

*KILLIE NEWS*

A Publication of the Minnesota Killie Keepers Association

An affiliate of the American Killifish Association (AKA)

November 2008

**Minnesota Killie Keepers Association  
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**Web Site:** [www.mkka.net](http://www.mkka.net)**Table of Contents:**

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**From the Editor:**

We are having nominations this month for the Officer's positions on the club's Board or Directors. I am willing to continue as Editor of the Killie News, but would be happy to "retire" if someone else wants to give it a try. I would be more than happy to help with the first issue or two if you are nervous about the process of publishing.

Bob Carter has decided to retire from the position of Web Master. Doug Pham has stepped in to take the position. Thanks, Bob, for all your work in setting up the web site and thanks to Doug for being willing to be our new Web Master.

Email me at [raqbe@usinternet.com](mailto:raqbe@usinternet.com) if you have any questions, comments or items you'd like to see in the Killie News. Until next month,

Happy fish keeping!

*Robin*

The Thursday, October 16, 2008 meeting was held in the Party room at Craig Rees' apartment complex.

In attendance were: Craig Rees, John Aldrich, Brad & Nancy Swanson, Margie Johnson, Kelly & Randy Huesmann, Milo Squires, Mike Kromrey, Brent & Emily Helland, Jenny Kruckenberg, Bob Carter, Carter McAninch, Jason Albers, Doug Pham, Greg Goodnow and Bruce Cameron

There was an outstanding attendance for this meeting with 18 people turning out.

Craig announced that the club treasury is at \$2,300.

Craig is back to selling Blackworms to the members at each monthly meeting.

The meeting started with talk about the new stands we are building for the club. We came up with a total of \$20.00 to sponsor a stand. The club agreed that the sponsorship is not mandatory.

Craig mentioned that he put in an order for some more books from Ruth Warner.

Also discussed was that all proceeds for the egg and fish that members bring to the monthly meetings for sale will be 100% to the seller.

We decided and voted to hold the monthly meetings at Craig's party room for the near future until we decide to go back to member's houses. There is easy access for the new members in the club. There will still be a couple meetings held in member's homes during the year.

We will be holding Elections via email from Craig in the next couple weeks. We will be changing officer's titles this year to President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Editor. The Vice President position was previously called General Member.

Then we only had a short time to hold a discussion on egg storage.

Submitted by John Aldrich.

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## **Minnesota Killie Keepers November Field Trip By Bob Wolter**

MKKA's Annual Field Trip to their sister club's Show and auction was a great success and, as usual, lots of fun. There were opportunities for Awards, Recognition, Prizes, and the opportunity to purchase needed fish at auction prices. Everyone in attendance at this two-day event enjoyed renewing old friendships and making new ones. Dick Martino brought the AKA's selection of books for sale.

### **Canterbury (Inn?) Tales:**

**The Dutiful Wife** – while your author was taking a picture of four convenient club members he noticed that poor Milo Squires would be cut off, so he asked Erin Kromrey if she could move closer to Craig Rees. Erin replied “I’m taken.” HUH? It’s only a picture?



Milo Squires, Erin Kromrey, Craig Rees and John Aldrich 2008 WAKO Show photo by Bob Wolter.

**And the Winner Is...:** Milo – who had turned in the best elapsed time for the 336-mile Minneapolis to Milwaukee rally.

Fly Low With Milo

**Poor Jen and the Meany** – It was a genuine Mean Old, Meany Old, Mean, Old Meany! A little pair of fish came up for auction and poor Jen became “all happy” as she waved her tiny paddle for her fish. She jumped up and down and waived her paddle furiously to be sure the auctioneer saw her. The competing bidders dropped out, leaving a by now elated Jen owning the field – or so she thought. The auctioneer awarded the winning bid to someone else sitting way in the back. A very old man in the front protested this miscarriage of justice to the auctioneer – to no avail. The Mean Old Meany old Meany in the back took poor tearful Jens little fish away. What ever happened to “Women and Children first”? Would this brute in the back show any degree of being a gentleman? No Way!

**The Cameron's purchase the Camerons** – or something like that.

Actually it was a pair of Cameroonians or were they Cameroonense, or? Well, in any case, all four are now happily back in Minnesota.

**The King has Abdicated** – see what happens when someone gets paid a well-deserved compliment for nearly a quarter century of suzerainty over *Epiplatys lamottei*. Craig Rees made his fame by being one of the very first to breed this truly beautiful fish. He was the reigning expert! Then this newsletter compliments him for his efforts and what does this guy do. He gets rid of all his *E. lamottei*. Huh? A pair of *E. lamottei* sold for \$25 in the auction – read it and weep! Serves you right Craig!

**Great Big Spender** – John Aldrich Junior received a well deserved round of applause for the winning bid on the most sought after fish in the entire auction. Make sure your tank is covered John!

