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LABYRINTH

Anabantoid Association
of
Great Britain



Newsletter No. 162 February 2011

3. *Betta sp. affinis lehi*
6. *Betta lehi* collection
7. *B. lehi* spawning
8. *Badis juergensmidti*
10. *Sphaerichthys vaillanti*
11. Malay 2010- Peat swamp Bettas

Front cover: *Betta sp affinis* lehi by Jens Kuehne

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1995 *Sandelia bainsii*, *S.capensis* and *habitats of each* (4 slides, tri-fold leaflet p&p £3)

1996 *Parosphromenus nanyi*, *Ctenopoma fasciolatum*, *Trichopsis vittatus*, *Betta persephone*, *B splendens*: Twin-tail and Cambodian. 6 slides by Kevin Webb, *Ctenopoma intermedium* and its Okavango habitat 2 slides by Dr J. Cambray
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From Merchandise Officer

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*****NEW LINKE BETTA BOOK
 FOR £35 SEE P 9*****

BETTA SP. AFF. LEHI
Jens Kuehne,
www.mahachai-tours.com



The *B. fusca* - group differs in different body features, but mainly in behaviour, from the *B. pugnax* group. Previously members of this group were not known from widespread areas, just as with many labyrinth fish species, they were only known from selective collections . So we had just sufficient information about the habitats of the main members of *B. fusca* group REAGAN 1910 in Sumatra and about *B. pulchra* Tan & Tan 1996 from the south of the Malaysian peninsular. Another very interesting representative which I found throughout the whole Malay Peninsula to southern Thailand, was *B. lehi*

TAN & NG 2005. This is a very common fish in Borneo / East Sarawak and was also described from there.

I also found a relatively outlying example of the *B. ferox* group of mouthbrooders in my fishing nets again in 2006, on the eastern flank of Khao Luang range . From about the heights of Nakhon Si Thammarat in the south to just north of Sichon, this mouth-breeder, lives in a relatively high degree of concentration in calmer river sections and river sections, which are connected to areas as fast-flowing as *ferox* habitats. These fish can occur with *B. ferox*

and *B. Pallida*, practically in any body of water.

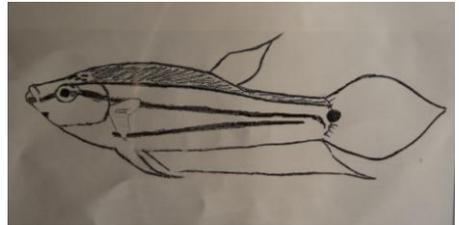
First, it was assumed that it is an example of the fusca type, namely *B. pulchra*, which



is known from the south of the Malaysian peninsula. It would be very strange if this type is found only here and not in the north. The lack of second Postorbital stripe would be evidence for *B. pulchra* and the rest of the body shape and markings are similar. However, after the counting of features, as used in the description, my conclusion was more interesting. These fish should be (key out as) *B. lehi*. After comparing the photos, it turned out that it is the same fish, especially since the real *B. pulchra* is a representative of the black water lovers.

Another time I found this fish in the northern part of Thailand in a section of the Si Tanao Mountains, just south of Hat Yai, and suspected, that the fish has been already 'smuggled through' through the entire Malaysian peninsula. And actually that was for me very

surprising, I found this fish right back in the Malaysian central mountains. Somewhere between the small towns of Gerik and Bailing in the state of Perak it lives about 800 m above sea level. The local waters drain into the Andaman Sea to the west! An admitted exception to the scheme of things was that the habitats were in areas of high water flow just as *B. ferox* prefer.



B. sp. aff. lehi - Special features include the absence from the face mask of 2 Chin stripes and 2 Pos orbital stripes 3rd, Since the strip is complete and consistently present.

But this area also showed me the direction of distribution of *B. sp. aff. lehi* westward. Other sites were connected, almost logically, although I am amazed at the discovery of *B.sp.aff lehi* at each new locality. One such is situated in Perlis National Park, Malaysia, on the border of the district in Satun, Malaysia. I've been there now for over 4 years on a regular basis and caught *B.ferox*, only this year it became apparent to me that *B. sp. aff. lehi* also occurs. The animals that I found in December 2009 in Ipoh in Malaysia, because of their youth and size were not yet determined exactly, but I think

these fish were a *B. fusca* type, probably the *B. sp. aff. lehi*.



Biotope of *B. sp. aff. Lehi*, in a mineral poor arm of the stream. Another hard water side arm is home to *B. ferox*,- Taman Negara Perlis, Malaysia

Discussion

This fish will probably have a key role in researching the history of the spread of mouth-brooding Betta. Probably this form is the product one of the most recent distribution histories, ie last ice age. They have evolved from the central land masses that are now under water in

the South China Sea and from there have spread west and east.

