze. There was so much in that little squeeze. There was relief and excitement and anticipation. There was wonder and joy and appreciation. There was understanding and connection, and there was love. Sixty years of love. This was gonna be way more than just great. The two of us were about to share the crowning adventure of our sixty years as mother and son. We'd crossed two continents and an ocean to come here, and it all began with a Yes!



My diving companions, two Israelis on a year-long round-the-world backpacking tour and a Frenchman living in New Caledonia on his way to Antarctica for a month as a crewman on a private sailboat.



All the passengers crowded to the prow of the ship as we made our first approach to Antarctica. Again, the scale is hard to convey. The calving glacier face near the little Antarctica banner dwarfed our entire ship as we made our way through this narrow passage.



As we leave the harbor and enter the Beagle Channel, the sky is full of wheeling migratory birds, feeding on the rich summer blooms of insects, fish, and krill.



Approaching Antarctica. What the photos cannot capture is the vastness, the scale of it all! There are no trees or houses or animals to measure against, just water, rock, ice, and clouds.



A group of humpback whales. We saw groups of humpbacks like this every day.



Penguins are stiff and clumsy on land, crazy acrobats in the water!



In Ushuaia we saw sea lions, in Antarctica we saw seals—Crabeaters, Weddells, and Leopards. Unlike the penguins, the seals always checked us out, and at times even approached our Zodiacs!



A colony of Gentoo penguins with their fuzzy gray chicks on the Antarctic Peninsula. The adults stand about 3' tall. In all we saw five species of penguins: P. Gentoo, Megellanic, Chinstrap, Adelie, and Macaroni. All penguins acted completely oblivious to our presence. Even at close range, they didn't look at us, approach us, or run from us. In a way, that only added to their inherent charm.



A pod of Orcas, another frequently seen marine mammal.



The abandoned whaling station at Deception Island in the South Shetland Islands just north of the Antarctic peninsula. The harbor is actually the caldera of an active volcano that last erupted in 1970. The black beach is mostly volcanic ash, and when you walk on the sand, steam rises from your footprints. Lots of seals here, basking in the warm sand.





BOWL SHOW RULES

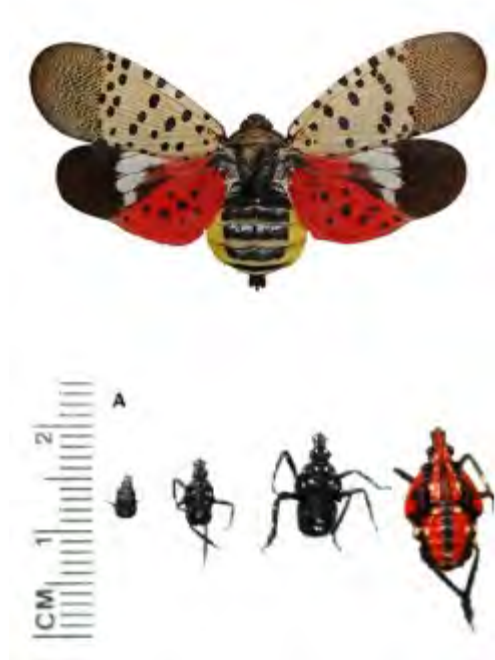
There is a Bowl Show at every GCAS meeting, except our Night at the Auction/ fleamarket meeting and our Holiday Party and Awards Banquet meeting. Bowl shows are open to all members of GCAS. Rules are as follows:

- Only current GCAS members may enter fish in the Bowl Show.
- There is a limit of 2 entries per member per meeting.
- Unlike some other clubs, every month is an “open” Bowl Show at the GCAS (i.e., there is no “theme,” such as that one month cichlids are judged, the next livebearers, the next anabantoids, etc.).
- Any fish that wins any prize (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) may not be entered again in the same meeting year.
- B.Y.O.B. (Bring Your Own Bowl!) Entrants are responsible for providing suitable containers and suitable water for their fish. These containers must be clear on at least three sides.
- Only one fish per container (i.e., no “pairs”).
- No plants, ornaments, or equipment (filters, airstones, etc.) are allowed in the judging tank (an external mirror, or opaque cards between containers is acceptable, as is a cover that does not obstruct side viewing).
- Points are awarded: 5 points for 1st Place, 3 for 2nd Place, and 1 for 3rd Place.
- Ribbons are awarded: blue for 1st Place, red for 2nd Place, and green for 3rd Place.
- The person with the most points at the end of the meeting season receives the Walter Hubel Bowl Show Champion trophy at the Awards Banquet.
- The decision of the judge(s) is final.
- A running UNOFFICIAL total of the points awarded is printed in **Modern Aquarium**. Only the tally of points maintained by the Bowl Show Coordinator is official.
- **In case of ties:**
 - 1st Tiebreaker – most 1st Places
 - 2nd Tiebreaker – most 2nd Places
 - 3rd Tiebreaker – most entries