**Upcoming MKKA field trips** – Spring 2009 to the Chicago Killie Show. Come One, Come All – for fun prizes and reasonably priced auction fish. If you haven't been touted, featured, or insulted in this article – see your author for your well deserved publicity at the next field trip.

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## **The Blue Gularis – One Mans Odyssey: Success, Failure and Success**

**By Bob Wolter**

This article was previously published in the AKA's Journal of American Killifish.

The Blue Gularis, emblem fish of the AKA, is both beautiful and fascinating. It can also be very frustrating. Your author relates his personal experience in hopes that you will try it and avoid some of his mistakes that he made. Do give it some space in your fish room. Be prepared – this fish is large and the space you need will be considerable. So with that caveat, let the journey begin!

In the late 1960's, there were not many killies available at Milwaukee's Pet Shops. To name a few: The Firemouth Killie (now *Ep. dageti*), *A. australe*, and the ubiquitous *Panchax panchax*. They all had two things in common:

1. They were very pricey
2. They leaped out of the tank.

One-day I walked into the pet shop and saw the love of my life. It was huge, had a beautiful blue sheen, and some of the



most gorgeous finnage ever seen. The owner said that they were Blue Gularis, imported from Germany. He then quoted a price equal to several weeks' worth of groceries. This was clearly way out of range for a poor college student, but the dream remained.

The fish originally came from the lower Niger River in Nigeria. They have had a number of scientific names according to Rudolf Wildekamp:

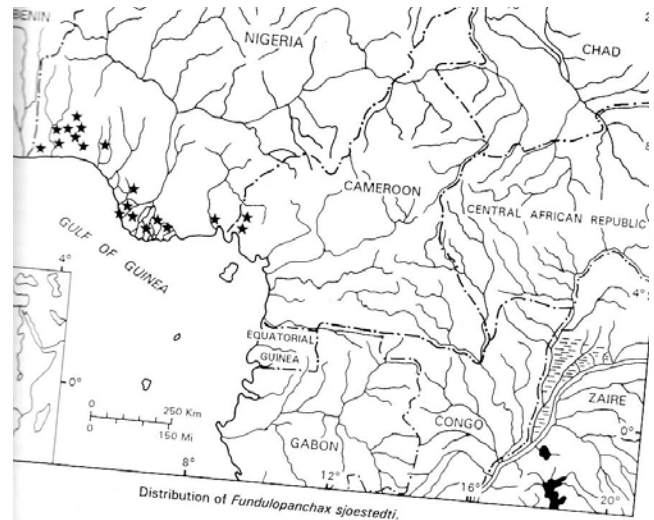
*Fundulus sjostedi*-1895

*Fundulus gularis* var. *coerulea*-1915

*Aphyosemion sjoestedti*-1966

*Fundulopanchax sjoestedti*- 1981 to current

Wildekamp lists them at 78-140 mm with the type locality as the mouth of the Niger River SW Nigeria. See Map at right for locations <sup>1</sup>



All of the killies imported from Germany at that time had colors not seen since. WAKO (Wisconsin Area Killifish Organization) club member Manfred Schulz, originally from Germany, says that the color came from “good live food”. Specially formulated flake foods were very expensive in those days. Some fish fanciers made their own “liver paste” with their Waring blender. Liver paste clearly was cheaper but was very prone to fouling the tank. Liver paste has since gone out of fashion for obvious reasons.

Many people, including dad, went out early in the morning with dip nets to collect live foods. Manfred laments the disappearance of good live food collecting sites, but understands that the spraying for West Nile Virus is necessary.

The dream remained, so in the early 1970’s the price came down a bit. So with a full time job, I walked into the pet shop and said, “I’ll take two pair”. In case one died, at least there would be a pair left. As these were giant economy size fish, into a 20 long tank they went. Having observed them acting extremely bellicose to their fellow tank mates, lots of hiding places were provided.

What to feed? They greedily ate anything placed in the tank, but red worms seemed to really put the weight on.

After consulting *Exotic Aquarium Fishes* by Innes<sup>2</sup>, it was found that they would lay eggs in a nylon mop. Off we go to the fabric store.

<sup>1</sup> A World of Killies Volume 3 by Rudolf H. Wildekamp pg 207 American Killifish Association 1996 Mishawaka, Indiana

<sup>2</sup> Exotic Aquarium Fishes by William T. Innes pg.289 Aquarium Publishing Company Norristown, Pa.1964

Oh wow, this actually worked and the tiny eggs were placed in a small pill bottle containing methylene blue. The eggs actually hatched, and the young ate brine shrimp heartily and grew quickly. Your author couldn't figure at the time why about half of the young "disappeared" with not a sign of tiny corpses. Later it was found out that with different hatching times, with water hatching, sibling cannibalism was the answer.

