



The Raleigh Aquarium Society

P.O. Box 31564, Raleigh, North Carolina 27612-1564
<http://www.raleighaquariumsociety.org>
raleighaquariumsociety@yahoo.com

September 4th, 2008

Next Meeting: Thursday @7:30pm September 4th, 2008.

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at the [North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine](#) located at [4700 Hillsborough Street in Raleigh](#). Visitors are welcome! Snacks and light refreshments are provided. A raffle of fish and fish related items follow the meeting. Due to Security Issues, NCSU has required that the doors going into the downstairs lobby remain locked. Please be on time, as we will have a designated person standing by the door to let you in. If you are late, you may try knocking or call Linda Twaddle at 919-880-3782 or John Patterson at 919-264-4011.

Meeting Agenda

Freshwater Aquarium Shrimps

Red ones, green ones, black ones & white ones... You never saw such a mess! This month, Todd Wenzel will present his first-ever Powerpoint presentation about the variety of neat new freshwater shrimp, crayfish and lobsters in the hobby. If all goes well, we may also auction some of the new arrivals at Anubias (Mark Denaro) and add the new shrimp Aqualog to the club library. By the way, those of you who are presently raising these shrimp types can bring a few samples to either auction or for the raffle table.

Business Meeting

Business meetings are open to everyone who is interested in participating in Committees, general business of the club and the Workshop and Swap Meet planning. Business Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the NC State Vet School, upstairs in the lobby area as follows:

September - no meeting

October 16, 2008

November 20, 2008

December 18, 2008

January 15, 2009

February 19, 2009

March 19, 2009

April - no meeting

May - no meeting

June - no meeting

July

August - no meeting

ARTICLE INFORMATION:**Author:** William Berg**Title:** Clown Loaches**Summary:** *Botia macracanthus*. How to select healthy specimens, and how to keep and feed them. Speculations on how they might be bred.**Contact for editing purposes:****email:** robert@williambergs.com**Date first published:** 2004**Publication:** William's website:www.aquaticcommunity.com**Reprinted from Aquarticles:**February 2005: Posted on *Fishlore.com*May 2005: *Fins & Friends*, Regina Aquarium SocietyMay/June 2005: *The Wet Thumb*, Cleveland Aquarium Society**ARTICLE USE:****Internet publication (club or non-profit web site):**

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Clown Loaches

By William Berg

of Sweden, for his website: www.aquaticcommunity.com

Aquarticles

Scientific Name: *Botia macracanthus***Other Scientific Name(s):** *Cobitis macracanthus*, *Botia macrocanthus***Common Name:** Clown Loach

Clown loaches are very popular aquarium fish; however they are not always easy to keep successfully since they easily succumb to ick and are sensitive to poor water conditions. This article is intended to help new clown loach owners provide a good home for their loaches. Clown loaches are found in Indonesia (Sumatra and Borneo), and almost all clown loaches in aquariums are wild caught and distributed around the world before being sold. This can put considerable stress on the fish, and a vital step in getting a healthy clown loach school in your aquarium is choosing healthy fish. But how to make sure that you get healthy fish?

- Check the general conditions in the fish store. Are there dead fish in the aquariums? Is the water clean? If some tanks are mistreated there is a good chance that there might be unfavourable conditions in others too. Only buy fish from stores that take good care of their aquariums.
- How do the clown loaches look? Clown loaches can give you an indication of their condition based on their coloration. A healthy clown loach shows clear distinct colours, while a stressed one loses its colours and becomes whiter. Only buy loaches that show their correct colours.
- Are the clown loaches well fed? Those that haven't been fed correctly are hard to nurse back to health, and it is more than likely you will end up with a dead fish if you buy one. Look at their

bodies and see if they look well fed, and ask the shopkeepers how often and what the loaches are fed.

- Are the clown loaches active? Healthy clown loaches are very active and full of energy. A healthy clown loach should be hard to catch.
- Do the clown loaches have hiding places? Hiding places are very important to relieve stress in clown loaches, and you are likely to get higher quality fish from aquariums with hiding places.
- Don't buy clown loaches smaller than 2 inches/5 cm if you haven't kept clown loaches before, since they are much more sensitive when they are younger.

So ideally you should look for the most coloured, most active clown loaches you can find, and buy these to have the best starting point possible. You should also consider the water conditions in the store and try to find one that keeps their clown loaches in water condition similar to the water conditions in your aquarium, to reduce stress on the clown loaches. It should also be stated that clown loaches like resting on their sides, looking almost as if they were dead. However this is completely normal and should not be seen as a sign of poor quality in the fish but rather the opposite. When you have decided where to buy your clown loaches you should buy at least 3 (preferable 8-10). Clown loaches are schooling fish that should never be kept alone!!!

Once you get home with your new clown loaches you should let the bag float on the water surface for 10-15 minutes, and then slowly every 10 minutes add a little water from the aquarium (a coffee cup). Repeat this 4-5 times before you release the fish into their new home.

