



Ottawa Valley Aquarium Society Newsletter

ovas.ca

Upcoming Events

April 23, 2007

DIY lighting demo with Sean Kettle and mini auction.

May 28, 2007

Home show video, mini auction and OVAS Executive elections.

June 11, 2007

Tour of Marinescape – please register online or with Jody Willoughby (Babblefish1960)

June 25, 2007

Mini auction and social evening.

July 2007

OVAS BBQ

The club has had quite a flurry of activity since our last newsletter. February's meeting will definitely stand out as a club highlight for the year. With the assistance of the American Cichlid Association, OVAS was happy to have Spencer Jack come from Winnipeg, MB to deliver two of his presentations. Spencer's talk on collecting in Uruguay has many OVAS members seriously considering joining him on his next trip in November of this year. His second presentation was more light-hearted – a look at the life of a cichlid fanatic.

Additionally, unbeknownst to OVAS, Spencer brought 3 full boxes of fish from his stock to auction off and kindly donated 25% of the proceeds towards OVAS. Lastly, members and executives alike enjoyed being able to speak to hobbyists from another part of the country and discuss the similarities and differences each club offers. I'm sure we will invite Spencer back again for a future program. A big thanks to Chris Murray and Alain Decelles for getting all the details worked out, to our volunteers who helped in the special one day event and of course to Spencer, John and Adrian for coming!

Our Giant Auction was held on March 4. We had a great turnout and lots of items available. Door prizes and donations to OVAS this year were incredible and OVAS wants to once again thank everyone who supported the club with their kind gifts. Kudos go out to our Auction Chairman, Art Williamson, and our Corporate & Public Affairs Chairman, Jody Willoughby, for their work on the auction as well as to the countless volunteers that helped the Giant Auction run as smoothly as it did.

Our season is slowly winding down, but we look forward to presentations from a couple of in-house speakers over the next couple of months as well as an OVAS field trip in the month of June. May is the OVAS election and there is always an opportunity for volunteers to join the executive and help see what drives the club behind the scenes. Finally, our OVAS summer picnic will round out the events for the year before we take our summer break and resume in September.

Breeder's Awards and Aquatic Horticulturalist Awards submissions have been completed for this year. Because awards submissions are due in February, don't wait until the start of next season to get your BAP/AHAP points going!

I hope you enjoy what the club has to offer for the balance of the year. Next year's program and schedule are already in the works and the executive intend to work very hard at making next year even better than this year!

Sean Kettle
OVAS President

One of the most popular auction items the past couple of years has been the spawning mops full of rainbow eggs brought in by Chelsea Smith.

In this article Chelsea will divulge her secrets and explain how to make your own spawning mop.

How to Make a Spawning Mop by Chelsea Smith

A spawning mop serves as a place for plant-spawning fishes to lay their eggs. This benefits the breeder as the mops can be removed from the main aquarium and the fry hatched out into dedicated tanks where they will not be eaten by their parents or other aquarium inhabitants. Mops also provide protection for the eggs while in the spawning environment – it is more difficult for egg-eating fishes to remove the eggs!

Fish that will utilize a mop for breeding purposes include: rainbowfishes (Families Melanotaeniidae and Pseudomugilidae), White Cloud Mountain Minnows (*Tanichthys albonubes*), hundreds of varieties of killifishes and even some *Corydoras* catfishes!

These fishes typically lay their eggs amongst floating plants, Java moss and other fine-leaved plants. Spawning mops can also be used to provide cover for females and fry for livebearers.

Materials needed (Fig. 1):

Yarn – Purchase synthetic (acrylic) yarn only, as other materials will leach dye into your water. One skein of yarn makes about four mops with this method. The colour does not matter – supposedly it's easier to find eggs in dark yarn, but I do not find this to be true with rainbowfish eggs as they are transparent. I choose dark green yarn as it blends in best with a planted tank.

Styrofoam balls (2") or corks – Yarn attaches to Styrofoam balls quite well; they can be bought in bulk in nearly any size and amount. Other floating objects could be used in substitution.

Frame – You will need an object to wrap the yarn around to create your mop. Choose something that is approximately as long as you would like your mop to be. *Keep in mind that fish prefer to spawn at different heights in the tank! If you are attempting to collect eggs from a bottom-spawner, consider a long mop that reaches the bottom of your tank, or remove the floating device to create a non-floating mop.* Large books, cookie sheets and serving trays make excellent frames.

Scissors

Method:

Many breeders suggest that you soak your yarn or briefly boil it to sterilize it before use. This step is not necessary – in fact, boiling acrylic yarn, however briefly, will cause it to melt and disassociate (I learned this the hard way). It is *much* easier to put a mop together with dry yarn, fresh off the skein.

Cut two ~6" lengths of yarn and set aside.

Grab the loose end of the yarn and hold it with your thumb on the top edge of your frame. Wrap the yarn around the frame 50 to 100 times (thicker mops offer more protection to the eggs and more surfaces on which the eggs will collect) (Fig. 2). Cut the yarn from the skein. Tie one of the short pieces of yarn you cut earlier in a knot around the bundle of yarn on one side (near the center) of your frame (Fig. 3). Flip the frame over and cut through all of the yarn, directly opposite from where you tied your knot (Fig. 4).