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION
AND THANKS FROM 'DER
MAKROPODE'

CLEARWATER AQUATICS EXPEDITION TO LUNDU 28.04.07 (*BETTA LEHI*)



We decided to go back to Lundu to collect *Betta lehi* as we need some females to compliment our existing stock. And Mansur has decided to join as he has never been to the area. The place is located in a fruit orchard and not far from the main road. There are also some old rubber trees here.



Salihan having trouble getting the *Betta lehi* to eat the worm as most of the lehi here are juveniles. In short, the worm is too big for them to eat. In the beginning, he caught 15 rasboras. However, after changing the bait, his luck changed.



Salihan and Aben sorting out the worms to the fishing rod. The small stream is full of fallen branches after a recent thunderstorm



Close up view of the habitat.



Betta lehi female

CLEARWATER AQUATICS- SHOWCASE & BREEDING OF BETTA LEHI TAN & NG, 2005

These were collected from Serikin (Border town between Sarawak and Kalimantan,Indonesia).



A male



Another male sharing the same tank



A female

Some spawning photos :

A tricky shot ... as the spawning underneath a driftwood.



Notice the damaged scales on the femaleDuring spawning both the female and male constantly chase away the other pair when they venture too close to their territory.



A brooding male

***BADIS JUERGENSCHMIDTI*, A NEW SPECIES OF *BADIS*
FROM MYANMAR- A SUMMARY**
Stefan van der Voort



In late 2010m Ingo Schindler and Horst Linke described a new *Badis* from East Myanmar and named it after Dr. Jürgen Schmidt. The species was discovered by Linke and friends during a field trip in March 2010 and was subsequently brought back to Germany and from there spread throughout the hobbyist world in the form of F1 material.

The description also introduces a new numbering standard for the vertical bars on the flank of *Badis* in general. The standard will not be treated in this summary, but is available from the open access paper.

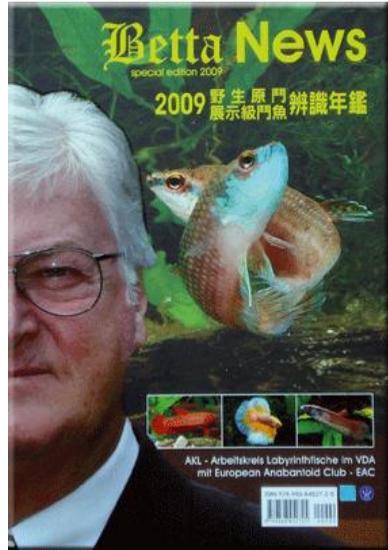
Diagnosis. *Badis juergenschmidti* can easily be differentiated from other members of the genus by the absence of a blotch on the posterodorsal corner of its opercle, no cleithral blotch, bar 1 (on caudal fin base) in adult males being broad and not reduced to a single blotch on centre of caudal peduncle or split into three separate blotches, bar 2 without a blotch on dorsolateral aspect of caudal peduncle (e.g. *B. ruber* group species), caudal fin of adult males with a white margin posterodorsally and posteroventrally. A more detailed differential can be found in ‘Comparative notes’ of the original description.

Distribution and habitat. Currently only known from its type locality; the Ka Dat Chaung River, south-eastern central Myanmar. This particular habitat is a small river with a slow current. The river bed consisted of boulders, pebbles and sand with the water being clear. The following measurements were conducted at 9:30 in the morning: water temperature 26.9 degrees Celsius, electric conductivity 6 μ S, pH 6.4. The only species the collecting party could collect from that same location was *Acanthocobitis zonalternans*.

Reproduction. Like other species of the genus, *Badis juergenschmidti* is also a cave brooder of which males, however, turns a nice reddish-orange during brood care instead of a dark or smoky colouration in other species.

References

Schindler, I. & H. Linke (2010): *Badis juergenschmidti* - a new species of the Indo-Burmese fish family Badidae (Teleostei: Perciformes) from Myanmar. – Vertebrate Zoology, 60 (3) 209-216.