Tank setup

Clown loaches can be kept in aquariums of 100 L / 20 G or more. Keep in mind that even though clown loaches grow very slowly they will get big eventually and need an aquarium of at least 540 L/ 125 G, and that should be considered a minimum.

Decorate your aquarium using a bottom substrate of sand or fine gravel that allows the clown loaches to dig . I recommend keeping your clown loaches in a planted aquarium, however the choice of plants differs greatly depending on whether you keep juvenile or adult clown loaches. Juvenile clown loaches can be kept with most plant species, while adults can be kept only with hardy plants such as Java fern and Anubias. All other plants will be destroyed and/or eaten by the adult clown loaches. I also recommend using floating plants to dim the lighting, which makes the loaches more active during the day.

Clown loaches want a setup with a lot of caves and other hiding places, preferably so narrow that they can just barely squeeze themselves into them. Don't be concerned if your clown loaches have squeezed themselves into caves they dug under rocks or aquarium equipment. Odds are they are not stuck - they just like it that way.

Hiding places can be created with rocks, roots, PVC pipes, flower pots, coconuts and different kinds of aquarium decorations. Sharp objects should not be used to decorate aquariums for clown loaches. You can not create too many hiding places and you should create several for each loach.

Clown loaches are sensitive to poor water quality, and they require good filtration. Higher water circulation is also appreciated since clown loaches live in currents in the wild.

Clown loaches are excellent jumpers, and you should make sure that your tank is properly sealed.

Health

As I said earlier, clown loaches are very sensitive towards poor water quality and are usually the first fish that get ill or die if the water quality drops. Water changes of at least 25% a week are recommended. Because of their low tolerance to poor water qualities they are sometimes called indicator fish, since their health indicates the status of the aquarium. Clown loaches are very sensitive to chlorine, and even small amounts can cause a mass death of loaches.

This species are very prone towards getting ick if the water quality isn't good enough, and are sensitive to most ick medicines and salts. So keep an eye on your clown loaches and only use half the recommended doses of medicine, otherwise you risk the medicine killing the loaches.

Food

Clown loaches are carnivores and only eat vegetables to complement their diet. It is therefore recommended that they are given food that reflects this. To get your clown loaches to grow, optimal feeding 3-5 times a day is recommended. (They still grow slowly). Their diet should contain a variety of foods, and can include almost any carnivorous food. A good base may be shrimps, different sinking wafers, different frozen foods, and as they grow older, fish slices. Clown loaches can make a clicking sound, and they will do this when they are content. Therefore you will soon find out what is your loaches' favourite food by them clicking when they receive it. Like most other fish, clown loaches might need some time to accept new foods, however once they do it might become a favourite. Clown loaches are one of the few fishes that eat and like snails, and can therefore be of good use in snail control.

Breeding

Clown loaches have been bred in aquariums, however it is very rare. Sexing clown loaches externally is hard, but possible by looking at the tail fin. The tail fin tips on the male are slightly bent inwards, making the fin look a little bit like a claw. The tail fin tips on the females aren't shaped like this.

Clown loaches have to be quite old and at least 7 inches / 17 cm before they are sexually mature. In the one good account of clown loaches spawning they spawned under the following conditions:

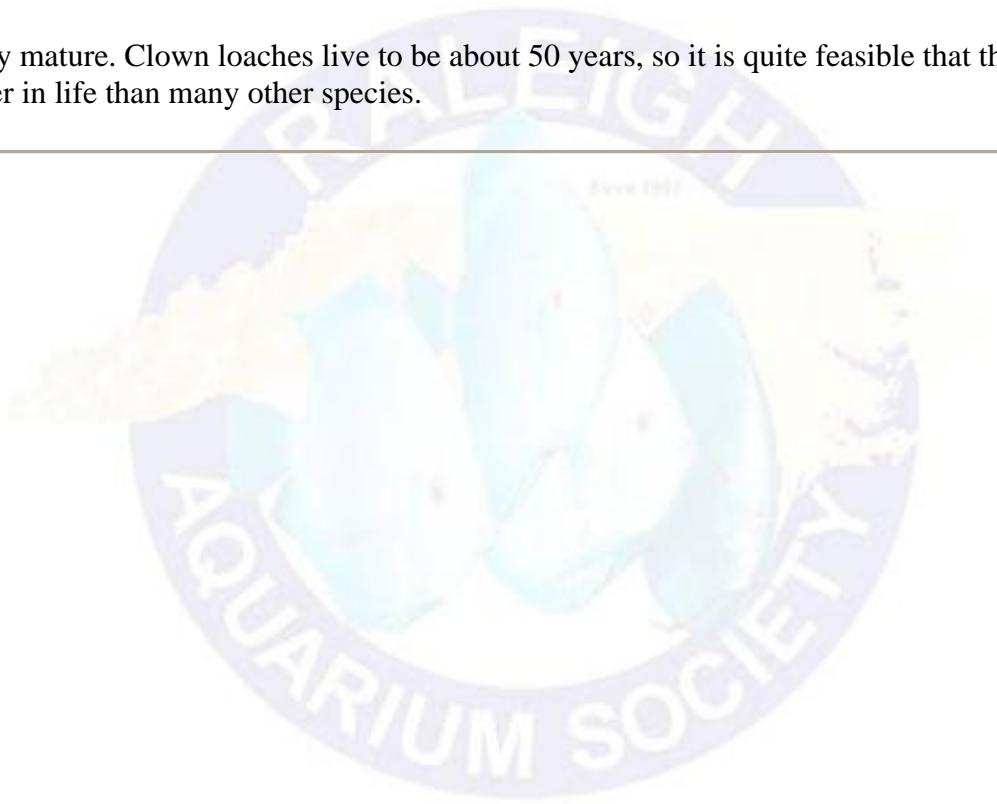
- Temp: 84F
- pH: 6.5
- Ammonia & Nitrite: 0
- Nitrate: < 25