The Spotted Lanternfly

by Dan Radebaugh

A few days ago Marsha and I went to an outdoor concert a few blocks from where we live in Jackson Heights, featuring the Jackson Heights Orchestra. As we settled into our seats waiting for the program to commence, we both became unwilling hosts to some very colorful bugs called lantern flies. I was a bit taken aback by this sighting, as we live only a few blocks from the park where the concert was being held, and while I had never actually seen one of these bugs before, there certainly were lots of them there in the park! I have of course heard of them, but these were the first ones that I recall actually seeing, so I thought that I should find out a bit more about them.



The spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*—SLF) is a planthopper, arriving here from China, Taiwan, Japan, and Vietnam. They were first discovered in New York City in 2019. Since Spotted Lanternflies are newcomers to North America, we're still learning about them and how they interact with our ecosystems, including city parks and farms. While they can infest trees, SLF are not considered a widespread threat to our city's forests.

However, because SLF feeds on a wide range of agricultural crops, including walnut, grapes, hops, apples, blueberries, and stone fruits, the insect is considered a significant threat to agriculture. The Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) is its preferred host tree.

SLF feeds on over 70 species of trees. To feed, they pierce through the bark and suck on the sap. They prefer Tree of Heaven saplings, and will also feed on black walnut, American beech, red maple, porcelain berry, and staghorn sumac. Their feeding alone does not usually kill trees, but it can, over time, weaken plants. Their feeding leaves behind a sticky residue called "honeydew" that can attract other insects and promote the growth of sooty mold. This fungus doesn't seem to be an issue for the long-term health of the plants.

So what is being done about these insects? NYC Parks is taking the following steps:

- Caring for infested trees will follow Parks' Tree Risk Management program — pruning and removing trees as they pose a risk to the public.
- Parks is participating in an interagency working group with federal, state, and local agencies to coordinate surveying and treatment approaches.
- Parks is not currently considering widespread treatment due to uncertainty of the success of chemical treatments and the prohibitive cost; however they may treat limited high-value trees if deemed necessary.
- NYC Parks does not endorse or permit the use of traps to reduce SLF numbers, as they can trap and harm other insects, birds, or mammals. Traps can be forgotten, which can kill or girdle a tree if left on for too long.



What can we civilians do to help? In the past, NYC Parks instructed New Yorkers to squish the insect. However, we now know that SLF has become established in North America and is here to stay. We can still help slow their movement, giving park managers and farmers more time to prepare for this new insect and its impact on trees, crops, vehicles, and buildings.

- Learn about SLF. There are several stages to the SLF life cycle; nymphs look different from adults and often behave differently. Knowing when in the year SLF lays eggs helps know when to look for them. While SLF are influencing our ecosystems and changing our landscapes, they are interesting insects in their own right, too!

- Sightings outside of NYC SLF is established in NYC, so there's no need to document sightings. Researchers still need help tracking their movements across NY State. If you find SLF in a place where they haven't been seen before, take a picture of the insect or egg masses and send it's location to NY State by emailing spottedlanternfly@agriculture.ny.gov or filling out the online form.

Hmmm! I wonder if these critters would make good snacks for some of my larger fish?



The Fish With Two Names

by Susan Priest

This is the story of a fish that started out with no name at all. Later on, as it neared the end of its earthly life, it found itself with TWO! I guess I had better take you back a couple of years to the beginning of this fish tale.

One day my neighbor Marie was helping out at a kids' birthday party. As fate would have it, there was one small and lonely goldfish left after all of the kids had gone home. Marie, who had never kept a fish before, adopted it. Not long after that my phone started to ring. "Susan, can you help me with something?"

She had the fish in one of those VERY small bowls which someone, somehow, deemed suitable for a betta. This was clearly a "feeder goldfish," and was just as clearly on the "short list."

I gave her a half-gallon capacity flat-sided bowl, with a lid made from plastic needlepoint mesh, a small Java fern, and some flake food. I taught her how to dechlorinate the water, and never to clean the inside of the bowl with soap or detergent. I also gave her a plastic cup to hold the fish in when she was changing the water. Now she was on her own.

Two days later she called with the "bad news." She felt responsible. I tried my best to assure her that it was not her fault. Anyway, she found that she had enjoyed the company of the little fish, and thought that she would like another one. Hmmm!

