



California Beta Society
San Francisco Sacramento
Silicon Valley
NEWSLETTER

January/February 2008

International Show Scheduled May 17th

The second IBC International Show for CBS this season has been scheduled for May 17, 2008. We will announce the location as soon as it is final. This will be a one-day show: judging in the morning and the auction in the afternoon. The show chair is Jeremy Bolanos. If you can volunteer to help, please contact him. There will be lots of things to do.

2008 memberships due

California Beta Society memberships are due for 2008. This year memberships will take affect the day you join, not from the first of the year. Membership is \$15.00 per year. You can join by mail, at a meeting, or by PayPal. To join by PayPal, click the PayPal button on the first page of the web site and it will take you through the process.

Meeting Schedule for 2008

There was a poll on the email list asking where people were most likely to attend meetings. The East Bay won by quite a majority. So, for the time being, meetings will be held at the Round Table Pizza at 20920 Redwood Road in Castro Valley. We are looking for another place (not pizza) to hold meetings, but Round Table has the advantage of always having room. As soon as we know anything different, it will be announced on the email group.

Meetings will be scheduled for the Sacramento and San Jose areas, dates to be announced. We hope to have a schedule of meetings posted soon.

Starting with wild-type bettas, part 1

By Christine Tanner

If you've been to a CBS meeting, it's likely you've heard me mention "wild type" bettas. "Wild" or "Wild Type" betta is a term betta hobbyists use to refer to all the fish in the *Betta* genus that are not *Betta splendens*. There are currently about 60 betta species that have been described, plus at least 10 that are undescribed. More are being discovered every year, with some having been described in just the last few years.

Wild bettas are quite an assortment. *Betta persephone* is a tiny one inch long dark velvety black fish, while *Betta macrostoma* is a huge six inch stunning bright orange beauty. Wild bettas are often divided into two groups - bubblenesters and mouthbrooders. Bubblenesters reproduce in a manner similar to our *B. splendens* by building and tending a bubble nest full of eggs. Mouthbrooders go through the same spawning ritual, but the eggs are carried in the mouth of the male fish until they hatch into free swimming fry.

The bubblenesters vary from two inch wine-red *B. coccina* to the burly five inch iridescent green *B. bellica* (both of which can currently be found in my fishroom!). Mouthbrooders show the same variety with *B. albimarginata* being a tiny but eye-catching two inch miniature of its much larger relative *B. macrostoma*. There are all the colors of the rainbow, including that illusive green that we have such difficulty reproducing in *B. splendens*. Words don't do these fish justice. The photos on the internet don't compare to seeing them live in your fishtank, but they give you an idea of the beauty of these little known fish.

The problem with wild bettas, and the reason why most folks have never heard of them, is that they just are not a fish that your local fish store is likely to have in stock. For whatever reason (most likely cost), the average fish store isn't interested in marketing these beautiful fish. I'll admit that some of the species can be difficult to keep, but some of them are just as easy if not easier to keep than *B. splendens*.

For one thing, wild bettas can be kept in groups in community tanks. No need to jar up feisty males like we must do with splendens! Wild bettas will happily putter around your planted community tank and most won't bother other fish. I do find that my wilds, particularly the mouthbrooders, eat like pigs so they will out-compete less outgoing fish for food. I've kept wilds in my 80 gallon community tank, as well as with some of my West African cichlids who have similar soft water requirements.

Speaking of water requirements, it is the case that some wild bettas require very soft acidic water, particularly if the fish are wild caught specimens. In general, wild bettas come from blackwater type environments with low pH

and very little hardness. However, some species are quite content in harder water, and will even spawn in harder water conditions. Tank-raised wilds are generally less picky about water conditions than wild caught, but most species are rarely available tank-raised.

For those new to wild types, there are a few species I tend to recommend. If you would like a fish similar to *splendens*, you can try *B. smaragdina*. *Betta imbellis* and *B. mahachai* are two others that are very similar, easy to spawn, and not terribly picky about water parameters. If you'd like to try a mouthbrooding species, *B. pugnax* and *B. edithae* are two that are fairly undemanding if not terribly exciting to look at. *Betta falx* is a cute little mouthbrooder that I don't have experience with personally but I'm told they are easy to spawn.

Continued in the next newsletter



B. bellica. Photograph by Christine Tanner

California Betta Society Newsletter
1197 Burdett Way
Milpitas CA 95035



B. bellica. Photograph by Christine Tanner