At Aquarama 2009 in Singapore, a Chinese/English edition of "Betta News special" was previewed, printed in A4 with 218 pages and over 650 colour images. This shows some very good images of all possible Bettas including mouthbrooders with associated biotopes and spawning sequences. A large part is taken up by *Betta splendens*. This unprecedented edition is enlivened through a series of travel reports, which has new and rare species of the genus *Parosphromenus*. The authors of this edition are Horst Linke of Germany and Nathan Chiang of Taiwan. The Chinese/English edition with the title "Betta News special" is currently the most impressive work about the fish of the Betta genus. **There is nothing comparable. AAGB has limited numbers of this work for £35 including post inland. Enquiries to the Editor.**

NOTES ON BREEDING SPHAERICHTHYS VAILLANTI **Ray Blackburn**



I fell in love again when I first saw these fish in Wigan (Pier Aquatics). Not knowing anything about them, I purchased a pair, thinking at the time that the bright coloured one was a male and the dull one a female (but it turned out to be the other way round).

I kept them in a 16x8x8" tank. The pH was slowly brought down by frequent water changes using RO water with 'pH down' and 'Blackwater Tonic'. I settled for a pH of 5-5.5 with a DH around 3-4 and a temperature of 80F. I fed plenty of live food: white worm, blood worm plus brine shrimp.

I didn't witness the spawning, but the sign I noticed was that the male stopped eating. At this stage, I removed the female and dropped water changes to about a pint every fourth

day. After 20 days of not eating, he started to release the young fry, a spitting image of their parents, even at that size). I found about twenty odd fry and started feeding Infusoria for the first couple of days, then brine shrimp, then Grindal worm. I removed the female for safety, but since have found them to be good parents. They don't touch the young which are now 30 days old and trebled in size.



**REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION AND
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FORGOTTEN FORESTS AND HIDDEN HILLS STREAMS

1. PEAT SWAMP BETTAS

Dave Armitage



My latest, and possibly final, trip to Peninsular Malaysia was also the most comprehensive. In 12 days we were to travel round the circumference of the country, from KL via South Selangor to Johore (Muar, Johore Bharu, Kota Tinggi, Sedili & Mersing), Pahang (Rompin & Kuantan), Terengganu (Cukai, Cherating, Dungun, Rantau Abang, Sekayu), Kelantan (Pasir Puteh, then north to the Thai border, Tanah Merah, Machang & Jeli), Perak (Temengor, Gerik, Lenggong, Bukit Merah & Taiping) and back again to KL via North Selangor. In the course of this we encountered over 20 species of labyrinth fish and 3 *Channa* and brought home a good proportion of them.

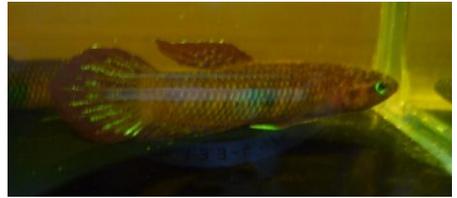
On this trip, the old triumvirate of Yong, Pinto and Armitage was

joined by Paul Jordan, a *Channa* enthusiast whose appetite for such trips had been whetted, earlier in the year, by a short trip to Terengganu, on his way back from visiting relations in Oz. Fortunately he turned out to be a stoical and tolerant traveler. Just as well as he was to share a bedroom with me and assorted arthropod house guests!

Paul and I travelled together from Yorkshire via Gatwick and Dubai, arrived at our KL hotel, the Sky, adjacent to the Royal Bintang without incident and sallied forth in search of some Tiger beer .

The next morning, Dennis picked us up in his bright orange Mitsubishi Pajero at 11 and we headed for the remnant of South Selangor peatswamps, skirting the

airport and racing circuit. I think we were on the Dengkil road when Dennis turned off onto a dirt track to search for the forest remnant he knew as the last resort of *Betta livida* in South Selangor but even he needed his memory refreshed from a couple of locals before we found his favourite blackwater drain on the edge of a forest reserve which could be distantly seen. We jumped enthusiastically into the cool waist-deep water and although I found chocolate gouramis and a large yellow *Betta*, my search for *B.livida* was fruitless but Dennis was fishing in the shade by a small bridge and had netted a good number. I could only imagine that they had washed out of the forest. Paul measured the water parameters and was surprised to find his pH meter registering below 3, with conductivity of 68 and temperature apparently nearly 29C !



We headed for our overnight stay at Muar via Port Dickson and along the PLUS highway with a quick stop at the motorway services for a snack of kopi (black coffee sitting on a bed of condensed milk and sugar) and rice. I have to admit I became quite reliant on the Malaysian sweet beverage. The Streetview Hotel was our comfortable retreat for the night with a good Chinese restaurant just around the block where in the morning Dennis introduced me to a Chinese breakfast of pau - a dumpling filled with sweet or savoury mix which had to be peeled like an orange !