Her inexperience had me ruling out one choice after another. What fish would be suitable in a small bowl with no filtration? Maybe a paradise fish? No, that would get too big. A cory would be fun for her to watch, but they need friends and family. Gouramis come in many different sizes and colors; that is a possibility worth investigating. Then, as I glanced around my kitchen, the obvious choice was right in front of me: a betta! *Betta splendens*, to be precise.

I had three or four to choose from. My eyes kept drifting to a frisky red Cambodian female. (The term Cambodian in this context refers to a two-tone fish with a pale colored body and darker colored fins.) Even though she was one of my favorites (aren't they all?), I decided that this was

the right fish for Marie. In addition to the flake food she already had, I gave her some small pelleted food for carnivores, and turned the red betta over to her care.

A couple of days later I went to visit them. "I changed the water yesterday, and again today. How often am I supposed to do it?" I told her that once or twice a week was good. She showed me how much food she was giving it once each day. It was a suitably small amount, and I complimented her on her restraint. I asked her "have you given the fish a name yet?" She said that she was still thinking about it.

One day Marie had a visitor who was 100% sure that the fish was a male. I assured her that it was not, and pointed out the tiny white "egg spot" in the area of the vent as proof. Marie still couldn't completely discount her friend's opinion on the subject, and this of course further complicated the process of choosing a name for the fish. Weeks and months went by.

At this point I would like you to imagine the care you would be giving your fish if you only had **one**. Would you be scrubbing out the bowl with a toothbrush? Would you be carrying it from room to room with you? Would you play

different types of music for it to find out if it preferred jazz or country/western? Would you be buying it toys? When you only have one fish to care for, anything goes!

Even though Marie had never kept a fish before, she took excellent care of this one for over two years. Ultimately, the call came with a request for advice. "Should I flush it, or put it out with my trash." I suggested to her that it would make excellent fertilizer at the base of her fig tree.

So, the question came up again one last time. "Marie, did you ever give that fish a name?" She replied that since she was never **really** sure if it was a male or a female, that she eventually gave it two names, one of each. Her fish was named Reuben as well as Lauren. Sometimes she would call it by one name, and sometimes the other. Don't you just love that!



The fish with two names.

Photo by Al Priest

This article originally appeared in the October, 2011 issue of *Modern Aquarium*.

Once again, life has come full circle. I bought a charming young black female betta at our September auction. I offered it to Marie, but she said no, that she would wait for something more colorful.

So, if you notice me bidding on a red, blue, or yellow betta at one of our auctions, you can be sure that it will be going to a good home, and might even get more than one name.



GCAS Happenings

August

A WARM WELCOME BACK TO RENEWING GCAS MEMBERS EVELYN EAGAN AND STEVE MILLER!

Last Month's Bowl Show Winners:

- 1 JOHN "Buzz" Buzzetti
- 2 STEPHEN SICA
- 3 RICHIE WAIZMAN

UNOFFICIAL 2024 BOWL SHOW TOTALS TO DATE:

RICHIE WAIZMAN	10	BILL AMELY	3	STEPHEN SICA	5	JOHN "Buzz" Buzzetti	3
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Here are some aquarium societies in the Metropolitan New York area:

GREATER CITY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Next Meeting: August 7, 2024

No Speaker: **A Night At The Auction**

GCAS Meets the first Wednesday of the month (except

January & February) at 7:30pm:

Queens Botanical Garden

43-50 Main Street - Flushing, NY

Contact: Joseph Ferdenzi (516) 484-0944

E-mail: GCAS@Earthlink.net

Website: <http://www.greatercity.net>

BROOKLYN AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Meets the 2nd Friday of the month (except July and August) at 7:30pm: New York Aquarium - Education Hall, Brooklyn, NY 11229

Call: BAS Events Hotline: (718) 837-4455

Website: <http://www.brooklynaquariumsociety.org>

LONG ISLAND AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Meets: 2nd Fridays (except July and August) 8:00pm.

Meetings are held at AMVETS Post 48, 660 Hawkins Avenue, Ronkoncoma, NY 11779

Website: <https://ncasweb.thechinesequest.com/>

NASSAU COUNTY AQUARIUM SOCIETY

Meets: 2nd Tuesday of the month (except July and August) at 7:30 PM. Meetings are held at:

Molloy University - 1000 Hempstead Ave, Rockville Center, NY, Barbara H. Hagan Center for Nursing, Room 239

Contact: Mike Foran (516) 798-6766

Website: <https://www.nassaucountyaquariumsociety.org/>



Tragic Update Regarding Charlotte the Stingray

A series by the Undergravel Reporter

In spite of popular demand to the contrary, this humor and information column continues. As usual, it does NOT necessarily represent the opinions of the Editor, or of the Greater City Aquarium Society.

