

# Raleigh Aquarium Society News

## December 2004

*Next Meeting: Thursday,  
December 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 7:30pm  
Cover Dish Christmas  
Party*



Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at the N.C. State Veterinary Medical College 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 Brandon Berry's cell phone at 252-266-3559, Jeff Jenkins at 919-612-0229, or John Patterson at 919-264-4011.

## Meeting Agenda

### Holiday Potluck (cover-dish) Dinner Party

The club will provide ham, turkey, and drinks. Please bring a side dish, salad, or dessert.

**Mark you Calendars:** The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Carolina Aquarium Workshop and Auction will be held on February 25<sup>th</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup> at the Wake County Commons Building.

**Future Speakers for our Meetings:** If you know of anyone who would be willing to give a talk at one of our meetings, please contact Gerald Pottern at [gpottern@rjgaCarolina.com](mailto:gpottern@rjgaCarolina.com) or Brandon Berry at [brandonberry@cox.net](mailto:brandonberry@cox.net)

# *Monthly Feature:*

## Neochromis rufocaudalis

*by Greg Steeves*

The lakes of the African rift contain many varied species of aquatic life. Each of these large bodies of water contains its own unique varieties of fish that have come to take advantage of particular feeding niches. Food supply is generally the key factor in determining diversity. Algae supply is abundant in these lakes and many different species of fish have evolved to exploit this food source. Not surprisingly, the true algal grazers of the rift valley region have similar characteristics. *Labeotropheus* species of Lake Malawi, the *Tropheus* of Lake Tanganyika, and the *Neochromis* of Lake Victoria are three such species that although they have evolved separately from one another, share common traits. Specialized tooth structure, elongated intestinal tracts, and a robust torpedo shaped body structure all aid these fish in processing the food on which they feed.



The fish I want to deal with here is endemic to Lake Victoria. *Neochromis*

rufocaudalis, formerly known as Neochromis nigricans is not one of the more threatened species of Lake Victoria. I am not certain as to how geographical variants of this species may differ, but the variety of rufocaudalis that we keep was exported from the Saa Nane Island region of Lake Victoria.

This is not a large fish, growing only to about five inches maximum. Females and sub dominant males are similarly patterned. A broken series of blotches along the lateral line is backgrounded by an earth brown coloration. Dominant male coloration is strikingly beautiful. Males will sport a dark blue to almost black body coloration with bright red tail and anal fins. Several jet-black vertical bars are evenly spaced along the body. The dorsal fin is a vibrant metallic blue outlined with a bright red stripe. The horizontal barring between the eyes of this beauty, commonly seen in Lake Malawi species, really sets this fish off nicely.



Dominant males will stake out a territory, usually in a rock cave or crevice. When not chasing other fish, male Neochromis rufocaudalis spend their time showing off with a series of "shimmy's" to prospective females. It is a beautiful sight to see a large group of these fish grazing an algae covered rock. Reflections cast on their body glitter and gleam in the light. To keep these undemanding fish in top condition, it is helpful to feed a spirulina base flake in small amounts frequently. This would be a great fish for those hobbyists who feel their animals are always hungry and have the need to sprinkle food to them every time they walk by the tank. Rufocaudalis are not shy fish and will learn to recognize their feeder on sight. They will remain mostly in the open under captive settings, but caves and secluded places throughout the tank will aid in overcoming any timidity they may possess. Although these fish have spawned for me, I have as yet to observe the act. I presume that breeding is in the typical great lakes mouthbrooder manner. When keeping a group of any type of Victorian cichlid, the bigger the tank, the better. I would suggest an aquarium of no less than 55

gallons for a group of twelve *Neochromis rufocaudalis*. It is not advisable to mix any Lake Victoria rock cichlid species together in a tank due to the possibility of interbreeding; however, one may find it necessary from time to time. The *rufocaudalis* might be an exception to this rule. The very rounded, tropheus-like head structure of this species makes it easily identifiable from most other cichlids from this region. I have previously grouped a *rufocaudalis* colony with an equal number of *Haplochromis* sp. "purple yellow" and there were no damaging inter-species conflicts. Males and females of each species are readily able to identify their own and any prelude to breeding activity is kept between same species fish. If you must mix species of Victorian cichlids, try to use fish as different as possible. This includes differing body shape and especially coloration. We as hobbyists must endeavor to keep our fish races as pure as possible because, as Brad Harrison in his introduction to Lake Victoria stated, "there is no going back to the well"

*Neochromis rufocaudalis* are a peaceful fish and mix well with malawian mbuna. Like most Victorian rock cichlids, they are not a common fish in the hobby and are an undemanding jewel for our tanks. Under a grolux lighting scheme, dominate males sparkle and stand out very nicely. Shale rock work and artificial plants will aid in making this fish feel comfortable. Enjoy!