Our two forest remnants for the day were apparently part of the same forest block but had to be approached from different sides and were both embedded in agricultural cultivation. Dennis also asked us to be discrete about the location due to the extreme scarcity of the fish and the tenuous nature of their habitat. This discretion was not difficult since it always proved difficult to locate where we were due to the scarcity of maps and the rapid changes to the road system. *Betta persephone* and *B.bellica* young were plentiful

in puddles just outside and just under the canopy of a flooded forest and Paul, Tony and I fished industriously under a circling Crested Serpent Eagle while White-handed Gibbons chorused distantly.



To gain access to the next swamp forest remnant, we had to wade across a waist-deep blackwater ditch and follow the trickles of water to the occasional broader

puddles, usually well-protected by spiky vegetation. Here we found a very few *Betta coccina* and only with the greatest difficulty. Other fish in these puddles included *Anabas*, *Belontia hasselti*, *Betta bellica*, hexazona barbs and maculata rasboras.





Scratched and exhausted we now headed for Johore Bahru, gateway for Tony's visit to Pat Yap in Singapore, into the horror of big city congestion and settled for a greasy hourly rate flop house by the side of the dual carriageway and with a large noisy roost of Javan Mynas just outside our window.

The Hotel Sri Rompin and our Restoran Rompin Bahru were fortunately adjacent, albeit on opposite sides of the dual carriageway and we decided to try wild boar to complement the Tiger beer in deference to the habitats the pigs create for our fish through their wallowing. The Asian Glossy Starlings were just settling into their evening roosts at this time. The hotel was excellent value too-100RM (£25) for two rooms despite the trek to the 1st floor to get the lift to the 2nd and the eccentric electric point just over the shower head.

Over breakfast, we watched one of the local cats stalking an American cockroach then headed out toward Cukai (Kemaman). Just outside the town, we stopped to fish by

blackwater drains, overseen by a serpent eagle but found only Anabas. Further along the road however we were much luckier and found an idyllic habitat; a stream of 26C, 4.2pH, 30 conductivity containing *Betta tussyae*, *B.bellica*, *B. waseri*, *Parosphromenus nagy*, chocolate gouramis, *Belontia hasselti* and *Channa gachua*. I followed the stream to where water seeped in from pig wallows on the flooded forest floor (where Paul found most *C.gachua* and the *B.waseri*). There appeared to be simple improvised dams of sticks to hold back the water from the forest which I could only imagine were contrived fish traps.





A.Pinto

The Kemaman Seaview Hotel faced the estuary and was just adjacent to the seafood restaurants; we chose the Tong Juan where we feasted on the specialty of the stuffed crab (a local variety with horned extensions to the shell) washed down with suitable quantities of Tiger. (usually we started with 2 bottles shared between the 4 of us, then another 2 from which Tony opted out, then a final bottle just for Paul and I).

We were reminded we were in Moslem Terengganu as the mosque was just behind the hotel and we were rudely awoken at 5am in good time for a Chinese breakfast of noodles before we investigated habitats near Cherating, a tipoff from some Malaysian friends of Paul's. We found mainly *B. imbellis* but Dennis located a few *B. tussya*e in swamps on the edge of forest at the side of the railway track but there were some more promising, shady habitats further along the road. Next we stopped at another of Dennis's favourite streams near Ibok, just down the road from where Paul was taken

by his friends earlier in the year. The water flow had stopped, probably because the monsoon rains had not materialised and we had to work hard to find a few *B. tussya*e and *P. nagy*i but there were quite a few *B. pi*'i, Nandus and both *Channa lucius* and *C. gachua*.



Our last fishing day saw us back on the PLUS Highway, turning off at Behreng to explore the old Tanjong Malim road. We passed the coffee shop by the side of what had been a rhino re-introduction project that we'd visited over 10 years previously and Dennis told us the project failed when the rhinos became diseased and the same fate had befallen the tapirs which succeeded them. Where the road had previously been lined

with forest or forest clearance, it was now mainly flanked with oil-palm with a big, sterile black water drain running along the side of the road. Eventually Dennis identified a stream running out of a remnant of forest and suggested we followed it through the undergrowth and explore it for *Betta livida* and *P.harveyi* for an hour or so while he kept our precious cargo of fish cool in the shade.



The undergrowth had grown closely over the stream and it took considerable effort to push through the thorns and spikes to access open water. Initially we only caught small yellow sucker loaches, and it was some time before Paul located *B.livida* in

some puddles at the side of the stream

This trip made me aware of how much more difficult it now was to locate the sometimes tiny remnants of forest in the midst of agricultural or mining development and with a rapidly developing road system. It was only because of the years of Dennis's exploration and monitoring that our trip was so productive and without his hard work and experience, so generously shared with us, we would have achieved very little on our own.

