

AUSTRALIA NEW GUINEA FISHES ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED

CONVENTION 2009 SYDNEY





The 2009 Convention is proudly hosted by:
The ANGFA NSW Organising Committee

CONVENTION PROGRAMME

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11

6.00-7.00 pm Venue Setup. Registration from 7 pm followed by a General Meeting (including AGM) from 8:00 pm. Members invited to come along and discuss matters related to the club and the hobby.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12

Morning Programme:

- 8.00-8.45 Registration.
8.45-9.05 Convention Opening.
Welcoming speeches by Sue Carson and ANGFA National President Lyndon Giles
- Session 1:
9.05-9.20 Rainbowfish Group –
“Preserving rarer fish in the hobby”.
9.20-10.25 Tom Barr –
“Methods for aquatic horticulture – How are non CO₂ and CO₂ enrichment different?”
10.25-10.45 Morning Tea
- Session 2:
10.45-11.30 Doug Hoese –
“Gobioid fishes from Australia and PNG”.
11.30-12.15 Michael Young –
“Colourful characters: exploring the evolutionary biology of the western rainbowfish”.
12.15-1.15 Lunch.

Afternoon Programme:

- Session 3:
1.15-1.55 Stirling Peverell –
“Conservation management of threatened freshwater elasmobranchs in Northern Australia”.
1.55-2.40 John Merrick –
“The big Murray – where to from here? Conservation of the Murray crayfish”.
2.40-3.25 Bruce Hansen –
“Perils of piscatorial pursuits”.
3.25-3.45 Afternoon Tea.
- Session 4:
3.45-5.15 Heiko Bleher –
“Adventure report”.
5.15 End of day address.

Evening/Night Programme:

- 6.00 Pre-dinner drinks.
6.30 Convention dinner.
8.00 Auction.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13

Morning Programme:

- 8.30-8.45 Registration.
Session 5:
8.45-9.05 Franz-Peter Mullenholz –
“Australia’s beautiful colours”.
9.05-9.45 Dean Gilligan –
“From genes to ecosystems: NSW Department of Primary Industries research into all three levels of aquatic biodiversity”.
9.45-10.25 Jean Joss –
“Australian (Queensland) lungfish: past, present and future”.
10.25-10.45 Morning Tea
- Session 6:
10.45-11.30 Leo O’Reilly & Gary Moores –
“Hidden gem of the north – Steve Irwin Wildlife Park”.
11.30-12.15 Culum Brown –
“Why fish are smarter than you think”.
12.15-1.15 Lunch.

Afternoon Programme:

- Session 7:
1.15-1.50 Gilbert Maebe –
“Western Australia”.
1.50-2.30 Glynn Aland –
“My island home”.
2.30-3.35 Diana Walstad –
“Why natural planted tanks are better”.
3.35-3.55 Afternoon Tea.
- Session 8:
3.55-4.45 Gunther Schmida –
“Australia’s OTHER wildlife”.
4.45-5.15 End of day/Convention closing address.



ANGFA COUNCILS/COMMITTEES

ANGFA INC. (NATIONAL):

P.O. Box 673, Ringwood, Victoria, 3134.

Web Page: <http://www.angfa.org.au>

Patrons:

Rick Datodi.

email: rickdatodi@connexus.net.au

Dr. Gerald Allen.

1 Dreyer Road, Rolystone, 6111, W.A.

email: tropical_reef@bigpond.com

Committee:

President: Lyndon Giles.

Telephone: Mobile: 0403 199 545.

email: president@angfa.org.au

Vice President: Leo O'Reilly.

Telephone: Mobile: 0438 733 789.

email: vp@angfa.org.au

Secretary: Natalie Everett.

Telephone: Mobile: 0434 869 067.

email: secretary@angfa.org.au

Treasurer/Membership Officer: Tony Tucceri.

Telephone: (03) 9329 9292.

267 Flemington Road, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051, Australia

email: treasurer@angfa.org.au

Public Officer: Neil Travis. Telephone: (03) 9300 2991.

email: ntravis@optusnet.com.au

Fishes of Sahul:

Editor: Rudie H. Kuiter.

PO Box 124, Seaford, Victoria 3198, Australia.

email: rudiekuiter@optusnet.com.au

Journal Co-ordinator and Photographer:

Neil Armstrong. Telephone: (03) 9306 4079.

email: silverbudgie@optusnet.com.au

ANGFA News:

Editor: Ken Smales. Telephone: (03) 9391 5225.

