Amazon Research Center For Ornamental Fishes

ARCOF

SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

Impacts of the COVID 19 Pandemic

Who would have thought that over one year later we would still be battling a pandemic that continues to impact us in ways yet to be discovered? For us, here at the Amazon Research Center, we have begun to experience some of the "unintended consequences" in a myriad of different ways. We were saddened to learn that two of the local fishermen we have worked with for many years passed away from COVID. Our resident director and his family have all contracted COVID, but thankfully, they are recovering. Unfortunately, the opening of the Aquarium has been delayed until the summer of 2022 as we were forced to reduce the number of workers to the bare minimum beginning January 2021. Also, the price of the acrylic for the large tanks has skyrocketed. Many of these challenges are not unique to us nor have all of the unintended consequences been adverse. The pandemic forced us to look at different ways to continue to raise money and build awareness. In the fall of 2020, we did a virtual "fall fundraiser" that raised $11,181 (111% of our goal) and in March 2021, we launched a virtual "Talk with the Experts" lecture series that has had between 65 – 105 attendees at each talk. Sometime ago, I read the following quote: "Adversity is inevitable, but difficulties or misfortunes don't have to keep you from achieving your intended goals and finding the happiness you seek in business and in life." I do not know who wrote this, but it helped me to stay the course over this past year. Adversity is a part of life. What is also a part of life is having the support, encouragement, and collaboration from our donors, volunteers, students, and other followers. To all, please accept our heartfelt gratitude and let's keep moving forward.

Anthony and Renee Mazeroll

Volunteers and Interns

Volunteers and interns for summer 2021 will be limited and you must show proof of receiving the vaccine; if you are interested, please contact Dr. Anthony Mazeroll directly at amaze@amazonresearchcenter.org.

Specialty Tanks Update

As we shared in our November 2020 newsletter, the fall fundraiser was quite successful. In February of 2020 we sent out an RFP (request for price) to the three manufacturers of acrylic in China. We were notified by all three companies that the cost of the specialty tanks had increased significantly and as a result the money raised in the fall of 2020 will only cover the cost of the "tunnel tank" pictured here. By the end of April 2021 we will be placing the order for the tunneled tank and also the flat panels to enclose the 6' x 6' x 21' large tank that encompasses the back wall of the aquarium.

Research Center Recognition

Carlos Chuquipiondo, Resident Director of the research center, has not been idle over the past several months. Carlos is actively participating in the development and editing of two books. The first is an Identification Manual to be used by Customs officials and the Ministry of Fishes to aid with fish identification in shipments that are being illegally exported out of Peru. The manual includes critical facts about each fish in order to give the fish the most appropriate care. The team is in the final phase of editing and the manual should go to the printers within the next month. The second book provides a description of the ornamental fish that are exported worldwide and their ecological importance. The book will include DNA bar codes of these fish. Additionally, the research center is working closely with the Peruvian Amazon Research Institute (IIAP), an extension of the Ministry of the Environment. ARCOF, along with the IIAP, is currently planning the reintroduction of a large shipment of Trigrinus catfish that were being illegally exported from Iquitos, Peru. The fish are being housed in the fish lab at the research center while the details are being worked out.

One of the goals of the center is to reintroduce as many fish as possible. A key element of the reintroduction process is getting these fish back to their native habitat. If you remember, in our last newsletter we discussed what an invasive species or "alien invader" is; invasive species are plants, animal, fungi, and bacteria that are non-native to the ecosystem around it. Consequently, not only do we evaluate the fish's health for reintroduction we also take the time to determine where in the vast waterway system surrounding Iquitos these fish came from.

SPRING FUNDRAISER – The Month of May!

We are dedicated to making a difference in the ornamental fish trade. This means that our work will positively impact the biodiversity with sustainable solutions for a sustainable environment.

Donate today. Your gift will be used to support one of the three programs identified below. Consider becoming a **sustaining donor**. If everyone who receives this email donated $10 a month, we would raise over $85,000 in one year.

1. **Education:**
    a. The Junior Conservationist Program.
        i. Utilizing age specific educational techniques, the junior conservationist program is divided into the following age groups: 4-6, 7-10, 11-13 and 14 and above. 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 in order 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.
        ii. **$2500 is needed to complete the content, artwork and to secure the printing.**

2. **Internships and Volunteers:**
    a. There are multiple opportunities for interns/volunteers at the center.
        i. These positions will provide critical support to the Aquarium by acting as guides and educators.
        ii. The interns/volunteers will have multiple opportunities to participate in field work, learn about scientific inquiry and help with the care and feeding of all of the animals at the research station and/or the Aquarium.
        iii. Participate in the reintroduction program.
        iv. **$1500 will house and feed an intern / volunteer for one month.**

3. **The Public Aquarium:**
    a. Filtration Systems
        i. With the delays we have experienced from the pandemic, prices have risen dramatically. We need three large filtration systems to support the main Aquarium and one for the fish lab.
        ii. **$5000 will purchase ONE filtration system.**