# Trading Post

To advertise please send the information to [raleighaquariumsociety@yahoo.com](mailto:raleighaquariumsociety@yahoo.com). Please send all trading post items by noon on the Wednesday before the first Thursday of the month in order to get them in that month's newsletter.

Neal Isaacs, Aquatica, LLC - just put a new reef system on line and we have a great selection of new corals including some beautiful red and green Ricordea. 5533 NC Highway 42-W, Unit A16, Garner, NC 27529 - [chuckawobly@earthlink.net](mailto:chuckawobly@earthlink.net)

Sal Notarmaso - Yellow Lab, Kenyi, Yellow Regal Peacock, Red Peacock, fry-obideans-Lake Victoria, Assorted large African Cichlid - Some mated Pairs, Mated pair gold Marbled Angel, assorted tanks and stands (2 / 45 2 /30 2/29 2/20 2 /10), make a offer - 919-383-3131

John Patterson - frozen brine shrimp, mysis shrimp, bloodworms, and krill for \$9 a lb. Blackworms (excellent) – contact for price [jrpatter@hotmail.com](mailto:jrpatter@hotmail.com) 919-264-4011

Gerald Pottern – Betta smaragdina -- male & 3 females for 15.00, Rainbow shiners Notropis chrosomus-- 4 for 10.00, Red Bee Shrimp (freshwater) -- 4 adults or 8 babies for 15.00, Aequidens dorsiger -- 3 adults for 15.00, Corydoras aeneus "gold stripe" 4 adults for 15.00

Liston Cyrus " Frontosa Fry (Mpimbwe Blue) \$7 each  
(919) 751-3626 or 919 270-9379, email: [liston.a.cyrus@gsk.com](mailto:liston.a.cyrus@gsk.com)

Frank Montillo has for sale:

African cichlids: Daffodils, Lelupei, Blotched Zebras, Red Zebras, Electric blue ahli, 1/2 blue red tail guppies, Brand new Penn plax heater 100 watt  
919-556-9004

**Check out our yahoo group  
"raleighaquariumsociety". Feel free to post items for  
sale or trade as well as any other aquarium related  
discussion.**

# A q u a t i p s

(new section: please send your tips to [brandonberry@cox.net](mailto:brandonberry@cox.net))

Keeping Blackworms: I've found that I can keep about a pound of blackworms in a fish net breeder, in my outdoor pond filter during the winter. I had some blackworms that were not doing well in the frig, so I figured I try something new. I put them in a net breeder a hung them over the side of my 55 gallon drum pond filter. The next day, they were the healthiest looking blackworms I had ever seen. I then bought about two more pounds and divided them between that net breeder and another one. I was amazed that despite the fact that they were piled over 2 inches thick, the were thriving. I've even begun to feed them some old fish food in hopes that they will multiply, or at least have a higher nutrient content. If you don't have an outdoor pond, I'd suggest just getting a 55 gallon drum, filling it to the top with water and putting some kind of bio-media in it such as lava rocks. Add a strong powerhead or large airstone and your set. Just hang the net around the side of the barrel. It will be interesting to see how warm the water can get in the spring and still have them doing well. I've had them breed in fish tanks with warm water, so I imagine that as long as they don't get too crowded and the oxygen content is sufficient in the water, they will do OK. I'll keep everyone posted. - Brandon

# Club Sponsors

(The following businesses give *RAS members* a discount on purchases)

Aquatica	5533 NC Hwy 42-W, A-16, Garner	(10%)
Carolina Pet Supply	322 McCormick Street, Garner	(10%)
Creative Pet	1350 E Broad St, Fuquay Varina	(10%)
Critter Country, Inc.	14 Technology Drive, Garner	(10%)
Fish Pros	5221 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh	(10%)
Pet Mania	All Area Locations	(10%)
Pet Paradise	9101-141 Leesville Road, Raleigh	(10%)
Triangle Tropical Fish	3600 N. Duke St., Suite 36, Durham	(10%)

(Excludes Aquariums and hoods)

You may be asked to show your RAS membership card.

*Please contact Brandon Berry at [brandonberry@cox.net](mailto:brandonberry@cox.net) 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:

12 monthly newsletters

A discount card good at participating local pet stores

All club discounts on club functions

**Individual Full Year \$15.00**

**Family Full Year \$17.00**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

New Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal Membership \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:**

*Raleigh Aquarium Society*

*PO Box 31564*

*Raleigh, NC 27612-1564*