



The Raleigh Aquarium Society

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March 2nd 2006

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 2nd @7:30pm

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 Brandon Berry s cell phone at 252-266-3559, Jeff Jenkins at 919-612-0229, or John Patterson at 919-264-4011.

Meeting Agenda

"Ratfish Romance at the Monterey Bay Aquarium"
By Gil Van Dykhuizen

Formerly at Monterey Bay Aquarium, Gil was on the forefront in collecting animals never before kept in captivity, and developing methods to keep and propagate them in captivity. He now runs a business called Aquatic Creations Group.

Monthly Feature

Curing ugly tank syndrome
By Schuyler D. Sloane
Pres. & Co-founder Of
The Northeast Philadelphia Aquarium Society

We have all been there, your once beautiful filled with colorful fish and lush plants now looks more like a swamp than a river. What is a hobbyist to do? Usually by the time most hobbyist get to this point it's too late, the seemingly daunting task of breaking the tank down just seems more like work. It doesn't have to be.

Before I begin, I do have to tell you that I in no way consider myself an expert. I am just a guy who wanted make an ugly tank look good again. Some people may not agree with my methods but hey did work extremely well for me. I will take

you through the steps I took.

Set up:

To begin you are going to need a few things. The following items can be changed to best suit the tank size and style that you are working on, you be the judge. These items may seem like a lot of items but most of them in actuality are ones that you use in your regular tank maintenance any way.

Buckets- Preferably 5 gallon ones, as many as you need to hold the amount of water in your tank.

1 gallon water jugs

1 small plastic juice pitcher

Shoe boxes- If you are thinking you finally have a use for all the boxes holding your wife's shoe boxes think again. Use the ones that are plastic and can be bought at the dollar store for.... You guessed it ONE DOLLAR. Get as many as you will need to hold the plants and fish you are keeping. (Here you can adjust the size of the boxes to fit your needs.)

Tank cleaning supplies- You know what you use so I don't think I need to go into detail here.

Misc. items- You are going to need a pair of scissors, some plant weights, new gravel (if you prefer), any gravel enhancing material such as fluorite for your plants, the soundtracks from the Rocky movies, (trust me it will get you motivated and if your tank suffers from Ugly Tank Syndrome you need the motivation),

Safety Sense- At this point you are about to begin, but first make sure that all electrical equipment for the tank has been un-plugged, give your heaters a chance to cool down to tank temperature before removing them.

The breakdown:

As an example I am going to base this article on a 20 gallon tank as I have said just make adjustments for your size tank. The first thing you are going to need to do is drain some of the water from your tank into the shoe boxes Do not vacuum your gravel, you will be doing this later you want just the water from your tank not the detritus, fill the shoe boxes with enough water to hold your fish and plants. One of these shoe boxes should also hold your filters media as you do not want them to dry out.

The next step is to begin to carefully pulling up your live plants, I say carefully because you should have some extensive root growth you do not want to damage. As you remove your plants inspect them for any dying leaves, snail eggs, snails, and any other unattractive things. (Sorry snail lovers). As you are pulling up your plants I would trim down some of the roots to make it easier to re-plant later, just make sure not to trim off too much. Place all the plants you have rescued into the shoe boxes making sure that they are completely submerged thus avoiding plant dry out.. At this point you are most likely going to see your water turning murky from all the detritus that has sunk into the gravel now would be a good time to net your fish out and place them into the shoe boxes as well.

You should by now be looking at murky tank of gravel, scum and snails (if you had them). Personally I gave up long ago trying to remove snails from my tanks and have learned to just deal with them. Your fish are happy for the temporary change of scenery (consider it a vacation), and you are about to flip the rocky cassette over, and yes I still listen to cassettes. While you were flipping over the rocky cassette thinking about how long it's been since you watched rocky III, the water remaining in your tank should have begun to settle down. If all the detritus has begun to settle down in the remaining tank water then you are ready for the next step, if not take a break and wait a little longer. Now your water has started to look a little clearer begin to siphon the water into your one gallon jugs, this water is going to be used to refill your tank later, leave about 1/3 of the tanks water in the tank. Begin the next step by agitating the remaining water and gravel in the tank, you want the remaining water to become extremely murky, this will save you some time when you begin to clean the gravel later and help to remove most of the remaining detritus from the tank. Begin to siphon the muddy water from the tank into one of the remaining 5 gallon buckets. Once you can no longer get any more water from your tank begin to net out the gravel into one of the 5 gallon buckets once all your gravel is out use a container of the water you saved to cover the gravel completely.