What else your donation supports:

• **$30,000 - Naming Rights to the 6,000 Gallon Aquarium** • **$5,000 - Naming Rights for a Room** • **$5,000 - One Filtration System** • **$2,500 - Nikon Dissecting Microscope** • **$2,000 - Nikon Binocular Microscope**	• **$1,500 - House 1 Intern for 1 Month** • **$1,000 - 400 Gallon Aquarium** • **$750 - House 1 Intern for 2 Weeks** • **$600 - 140 Gallon Aquarium** • **$300 - 100 Gallon Aquarium** • **$200 - 75 Gallon Aquarium**

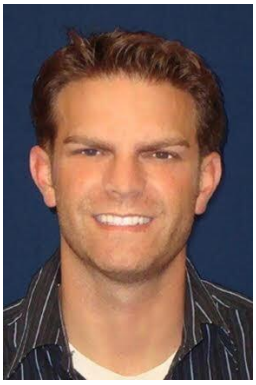
Talk with the Experts

Over the past several weeks ARCOF launched a virtual lecture series that has facilitated the opportunity for many of our followers to ask questions of individuals with extensive experience in their field. For anyone who missed any of the talks listed below, the four talks will be posted on the Amazon Research Center's YouTube site beginning 0800 (PST) Friday, May 7, 2021 – Midnight Sunday, May 9, 2021. You will need to subscribe to our site to view the talks. ARCOF YouTube

Eric Thomas, Ph.D. "Care and Breeding of Catfish and Plecos"

Eric Thomas started keeping fish in the late '60s and early '70s, when he was about 8 years old. In college, Eric studied captive husbandry of vertebrates. With his mentor, Professor Rudolfo Ruibal at UC Riverside, in 1978, Eric was the first person to breed the Budgett's frog (*Lepidobatrachus laevis)* in captivity. Eric went on to earn a Ph.D. under Dr. Paul Licht at UC Berkeley. Currently, Eric is an Associate Professor of Biology, co-chair, and director of graduate studies for the Biological Sciences Department at University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. Eric's research is split between reproductive pheromone production in *Hymenochirus* frogs and self-poisoning in *Corydoras* catfishes.

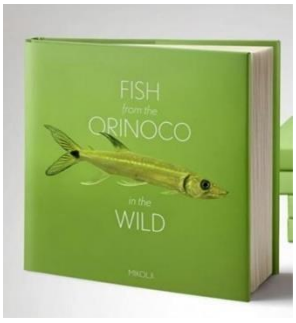
Rob McLure "Care and Breeding of Corydoras"



Rob McLure is currently a member of the Milwaukee Aquarium Society in Milwaukee, WI. With over 35 years of experience keeping fish, he has tried virtually everything from big cichlids to mini reefs. Rob has bred more than 100 species of aquarium fish and currently maintains more than 50 tanks in his small basement fish room. He has focused almost exclusively on Corydoras for the past 8 years and has managed to breed 70 species in the *Corydoradinae* group to date, almost all of those multiple times. Rob was introduced to Corydoras when his father bought a few "Julii catfish" at a local pet shop for his younger sister "Julie". Several years back, after a club breeding program started a spawning spree of 25 different fish in one year, Rob decided he wanted more focus on what he was doing. Out of all the fish spawned that year, the *Corydoras paleatus* were by far the most fun so the choice of what to focus on was easy. Rob hopes to continue breeding and enjoying Corydoras for as long as he possibly can.

Ivan Mikolj Photographer, Author, Artist "Conservation of Aquatic Environments in Colombia and Venezuela"

With more than a hundred expeditions and innumerable publications in different countries, Ivan has demonstrated the authenticity and originality of his artistic passion for photography and painting. The philosophy that moves his creative will is the urgency to preserve the aquatic ecosystems of the planet, and as a first step he considers it necessary to make known the richness and beauty of these biomes. That is why he maintains: "you cannot preserve something that you don't know exists." And to that work he has dedicated a great part of his life.



William Crampton Ph.D. "Natural History of Electric Fishes"

Dr. Will Crampton is an Associate Professor of vertebrate zoology at the University of Central Florida. His

research team investigates the ecological, behavioral, and evolutionary mechanisms that generate and regulate species diversity in the gymnotiform electric knifefishes of South and Central America. These remarkable fish generate electrostatic discharges which they use to locate objects in the dark, and to communicate. He is recognized for recording the highest-ever voltage generated by an electric eel — or any living creature, for that matter. The record-shattering 860-volt eel was discovered by Dr. Crampton during an expedition to the Tapajós River of Brazil. The eel belongs to one of two new species described recently by an international team of scientists in the journal *Nature Communications.* His research has been showcased in BBC, National Geographic, and Discovery Channel documentaries. This talk will not occur until April 24, 2020 at 10:00 AM PDT - 1:00 PM EDT – 5:00 PM UTC. If you are interested in attending the talk please click on the following link to register: https://amazonresearchcenter.dm.networkforgood.com/forms/talk-with-the-experts-william-crampton .