



Amazon Research Center For Ornamental Fishes

ARCOF

SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER

Results of the Raffle!

We want to send out a big **THANK YOU** to all who purchased a raffle ticket (or more!) for the trip to the Research Center in the Peruvian Amazon. Anthony and I had been talking about doing a raffle for quite a long time, but we felt it was important that the Center be farther along in its development before we offered a trip via a raffle. The raffle raised \$8485, all of which will go towards the opening of the Aquarium. We are very excited that this dream is becoming a reality. We could not do this without your support. Please stay tuned for more information about the grand opening scheduled for July 1, 2022.

With a great deal of pleasure we are happy to announce the winner of the raffle was Alexander Lehner.



Alexander is 49 years old, married and has three sons. He works in his family-owned bakery, that has been in his family over 150 years. He loves animals and in his fish room he has approximately 50 aquariums. He was eight years old when he got his first aquarium with guppies, tetras and Ancistrus. Over the years he added more aquariums and began breeding discus and plecos. After a break of nearly 20 years, Alexander got back into the hobby with a bang, and added a new fish room. Currently, Alexander has approximately 60 types of corydoras, Scleromystax, aspidoras, brochis and several types of ancistrus and Tatia, many of which he breeds. Congratulations, Alexander!

Anthony and Renee Mazeroll

Volunteers and Interns

We are happy to accept applications for volunteers and interns beginning this summer, 2022. Volunteers and Interns will be housed in the dormitories that are double or triple occupancy. All dorms have their own bathroom with hot and cold running water. The facility has access to laundry services and meals will be



provided. There are a limited number of dormitory rooms. Consequently, the number of volunteers and interns we can accept is variable dependent on housing availability. The good news is we will be accepting applications throughout the year. If you are interested in volunteering at the research center or doing an internship please go to our website



amazonresearchcenter.org. Look for the “Get Involved” tab and click on volunteer/intern. Scroll down until you see the “complete form” button. At this time, you must show proof of receiving the COVID vaccine. You can also contact Dr. Anthony Mazeroll directly at amaze@amazonresearchcenter.org for more information.



Conservation Projects

It has been several months since we have updated you about Tigrinus Catfish (*Brachyplatystoma tigrinum*) that came to the Center via Peruvian customs. A large shipment of these fish was confiscated as part of a larger illegal shipment. The fish were divided between two organizations for care. Last summer we applied to the Ministry of Fishes to reintroduce the fish under our care. The response we received from the Ministry was a surprise. At that time, we had been caring for these fish for approximately 6 months and all of the fish were doing well. The Tigrinus Catfish is a difficult fish to care for, in part because they are well known to be poor eaters. The Ministry was impressed that our fish were doing so well, subsequently, they asked us to not reintroduce our fish, but to determine if we could develop a sustainable breeding program for this fish. We have now had these fish in our care for a little over a year and all continue to do well. No breeding yet, they are too young, but we will keep you posted.



A second project the Center has undertaken is a pilot aquaculture project with the Red Pencil Fish. The Red Pencil Fish is one of two fish listed as critically endangered by the IUCN in the Iquitos, Peru region. The fish was first recognized in 2000 and accurately described in 2001. Because of its brilliant red coloring the fish quickly became popular in the aquarium trade and within 10 years the fish became endangered. To date this fish has not been found outside of the flood plain of the upper Rio Nanay, in the vicinity of the village of Alvarenga. In short, its range is restricted and could become extinct. The habitat of the Red Pencil Fish is the soft acidic water of the Rio Nanay where the currents are sluggish (often found in the floodplains) and where the water is covered in dense vegetation, leaf litter and wood. ARCOF has taken on a three-phase multi-year project specific to the Red Pencil Fish. The first phase of the project was started in the summer of 2021.



Approximately 100 Red Pencil Fish were collected and brought to the research center. There the fish have been slowly acclimated to the water differences between the two regions and are being introduced into the center’s aquaculture ponds. They are being monitored for stress, disease, and reproduction. The second phase due to start the summer of 2022 entails the use of environmental DNA to establish the true range of the fish and its native habitats. This phase will occur over 2 seasons. The third phase is the creation of aquaculture ponds in the

fishing village of Alvarenga, Peru, approximately 165 km northeast of Iquitos. Alvarenga is the ideal village for this project as its location is well suited to support the aquaculture ponds for this fish.



Grand Opening of The Aquarium of the Amazon!

The grand opening is scheduled for July 1, 2022. This has been a long time coming. To all of you, we would like to share our heart felt thanks for your ongoing support. It is deeply appreciated. Keep an eye out for our summer fundraiser to help support the grand opening and operations.

The pictures below show the various projects underway:

1. The outdoor auditorium
2. The safety fence to block access to the reservoir
3. The public bathrooms, waiting on installation of the toilets and sinks
4. The new walkway from the dormitories
5. The cement "river" is poured into the floor of the Aquarium, Anthony will be present when this is done.



Talk with the Experts

In the Spring of 2021 we launched our “Talk with the Experts” webinars featuring guest speakers who are considered experts in their field. Below we have highlighted two of the speakers from earlier this year.

Paul Loiselle PhD, “Conservation efforts of Fishes from Madagascar”

Dr. Paul V. Loiselle is an enthusiastic aquarist of 50 years experience. During the course of his career, Paul has had the opportunity to study cichlids in Madagascar, West Africa, Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika, Haiti, Mexico, Central America, and the Peruvian Amazon. Emeritus Curator of Freshwater Fishes at the New York Aquarium and a Senior Conservation Fellow of the Wildlife Conservation Society, he is actively involved in conservation programs focused on the fishes of Madagascar. Paul is co-chair of the I.U.C.N.’s Madagascar Region Freshwater Fish Specialty Group. He serves as a scientific advisor to the Lake Victoria Cichlid Species Survival Program and the Madagascar Faunal Interest Group. A founding member and Fellow of the American Cichlid Association, an honorary fellow of the Association France Cichlid and a life Member of the North Jersey Aquarium Society, he is an internationally published author of numerous articles on the care and breeding of ornamental fishes and such books as *The Cichlid Aquarium*, *Your Garden Pond*, and *The Fishkeeper's Guide to African Cichlids*.



Harmony Patricio PhD, “Updates from Shoal” Working together to conserve freshwater species.

Dr. Harmony Patricio leads the development and roll-out of Shoal in the U.S. and manages freshwater fish conservation programs, in partnership with Re:wild and the IUCN SSC Freshwater Fish Specialist Group.



Harmony has over 15 years of experience in conservation research, practice, and policy. She specializes in freshwater biodiversity, and has worked extensively in Australia, Central America, Southeast Asia, and the U.S. She spent six years designing and implementing freshwater fish conservation programs in the Mekong River Basin, in close collaboration with rural fishing communities, and established the Mekong Fish Network. She has a Master of Public Administration degree in Environmental Science and Policy from Columbia University. Her Ph.D. research focused on the development of novel environmental DNA methods to assess river biodiversity and

determine distributions of rare fishes, including the critically endangered Mekong giant catfish. Harmony serves on the Freshwater Conservation Committee and Freshwater Fish Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. She is also the Co-Chair of the Freshwater Specialist Group for the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas.

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