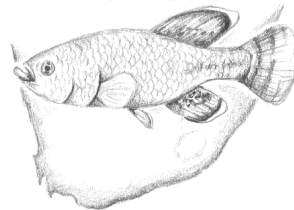


# SOUTHERN AFRICAN KILLIFISH SOCIETY *Letters*

Volume 2, Number 1, 2002

SOUTHERN AFRICAN  
KILLIFISH SOCIETY



*Nothobranchius annectens* "Ruhoi River TAN 98/12". Photo by Dusan Kojic

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## Greetings

Hello fellow Killikeepers

Happy new year! My fish have so far survived the hot summer (at least most of them). I trust yours have faired well too.

Once again I am late with the newsletter... My humble apologies. Work and holidays have delayed this issue (as with the last one) and will no doubt delay further issues. The first issue of each year will henceforth be sent out on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February. The next issues will be sent out at the beginning of April, June, August, October and December. I hope that this arrangement will work better.

One major delay was the article I had to put together on the *poliaki* to bulk up this edition. Once again, please submit articles! I know many of you out there have been in the hobby for many years and have amassed a large amount of invaluable knowledge. *Please share!* I have nothing at this time to include in the next edition. Articles on any killifish topic would be greatly appreciated! Even letters with questions or even comments would be appreciated!

The lack of input also negates the need to have an issue (SAKS *Letters*) sent out every two months. In future SAKS *Letters* may only be sent out every three months while having the newsletter with the Fish and Egg List sent out once a month. Depending on **your** response a decision will be taken later this year. All subscriptions will be maintained as six issues of SAKS *Letters* plus the newsletters starting from this issue.

For those of you who would prefer the choice, this and future issues will be available in both Word and PDF format. Please let me know which you prefer. No response will mean PDF.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Tyrone

## Fish and Egg Trading List

Please submit your list (by the latest one week before the end of the month) of fish/eggs that you have for sale or would like to acquire. The list can be sent to [tyronegenade@yahoo.com](mailto:tyronegenade@yahoo.com).

### Dirk Bellstedt

4 Helderspruit Road, Somerset West, 7130  
Tel: 021-8553788

Imported German foods and Discus. Brine shrimp eggs, flakes, frozen foods, baby star II & IV (baby brine shrimp substitute), decapsulated brine shrimp eggs, microgranulate etc... Best prices! Phone for a complete list of available products.

### Tyrone Genade

Nr.5 Concord, Kerk Straat, Stellenbosch, 7600.

Available eggs:

<i>Chromaphyosemion poliaki</i> "Bolifamba"	R 25/ws
<i>Fundulopanchax g. gardneri</i> "N'Sukka"	R 25/ws
<i>Nothobranchius eggersi</i> "Bagamoyo TZL 01-52" (blue)	R 50/ws
<i>Nothobranchius eggersi</i> "Utete TZ 97/55" (red)	R 50/ws
<i>Nothobranchius foerschi</i> "Aquarium strain"	R 50/ws
<i>Nothobranchius korthausae</i> "Kwachepa TZL 01-53" (yellow)	R 50/ws

All eggs are shipped fresh. Orders are taken in advance of harvesting the peat. As consequence, not all orders may be fulfilled due to unforeseen problems (e.g. all the fish dying).

## Articles and Letters

### Dancing poliaki

by Tyrone Genade  
5 Concord, Kerk Street, Stellenbosch, 7600.  
All photos and maps by Rudolf Pohlmann.

#### Introduction

Scheel's pictures of duelling BIVs is for many the epitome of killifish beauty. The two ljeube Ode males on the cover of his 1975 book, *Rivulins of the Old World* [1], set the standard for the then Bivitattum-group. Today the Bivitattum-group is the genus *Chromaphyosemion* [2] and the duelling BIVs are now more correctly known as *bitaeniatum*.



**Figure 1:** Male *Chromaphyosemion poliaki* "Bolifamba". Some strains have a yellow anal fin and the yellow fin tips can get much more pronounced. Photo by Rudolf Pohlmann.