Up to this point you should have the following things strewn around you: Shoeboxes with fish and plants, 1 shoebox filled with your filter media, 1 gallon jugs filled with somewhat clean water, at least one bucket filled with tank water, and one filled with gravel.

You should also be looking at a pretty bare tank. Now clean your tank up as much as you need to. Your about to begin to rebuild your tank.

The rebuild:

The rebuild of your tank is one of the most rewarding parts of this entire project. This is when all your artistic thoughts you have will come into play. The first thing you are going to need to do is prep your gravel. Begin to mix your gravel with any additives following the manufacturers instructions. Begin by laying a layer of your gravel in your tank, place enough to begin replanting. Since you already have some experience with planting since your tank was planted I will not go into detail about this process. Just remember a few things when placing plants and decorations into your tank such as some plants do not like to be pushed around by flow of your filter, Place your plants where you feel they are most appealing. Don't be afraid to pick your plants back up and move them around, you are going to step back and look at your tank many times to make sure that you are happy with there placement.

After you have your plants where you like them you are going to want to add your remaining gravel to the tank make sure to cover any exposed roots. Now begin to fill your tank with water from the 1 gallon jugs, Some say to use a plate to keep your gravel from being moved around but I prefer the hand method. For those who do not know the hand method basically all you are doing is using your free hand to catch the water you are pouring, basically keeping your hand just above the water line. Now you tank should be partially filled and you'll get the general idea of how your tank is going to look. Once you are satisfied begin to replace your filter, heater, and air lines. Before plugging them back in make sure to add a drip loop to all power cords. A drip loop is basically a loop in your power cords that allows any water that may leak down them to safely drip down and not directly to the outlet. Begin to finish up the project by filling the remaining tank space with the water you have left. The only water at this point you should have is the water still holding the fish. Before adding the fish back into your tank you are going to want to add a little stress coat and maybe even check to see how close your waters parameters are to when you started the project. After everything is to your satisfaction begin to acclimate your fish back into their tank using any method you feel comfortable with.

When I got to the end of this project I ended up only needing to replace a gallon or so of water to the tank, and after monitoring the fish for several hours and then several days I noticed I did not lose any fish. The project was a success and was completely happy with te looks of the tank.

There may be some things I have left out since I wrote this article from memory. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me at Phillyfishclub at gmail.com

Trading Post

Frank Montillo has: Praecox Australian Rainbows male and females, Yellow Labiochromis African cichlids male and females, red zebras and daffodils. Contact him at (919) 556-9004 or e-mail at fmontillo at aol.com

Sal Notarmaso has for sale: African Cichlids: Ngara, Yellow Regal, Peacocks, Blue Regal, Mylandi, O.B. Blotch, Ruby Red, Hap Obeideans, Kenyi, Blue Ahli, Bumble bee, Red top Arsto , Yellow Lab., Hongi, Orange leupi, Acie, and Venustus. Call for prices 383 3131

Monthly Web Links

Check out the lovely pictures of coral frags at [ReefScience](#). They also have a newsletter that is interesting and informative. To subscribe, just follow the link on the home page.

Ran into this site while wandering around: [Goldfish Society](#) A very interesting site, and worth adding to your favorites link if you keep goldfish.

Speaking of goldfish, click [Bristol Aquarists.org](#) for a nice pictorial guide to fancy goldfish varieties.

[Potomac Valley Aquarium Society](#) in the Washington D.C. area

[Atlanta Area Aquarium Association](#) in Atlanta, Georgia

Club Sponsors

*(The following businesses give RAS members a discount on purchases)
You may be asked to show your RAS membership card*

[Aqua Escape](#) 200 West Peace Street, Suite 130, Raleigh (10%) **919.755.0400**

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

[Carolina Pet Supply](#) 322 McCormick Street, Garner (10%) **919.773.0014**

[Creative Pet](#) 1350 E Broad St., Fuquay-Varina (10%) **919.577.9977**

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

[Down Under, Salt Water Fish & Corals](#) Highway 70 (in between Agri Supply and White Oak Shopping Center) in Garner. 20% on livestock, 15% on dry goods) **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](#) 5412 Etta Burke Court, Raleigh (10%) **919.233.1122**

[Fish World](#) 3501-151 Capital Blvd., Raleigh (10%) **919.872.1228**

[Infinity Pets](#) 100 W. Main St. Suite C. Youngsville, NC (10%) **570.3039** e-mail infinitypets@earthlink.net

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

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

[Pawz Pet Supply](#) 7317 Six Forks Road, Raleigh (10%) **919.845.9332**

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

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

Please contact Patricia Ceger 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:

Raleigh Aquarium Society
PO Box 31564
Raleigh, NC 27612-1564