The Pet Shop owners didn't really want to buy these "treasures" however. The few that did buy turned into enemies. As WAKO member and pet shop owner Gary Greenwood humorously put it, "The Blue Gularis is very accommodating. If the pet shop owner doesn't feed them all that their huge appetites require, they simply help themselves to anything and everything else that is swimming in the tank." The few shop owners that did heed the advice of keeping them by themselves, said the only the males sold – no more females please!

A job change and divorce caused disconnects and so it was not until many years later that the dream was revisited. I remained a WAKO member without tanks. After a several year hiatus, WAKO was rejoined a few years ago.

### **Frustration and failure**

At the 2004 WAKO November Show auction, it was impossible not to revisit the dream of the Great Blue Gularis. Only one pair came up for sale. The treasures were quickly bought, taken home, and placed in a five-gallon tank by themselves. Next: put in a mop and wait for the magic to happen.

Then pick the eggs, place them in a small clear container, add Acriflaven, and watch them all fungus. This repeated for the next few months, until the male ended it all by dispatching the female. I sentenced the "Murderer" to a 55-gallon tank where he enjoyed chasing and trimming the finnage of my large angelfish.

Then after wasting a year, another pair was purchased from the 2005 WAKO Show auction. To my immense frustration, they repeated the exact same scenario. Another male went into the community tank with his con-specific – whom he promptly killed! Another year wasted, with great ensuing frustration!

As a young boy my dad told me:

1. If your horse falls in a hole, it fell in the hole.
2. If the horse falls in the same hole again, it made a mistake.
3. If the horse falls in the same hole the third time – shoot it – you have a dumb animal that will never learn.



Since I didn't want to get shot, I thought about this problem long and hard. I recalled the very first African Cichlids from the late 1960's. They were really tough to breed, but you got serious money for the fry. I got a group of *C. frontosa*, but I had to buy the extra male to clinch the deal. The "Fronts" were known as "lady killers" and were the bane of many a breeder. The extra male turned out to be a Godsend! The Alpha male and spare male would fight enough to give time



to remove the “pregnant female” and spare the remainders. SO...It was decided that from this point on, the Gularis would be kept as a group only!

The next problem to solve was the poor results with the eggs. I attributed better prior hatches to a water softener. After consulting with several WAKO members, it was decided that this was not the problem. WAKO member John Metzger suggested that I take the eggs out after several days and lay them over peat moss for about 6 weeks and then put them back in water. Round glass Pyrex pie plates, left over from the *C. whitei* days, were dusted and washed off. WAKO founding member and AKA past president Jim Gasior suggested purchasing Jiffy “peat pellets” at the local garden shop. He also suggested moistening them just enough to become damp. OK.

Joining your nearby local AKA Affiliated Club is essential to your success. There are near by fellow hobbyists to meet with and share both fish and information. From the collective wisdom of many came an eagerly sought plan. Would it work?

### **Success at Last**

It has been said “every great success has its roots in failure”. Henry Ford had several bankruptcies prior to his great success. Not being Henry Ford, I had many failures anyway. This time, however, there was a workable plan in place:

1. A group of Blue Gularis
2. Picking mops and 3 day water incubation
3. Removing the eggs with an eyedropper and placing them over moist peat for 6 weeks.
4. Putting moist peat into glass pie plate.
5. Add water and presto!

After obtaining and raising a group of Gularis fry from WAKO club member Ruth Warner, it was discovered that the plan actually worked. Two strikes and a Home Run were acceptable. The fry ate micro worms like little gluttons. Since they were all hatched at the same time, sibling cannibalism was not a problem. After a month, frozen blood worms were added. After two months, the fry really put on weight with baby red worms. At three months they are several inches long, easily sexable, and ready for their very own large tank.

Conclusions:

1. The Gularis is a very large fish – many don’t read books and get considerably larger than “the book says.”
2. They are best bred as a group. This will allow the males to take out their aggression on each other, floating thermometers, and just about anything else in the tank. Your females will thank you.
3. Their “Group home” should be a 20-gallon long tank minimum. Of course a 30-gallon and up is better. The group can consist of 6-9 fish. Please make sure you have 2 or 3 males in the group. The dominant male will be the breeder – this is nature’s way. An egg requires genes from both the male and female and your dominant male has the best genes.
4. A tank with a painted bottom and side works best to maintain cleanliness. Painting the bottom also prevents “fish vertigo”.
5. It’s hard to fill these huge eaters up. A diet of flake and frozen food are like a meal of “petites fours” for them. To really put the weight on and keep it there, there is nothing finer than red worms. To avoid re-mortgaging your house, raise

your own in large container of peat mixed with potting soil. Feed cooked oatmeal, leave alone and harvest after a month or two.