Four large clown loaches (over 25 cm /10 inches) were kept together in a planted aquarium, and a few weeks before spawning they changed their behaviour and started eating live fish as their only accepted food. The females in the group grew very fast on this diet, and had doubled in girth by the time of spawning. The night during which the spawning took place, two clowns were swimming close beneath the surface entwined in each other and "clicking." The next morning, 450 eggs were found spread about the aquarium. Clown loaches eat their own eggs, so it is recommended moving the parents if you wish to succeed in spawning them.

The fry were fed liquid fry food for the first two weeks, after which they accepted crushed flakes. They grew relatively fast, to 2.5 cm/ 1 inch in 6 weeks. After that the growth rate slowed down.

It's suggested that older fish are essential for breeding since this fish might have to be quite old to

be sexually mature. Clown loaches live to be about 50 years, so it is quite feasible that they may spawn later in life than many other species.



Trading Post



Monthly Web Links

Raleigh Aquarium Society Forum on Yahoo Groups
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/raleighaquariumsociety/>

Potomac Valley Aquarium Society in the Washington D.C. area <http://www.pvas.com/>

Atlanta Area Aquarium Association in Atlanta, Georgia <http://www.atlantaaquarium.com/>

Carolina Fish Talk <http://www.carolinafishtalk.com/>

Charlotte Area Aquarists Society www.aquacharlotte.net

Marine Aquarium Society of the Carolinas <http://masotc.net/>

North Carolina Koi & Watergarden Society <http://www.nckws.com/>

Carolina Aquatic Plant Enthusiasts <http://www.ncaquaticplants.org/>

Aquatic Gardeners Association <http://www.aquatic-gardeners.org/>

KingFish Services <http://www.kingfishservices.net/>



Club Sponsors

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You may be asked to show your RAS membership card*

[Aquatica](#) 5533 NC Hwy 42-West, A-16, Garner (10%) **919.661.7790**

[Critter Country Inc](#) 14 Technology Drive, Garner (10%) **919.772.3761**

[Down Under, Salt Water Fish & Corals](#) 1543 US Hwy 70 West Garner, NC 27529 (in the Gateway Plaza). (10%) **919.662.8820**

[Fins, Furs & Feathers Pet Center](#) 303 S. Horner Boulevard, Sanford, NC 27330 (10% on everything except tanks) **919.718.0850**

[Fish Pros](#) 5655 Western Boulevard, Suite A, Raleigh 27606 (10%) **919.233.1122**

[Pet Mania](#) 7901 Falls of Neuse Rd #125, Raleigh (10%) **919.676.3225**

[Pet Paradise](#) 9101-141 Leesville Road, Raleigh (10%) **919.848.8881**

[The Pet Pad](#) 1347 Kildaire Farm Road, Cary, (10%) **919.481.6614**

[Triangle Tropical Fish](#) 3600 N. Duke St. Suite #36 Durham (10% excluding aquariums and stands) **919.479.0088**

Please contact John Jankowski at raleighaquariumsociety@yahoo.com if you are an active member of the Raleigh Aquarium Society and do not have an up to date membership card. Membership cards can be picked up at any meeting.

Raleigh Aquarium Society

Application for Membership

Membership privileges include:

- Ability to post items in trading post section of monthly newsletter
- A discount card good at participating local pet stores
- All club discounts on club functions
- Education from the most knowledgeable aquarium experts in NC
- Yearly Membership - \$15.00 (includes spouse and children)

(Membership dues run from March 1st each year. New members joining any other time will be pro-rated at \$3 + \$1 for each month remaining in the year.)

Name(s): _____

Date to begin membership: ____/____/____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ (2) (____) _____

Email Address: _____

New Membership

Renewal Membership

Mail to:

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PO Box 31564
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