Spurred on by those stunning pictures of duelling *bitaeniatums* I set about trying to obtain some fish. My first *Chromaphyosemion* were an old pair of "bivitattum", possibly *bitaeniatum* Umudike, that never amounted to much. I got one egg before the pair died. Various attempts to bring in eggs from overseas also ended in tragedy. The eggs died in transit.

Towards the end of 2000 I made contact with Lou Veiga of the AKA. We set up an exchange: *Nothobranchius* for *Aphyosemion halleri* "Bikong". In the deal he also added some *Chromaphyosemion poliaki* "Bolifamba". To my elation the *poliaki* eggs survived! The *halleri* eggs never made the trip when their turn came around.

#### Keeping them alive

Five fry hatched out and proved hardy. They took baby brine shrimp from the first day and grew steadily. In three months they were about 2 cm long and beginning to show colour. I had two females and three males. From four months old they were spawning.

The fish were kept together in a small tank with overhead lighting. The tank was situated on the lower tier of my fish tank stand and understandably the fish were shy. I barely ever saw them. They were fed baby brine shrimps, frozen brine shrimps, bloodworm, white mosquito larvae and flake. All foods were taken readily. The water temperature was between 23 and 25°C. My tap water, which is soft and tends to turn acidic, was used to fill the tank. The tank was well planted with Java Moss and fern and *Ceratophyllum*.

The *poliaki* lived in this tank for six months before I moved house and the fish found themselves in a new tank. This new tank was set up with the above parameters. It was a bit deeper and was situated on the top tier of the fish tank stand. For a few weeks the tank was unlit. During this time I used a bed side lamp with a long cord to look into the tanks to see if everything was OK. To my surprise the *poliaki* did not shy away when I shone the light into their tank. Instead, the males slowly crept out of the dense Java Moss and began to display to each other. This went on till my arm grew tired. I positioned the lamp so that it shone on a side pane of the tank from a shelf and then watched the fish from a distance. The fish followed the light. Quietly I watched the *polikai* dance in the lamp light.

Chromaphysems are not shy fish. They do not shun light. They are active and seek the light out in which to display. If one examines their colours, most of it is iridescent. There is very little blue, mostly oranges and yellows. These features indicate a fish that requires light to show off its colours both in nature and in captivity. The critical issue is not scaring the fish. Situating the tank near the floor in a busy room will definitely scare the fish into retreating into the Java moss at the slightest hint of danger or movement outside the tank. Good lighting stimulates activity between the fish in the tank. Even if I move around outside the tank the fish still interact with each other and do not retreat into the Java moss.

The males display some aggression towards each other but so far no fatalities have occurred. The fins get pretty haggard with the continual bickering so no prize fish could be raised in a multi-male group. The yellow fin extensions will definitely not develop properly. The females do not show any aggression nor do they predate each others' eggs.

The males reach between 4 and 5 cm in size while females max out at about 4 cm.

### **The wild habitat of *C. poliaki* "Bolifamba"**

The Bolifamba strain was collected just south of the Mile 17 junction, along the road from Buea to Douala, at the stream running near the town of Bolifamba (Figure 2).

The creek is described as follows from the field notes of T. Hrbek, J. Heller and J. Kum from their 1999 expeditions [3]. The creek was slow flowing and clear and clean. Bananas and coco-yams were cultivated on the one bank. The stream was littered with fallen trees and emergent reed like vegetation.

The fish were found behind the fallen trees in the quiet water and exposed to the sun--- a very untypical killifish habitat. The stream bed was composed of pebbles and was dark.