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Take one Styrofoam ball and drape the yarn over it, with the knotted section at the top of the ball (Fig. 5). Wrap the strings of yarn around it so it is completely covered and use your hand to constrict the yarn around the bottom of the ball. Tie the other short piece of yarn around the bunch that you are holding and knot it (Fig. 6). Your mop is done!

Rinse the mop in tap water and then place it in your aquarium. Once the oxygen bubbles escape (shaking the mop a couple of times over the next hour will aid this process), the yarn will start to sink but the mop will remain afloat. There should be a short piece of yarn sticking up at the top of the mop – if you shut this in your glass top or hood, it will keep the mop from floating around the tank.

Rainbowfishes will begin loading the mop with eggs almost immediately – results may vary with other fishes. It is very difficult to see the eggs in the mop, especially if it is still in your aquarium! If you remove the mop from the water and carefully look inside it under artificial light, you will be able to see the eggs.

Your mop can be left in your aquarium indefinitely. If fry begin to hatch, it is likely that they will be eaten but your fishes will continue to supply the mop with new eggs. When you are ready for fry, remove the mop to a dedicated breeding tank, sit back and enjoy! Good luck!



Fig. 1 - Materials



Fig. 2 – Wrap the Yarn Around the Frame



Fig. 3 – Tie Off the Yarn on One Side



Fig. 4 – Flip the Frame and Cut



Fig. 5 – Add the Styrofoam Ball



Fig. 6 – Completed Spawning Mop

Breeding Clownfish - A short description

by William Berg

www.aquarticles.com

Want to see how easy it would be to be recognized by CAOAC as Aquatic Horticulturist?

Here are five easy species that are almost always available at the auctions or local stores that will earn you enough points for an award at the first level:

Bacopa (*B. carolina* and *B. monneri* [Giant Bacopa & Moneywort] are two easy choices)

Cabomba (*C. carolina*, *C. aquatica* & *C. furcata* are easy to find as Fanwort commonly)

Hydrocotyle (*H. leucocephala* is also known as Pennywort)

Hygrophilia (*H. polysperma* is Green Hygro, *H. polysperma* "Rosanervig" is Tropic Sunset, and you can occasionally find Giant Hygro and Wisteria as well [*H. corymbosa* 'Siamensis' and *H. difformis* respectively])

Ludwigia (*L. repens* a.k.a Primrose)

Thanks to Disney's Motion Picture 'Finding Nemo,' almost everybody is familiar with clownfish.

Clownfish, or Anemonefishes, from the family Pomacentridae, are one of the easiest tropical marine aquarium fish to breed. Clownfish regularly lay eggs in aquariums. They have quite large eggs and larvae, and since the larvae easily eat cultured live foods, raising them is somewhat simpler than it is with many other marine species.

You need to get a pair if you want to breed clownfish, and that's quite interesting - believe it or not, clownfish are all born as males! When they are adults, the largest and the most dominant fish of the group will undergo a sex change and become a female. The second largest usually becomes the breeding male, while all the other fish remain juveniles and gender-neutral. If the breeding female disappears, the breeding male will change to a female, and so on. Buying an established pair may be a reasonable way to go, but it is often better to have a group of juveniles growing up together. If you choose to buy a pair you should look for a pair that goes around together. Sometimes you can be lucky enough to get a pair already spawning. Anyhow, establishing an adult pair can be a little tricky; and you need to keep your eyes on them to make sure that the female doesn't kill the male.

The next thing is to set up the tank. The tank should be large enough, approximately 200 liters for the breeding pair. It is better to keep a pair alone in an aquarium when trying to spawn clownfish.

The aquarium should be furnished with a nice anemone, a few live rocks and other rocky substances with a vertical surface, a layer of coral sand on the bottom, bright lighting, good filtration, and a protein skimmer. Your clownfish should be stress free, which means no aggressive tank mates and good water quality. As for feeding, clownfish need a mixed diet of fresh raw seafood and vegetables. A good diet includes prawns, mussels, and squid. It is best to feed small bits at regular intervals.

Spawning can begin 1 to 12 months after the fish have settled into their new home. When the fish are ready to spawn, they become very aggressive. The male clownfish will dance up and down in front of the female (also known as "clownfish wobble"). They will also start to clean their selected rock by robustly biting it. The spawning itself usually occurs in the afternoon or early evening. Once the spawning is complete (within several hours) the male takes on responsibility for attending the eggs, whereas the female acts as protector of the eggs and supervisor of her male.

Spawning is likely to occur again at intervals of 12 to 18 days. The eggs should be left in the care of the parents and not removed, unless the parents are known to be egg eaters. At first the eggs are a bright orange colour, but after several days this diminishes and the eyes appear. Hatching usually takes from 6 to 15 days, depending on temperature.

The most critical stage of the fry is the first 10 days of their larvae span. If you can get your fry to survive this period the rest of their raising should be easier.