



Amazon Research Center For Ornamental Fishes

ARCOF

FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER

Moving Beyond the COVID 19 Pandemic

Although we are still dealing with a myriad of issues associated with the global pandemic, we are happy to share with you some of the things we were able to accomplish in 2021.

- Completed construction of all the large tanks in the Aquarium with the remaining materials on their way.
- Received official standing from the Peruvian Government as a receiving center.
- Collected from customs and later released Tigrinus Catfish back into the Amazon River.
- Began our "Talk with the Experts" online series and now have followers from around the world.
- Hosted our first visiting professor at the research center this past summer, Dr. Eric Thomas University of the Pacific.
- To all who have supported us, we thank you. Your support has helped us purchase the items below as well as keeping the research center operational.
- The 21' x 6' x 6" acrylic panel and the tunnel tank are pictured below.





Volunteers and Interns

We will start taking volunteers and interns beginning June of 2022 and these opportunities will be available year-round. We will post the application for volunteers/interns in January 2022 on our website <https://www.amazonresearchcenter.org/> on January 8, 2022.

In brief, volunteers and interns will be housed in the dormitories that are on site at the research center. The dorms are double or triple occupancy. Each dorm has its own



bathroom with hot and cold water and air conditioning. Laundry facilities are available and there is a communal kitchen, some meals are provided. You must be 18 years of age or older. Consideration will be given to individuals under the age of 18 if they are accompanied by an adult. Look for more detailed information on our website.

Research Center Recognition

ARCOF applied for and was awarded a \$2500 grant from The Ohio Cichlid Association's Jim Smith Endowment Fund <https://www.ohiocichlid.com/jim-smith-fund>. This fund is dedicated to supporting those who do work



furthering cichlid or catfish research, education, or conservation. It was founded in 2003 to honor the late Jim Smith, a beloved and long-time OCA board member, to continue the good work he did during his life. Our application focused on the Junior Conservationist program based out of the Aquarium.

The aquarium will be used as an environmental education center for the school systems in the Iquitos area. The school districts will have the opportunity to visit the aquarium. While visiting the Aquarium the school children will be introduced to the environmental damage that is happening in the Amazon region and ways to overcome this environmental degradation. A key initiative to help create an eco-friendly philosophy within the peoples of the Peruvian Amazon is through the education of the children.

Over the summer of 2021 we were able to spend significant time at the research center and during that time we were able to meet with some key organizations that have already instituted programs to save the natural resources of the Peruvian Amazon. Amazon-Forever is one of those organizations. A key learning that Amazon-Forever shared with us was the years of failure in trying to educate the children of the Peruvian Amazon. They utilized a "standard age appropriate" approach that had little or no impact. Approximately, five years ago they reengineered their program and invented a back story of how the Amazon was created and how Grandfather Tree comes every 100 years to see if mankind is taking care of his forest and rivers.

In 2000, Grandfather Tree was very saddened by the encroachment of man with the resultant destruction and degradation. As a result, he brought his grandson “Huayo” to life <https://youtu.be/uZV1U5JwNvo>. Huayo is here to help teach the children how to take care of the Amazon. This program has been hugely successful.



A key element of Aquarium is our “junior conservationist” program in which the children will be introduced to the fish that are being captured for the aquarium trade as well as the environmental damage that is being done and how it impacts the fish negatively. After meeting with Amazon-Forever we are

adding to our program and have created our mascot the river princess “Nalda”. Nalda will be introduced to the children as a friend of Huayo’s. It is a common myth among the Amazon natives that the pink river dolphin can turn into a human. Nalda will be a pink river dolphin who has turned into a human to help teach the people how we are hurting the rivers, the fish and all the animals that live in the Amazon River Basin. She will look very similar to the women of the Bora tribe and wear traditional dress.

Utilizing age specific educational techniques, the junior conservationist program with Nalda as its leader will initially focus on children ages 3 – 11. This group will be further divided into the following age groups: 3-5, 6-8, and 9-11. The program follows a similar structure as that utilized by the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts of America; in that there are activities, tasks, readings, and knowledge challenges that must be met to advance. Built into the activities are the concepts of conservation, sustainable environments, renewable resources, and the ecology of the fish of the Amazon River Basin.

2021 It’s a Wrap – Year End Goal!

We are dedicated to making a difference in the ornamental fish trade. We are nearing completion of the Aquarium and we need you to help us raise \$10,000 by year end. [Join us](#) today, help us to reach our goal.



Looking through the tunnel tank



Talk with the Experts

Last Spring we launched our “Talk with the Experts” webinars. Below we have highlighted some of our additional speakers.

Monika Bohn, Global Center for Species Survival - Indianapolis Zoo. “IUCN Red Lists, EDGE Lists, Biodiversity Indicators”

With over ten years’ experience of monitoring the status and trends of biodiversity, Monni has worked extensively with the IUCN and has become a self-confessed taxonomic “jack of all trades”. After initially studying mammals in a primarily terrestrial setting, she has subsequently branched out to focus on the precarious status of the often overlooked, underappreciated, yet ecologically important species groups of the world, such as reptiles, molluscs, dung beetles and spiders. At the same time, her research interests became increasingly aquatic, and she has recently taken over the role of freshwater conservation coordinator at the Global Center for Species Survival at Indianapolis Zoo. Previously based at the Zoological Society of London, Monni has been involved in other globally important initiatives: the Living Planet Index is a global biodiversity indicator which tracks the world’s progress towards international biodiversity conservation targets and takes centerstage in WWF’s Living Planet Report; and the EDGE of Existence program, which promotes research and conservation action for Evolutionary Distinct and Globally Endangered species.



Michael Köck, “Reintroduction of Goodeids using the Example of the Tequila Splitfin”



Born in January under Capricorn, the half goat and half fish sign of the zodiac, I felt right from the beginning that I would be involved with fish. I remember my father always having a aquarium in our home and at the early age of eight I had my first tank. By twelve my focus had broadened and to the many species of tetras. My interest continued to grow to numerous other fish groups except cichlids. In 1998 I show how became stranded with livebearers when I got my first Goodeids for an exhibition at my local fish club. For a short time, I dabbled with swordtails and platyfish, but it wasn’t long before I was back with Goodeids. I worked in pet shops while completing my Masters in Zoology (sexual dimorphism of the Guppy) until 2004, when I took on a yearlong project with Scleractinia corals at the Vienna Zoo. In 2005 the Vienna Zoo hired me full time and within two years I was promoted to curator of the Haus des Meeres – Aqua Terra Zoo where I still work today. My Goodeids joined me with my zoo supporting the keeping and conservation of

the Goodeid. In 2009 I was able to establish the Goodeid Working Group and today my facility has expanded to over 170 aquariums in the HdM. Our focus is primarily Goodeids, with a few Poecilids and several threatened Leuciscids. Goodeids and Mexican fish are still my passion. I try to visit Mexico at least one a year to watch the fish in the natural habitat. My big fishy dream is to be able to live in Mexico one day among my beloved fish.