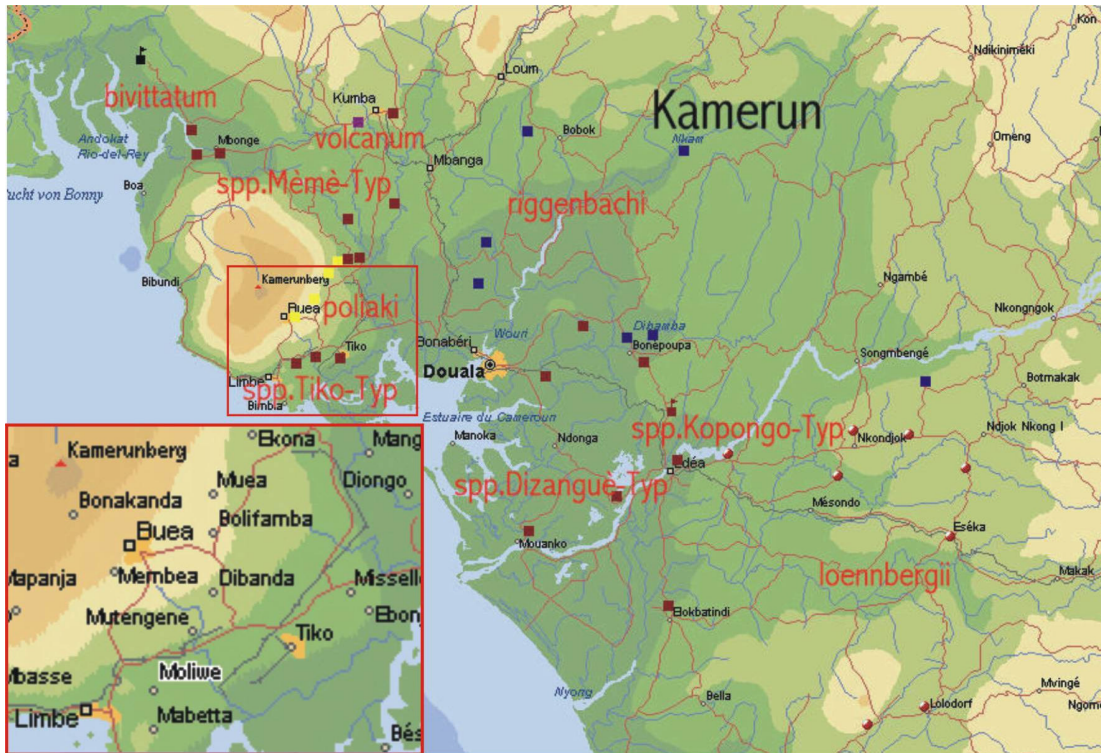
The water was of pH 7.6, TDS 110,  $\mu\text{Si}$  0.16. Unfortunately no temperatures were stated in the report.

### **Breeding**

This fish proved easy to breed. From four months of age I was collecting eggs steadily, although in small numbers (five or six per day). Often no eggs would be found for weeks followed by a sudden burst of productivity.

The eggs took between 12 and 20 days to hatch depending on temperature. The fry hatched out large enough to take baby brine shrimps. The fry grow at a steady rate and begin to colour up from around three months of age.

The parents do not seem to actively predate the eggs or fry. I have several fry (which appeared out of the Java moss) of both sexes growing up with the parents.



**Figure 2:** Map displaying the distribution of various Chromaphyosemion species. The distribution of *C. poliakii* is seen to be just South-east of Mt. Cameroon. The town of Bolifamba can be seen in the insert, bottom left corner. Maps supplied by Rudolf Pohlmann.

I have already sent eggs of this fish in damp peat to several people both locally and abroad with fair success.

## Conclusions

*Chromaphyosemion poliakii* “Bolifamba” is a relatively easy species with which to work. It is temperature tolerant (20 to 30°C) and does not seem to care for pH or hardness as long as extremes are avoided. This is a lovely little fish that I strongly recommend.

## References

- [1] Scheel, J.J. (1975) *Rivulins of the Old World*. TFH Publ., Neptune NJ.
- [2] Sonnenberg, R. (2000) *Proc.: 4th Int. Symp., Bonn, Bonn. Zool. Monogr.* 46, 79-94.
- [3] Hrbek, T., Heller, J. and Kum, J. (1999) *Complete Field Notes: Chromaphyosemion, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea*. DKG: Chromaphyosemion Study Group 2002 CD.

## Membership Dues

The membership dues are as follows for Southern African members:

Membership (e-based)	R 10
Postal	R 20

The membership packages comprise of a flat membership rate whereby you get the newsletter and SAKS *Letters* each two months for six issues. This is conveyed by e-mail for R 10 or by post for R 20. (The latter may change as outlined in the Greetings section.)

Same rates apply to foreign members except in regard to the postal membership. In this case the membership fee is R 60.

## Contact Details

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