The Undergravel Reporter has an unfortunate update to share from the March issue of this year's **Modern Aquarium**. Charlotte, the round stingray that got pregnant in a North Carolina aquarium despite not sharing a tank with a male inhabitant for over eight years, died in late June.

Charlotte made international headlines and was featured on Jimmy Kimmel Live and Saturday Night Live when the Aquarium and Shark Lab by Team Ecco in Hendersonville, North Carolina announced in February that Charlotte was pregnant despite being isolated from any male stingrays for years.

Prior to getting pregnant, Charlotte shared her tank with two male sharks, but scientists were quick to assure the public that the sharks were not the father. Instead, scientists believe that Charlotte became pregnant through a form of asexual reproduction known as parthenogenesis, in which a female develops an embryo directly from an unfertilized egg. Charlotte's pregnancy was believed to be the first known example of a stingray reproducing by parthenogenesis.

Charlotte's purported pregnancy generated significant tourism to the Aquarium and Shark Lab and to Hendersonville generally, but excitement turned to concern and then skepticism when Charlotte's

pregnancy stretched beyond the normal gestation period for a round stingray. In late May, the aquarium announced that Charlotte was not pregnant any longer but had instead developed a rare (but unspecified) reproductive disease.

The Team Ecco staff insist that outside experts confirmed the presence of embryonic rays via an ultrasound performed in February, but some have questioned whether Charlotte was really pregnant at all. Some have accused the aquarium's founder, Brenda Ramer, of fabricating Charlotte's pregnancy in order to attract business. Others believe the stingray was pregnant, but have questioned whether she received proper veterinary care, based in part on dubious comments made by Ms. Ramer regarding the pregnancy. In addition, the facility is not accredited by the

Association of Zoos and Aquariums, meaning that it does not receive annual examinations required to receive such accreditation.

The Aquarium and Shark Lab has released little information regarding Charlotte's passing other than that it was related to her "rare reproductive disease"

and has refused interview requests from NPR and other news outlets. That lack of information, including an inability to articulate Charlotte's "reproductive disease" has only fueled speculation that something was amiss in Hendersonville.

If there are any newsworthy updates to this story, the Undergravel Reporter will get the scoop.



Source:

<https://www.npr.org/2024/07/01/nx-s1-5025232/charlotte-the-stingray-pregnant-dies-north-carolina>



Pictures From Our Last Meeting

Photos by Marsha Radebaugh



Everyone is ready to begin!



Later in the meeting Joe Ferdenzi discusses aquatic plants.



The LoPinto family, Ray & Marie, with daughter Sophia and grandchildren Anthony and Eva.



Welcome to new member David (Dee) Manuel



Welcome to new member Jean Michel Doire.



Ron Webb and Artie Friedman chat with President Horst Gerber.



Ron Kasman accepting his Door Prize from Joe Ferdenzi.



Ed Vukich putting on his auctioneer cap, as President Horst inspects some items.



**Bill Amely presents Julyl Bowl Show Winners:
3rd Place: Richie Waizman
2nd Place: Steve Sica
1st Place: John "Buzz" Buzzeti**



GCAS Member Discounts at Local Fish Shops



10% Discount on everything.



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10% Discount on everything.



10% Discount on fish.



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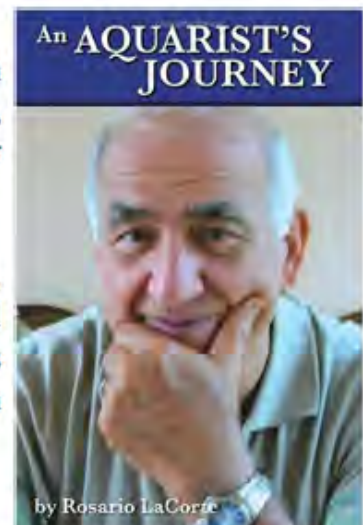


An Aquarist's Journey

Rosario La Corte is one of the world's leading authorities on breeding fish and he has written numerous articles and books, contributing greatly to our understanding of fish and their habits.

Now, for the first time, here is a compilation of his travels, adventures, successes (and, very occasional failures) all relating to collecting, keeping, and breeding fish, and in his own words (and edited by **Modern Aquarium's** Editor, Dan Radebaugh).

Available in softcover at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



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