6. I admit to using plastic plants for cover. Plastic plants come with a plastic base for burying in the gravel. Since a clean tank has no gravel, a dab of Sealastic on a piece of slate will cement to the plant base and keep it anchored and on the tank bottom.
7. Massive eaters need weekly water changes right? 20% is about right and I like to leave the water in a bucket to age overnight.
8. Join your local Killie Club to obtain the collective experiences of many.

Best wishes to you and may your journey be far shorter and more successful!

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## **November Club Communications:**

### **Club Business:**

1) Brad Swanson got a terrific price on the hinges & screws for the collapsible killie racks through eBay. The prototype that Brad & John built was brought to the MKKA meeting. We are planning to offer stand sponsorship for the new racks. This will really offset the club's costs & not drain the club's treasury. Stand sponsorship will be \$20 per stand. If you have an interest, please let Craig know and bring a check to the next meeting or mail it to me. [See address below – Ed.] 3 people sponsored a rack at the October meeting.

2) There was a turnout of 18 people at the October meeting on Thursday night. I believe there are reasons why we had such a great turnout, aside from our great looks. We offered pizza, killie eggs, (plants that I forgot to bag up), plus we had a project going on, (collapsible stands) and a program agenda. We gave members and visitors a reason to come out to a meeting. We are doing things in the club. They could see that we were not just having a social supper. They want to know how to raise and breed killies. People are hungry for information and this club has several experienced killie hobbyists who can share their experiences. We need to have pairs of fish and eggs at every meeting. I plan on bringing at least ten pairs of killies to the meeting and I will email the list before the meeting so members can see what will be there. Because I have a cost discount I think that we should do a small hard goods raffle at the meetings again. It would add a little excitement and make the club some money too. Anyone that has extra plants should bring them too.

Any more ideas or suggestions from club members on how to make the club stronger and keep getting members to come out to our meetings are more than welcome! Man it was great to see so many hobbyists at the meeting. Craig.

3) The MKKA 2009 show will be the 11th, 12th, & 13<sup>th</sup> of September, 2009.

### **Kudos:**

Thanks to Brad Swanson and John Aldrich for building the prototype killie rack before the October meeting.

### **Fish and Plants Available:**

### **Upcoming Affiliate Shows:**



**Wanted:**

I am looking for a Misaje female. I just lost one the other day.  
Bob Carter – fishkeeperbob@comcast.net

**Miscellaneous:**

If anyone needs any live food cultures, email me before the next meeting. But please, not on the day of the meeting. Craig – [killifish777@comcast.net](mailto:killifish777@comcast.net)

**Directions to Craig Rees' apartment:**

Take I 494 to the Penn Avenue exit. Go south on Penn to 102<sup>nd</sup> street. (This is the last street before Old Shakopee road.) Turn right on 102<sup>nd</sup>. Craig's apartment is set back from the corner. Look for the Pennbrooke Apartment sign.

Buzz the party room and take the elevator located to the right to the third floor.

2400 West 102<sup>nd</sup> Street Apartment 123  
Bloomington  
**952-888-1806**

**MKKA 2008 Calendar of Events:**

**Saturday April 19, 2008** was at the home of Bruce Cameron.

Social time started at 7:00 pm and the meeting started at 7:30 pm. 651-633-6484

**Thursday, May 15, 2008** was at the home of Bob Carter

Social time started at 7:00 pm and the meeting started at 8:00 pm. 651-633-4351

**Thursday, June 19, 2008** was at the home of Milo Squires.

Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm. 952-448-4153

**Saturday, July 19, 2008**, was at the home of Mike and Erin Kromrey

Social time starts at 4:00 pm and the meeting starts at 4:30 pm.

**Saturday, August 9, 2008** cancelled

**Tuesday, August 12, 2008:** was at the home of Craig Rees

Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm. 952-403-6038.

**Thursday, September 11, 2008** was the day we loaded the show equipment from Robin's garage to take to the hotel. We started around **1 pm**. (Thanks, Craig and Milo!) Robin touched up the paint on any killie racks that needed it.

**Friday September 12, 2008** was the day we did the show set-up at Canterbury inn in Shakopee.

**Saturday September 13, 2008** was the 15<sup>th</sup> annual MKKA killifish show.

**Sunday September 14, 2008** was the fish auction and awards presentation. There was a killie talk by Jim Gasior at 10 am.

Thursday, September 18, 2008 was at the home of Robin Engelking. Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm. This is the post-show meeting. 763-560-5038.

Thursday, October 16, 2008 was at the home of Craig Rees. Social time starts at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm 952-403-6038.

**Thursday, November 20, 2008** is scheduled to be at the home of Craig Rees. We will take nominations for Board members for the 2009 year. 952-403-6038.

**Thursday, December 18, 2008** is scheduled to be at the home of Milo Squires. We need to elect officers this month. 952-448-4153.