51 Cooper Avenue, North Altona, Victoria 3025, Australia.

email: ksmales@optusnet.com.au

ANGFA VICTORIA:

P.O. Box 59, Chirnside Park, Victoria. 3116.

Web Page: www.angfavic.org

President: Damian Walsh. Telephone: (03) 9332 2838.

email: dwalsh@seek.com.au

Secretary: Natalie Everett. Telephone: 0434 869 067.

email: ladykahu@gmail.com

Treasurer: Tony Tucceri. Telephone: (03) 9329 9619.

email: ttucceri@bigpond.net.au

ANGFA ACT Inc.:

Liaison Officer: Andy Wattam.

13 Fellows Street, Latham, ACT 2615.

Telephone: (02) 6254 3273.

email: awattam@pcug.org.au

or

Liaison Officer: Scott Hunt.

Telephone: (02) 6262 3347.

email: snvhunt@ozemail.com.au

ANGFA QLD INC:

P.O. Box 8135, Woolloongabba, Qld. 4102.

Web Page: <http://www.angfaqlld.org.au>

President: Leo O'Reilly.

Telephone: Mobile: 0438 733 789

email: oreilly1@bluemaxx.com.au

Secretary: Peter Johnson.

Telephone: Mobile: 0412 426 441.

email: peterjohnson@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Graeme Finsen.

Telephone: Mobile: 0423 782 642

email: finsen@optusnet.com.au

ANGFA WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

Liaison Officer: Syd Adams.

Telephone: (08) 9417 2923

Postal Address: 66 Prinsep Road, Jandakot, WA. 6164

email: sydneyadams@bigpond.com

SANFA INC:

Web Page: sanfa@bold.net.au

President: Brian Booy. Telephone: (08) 8263 6247.

Secretary: Gavin Rich. Telephone: (08) 8254 8796.

E-mail: garich@esc.net.au

Treasurer: Robin Moseby. Telephone: (08) 8362 4632.

Liaison Officer: Graham Walker. Telephone: (08) 8337 7007.

email: gwal0948@bigpond.net.au

ANGFA NORTHERN TERRITORY:

P.O. Box 756, Howard Springs, Northern Territory 0835.

Liaison Officer: Dave Wilson. Telephone: (08) 8983 1483.

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ANGFA NEW SOUTH WALES:

Web Page: <http://www.angfa-nsw.org>

President: Derek Girkin. Telephone: (02) 4362 7085.

email: mistergl@exemail.com.au

Secretary: Lyn King. Telephone (02) 9618 2584.

Memberships: Lorraine Girkin. Telephone: (02) 4362 7085.

ANGFA NORTH AMERICA:

Coordinator: Ken Boorman

Postal Address: Lisa's Lair Bookstore, 33 Courtyard Walk,
Chatham, Ontario, N7L 5S3.

Telephone: 519-352-5573.

email: lisas_lair_bookstore@kent.net

OTHER OVERSEAS GROUPS

Europe: IRC

Web Page: www.irg-online.de

President: Harro Hieronimus

Postbox 170209, D-42624, Solingen, Germany.

hh@irg-online.de

Contact: Norbert Grunwald, Rottgen 120, D-42109,

Wuppertal, Germany.

ng@irg-online.de



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SPECIAL NOTICE:

**ALL MEMBERS AND VISITORS TO THIS
CONVENTION ARE REQUESTED TO
ENSURE THAT MOBILE PHONES ARE
SWITCHED OFF DURING CONVENTION
PRESENTATIONS.**

CONVENTION ORGANISERS

The 2009 ANGFA National Convention has been organised by the ANGFA NSW Organising Committee: Derek and Lorraine Girkin, Mark Abell, Tony Tucceri, Jennifer Palmer, Ian Baddock, John Buckley, Don Peddie, Alan Powell, Ron O'Reilly, Culum Brown, Leo O'Reilly, Lyn King, Carlos Alonso, Andrew Iredale and David Lo.

The support of our sister clubs and their committees, sponsors and members also deserves special mention. Without their support and help our task would have been just that little more difficult. Thank you to Andrea Manookian and staff at the *Courtyard By Marriott*, Parramatta for their assistance with the convention.

This publication has been designed and produced by Ken Smales. Special mention and thanks to Andrew Lo for his Chinese ink drawing for the cover and used as a background throughout this publication.

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WELCOME!!

**Please use this weekend to exchange
information and make new friends
and contacts.**

**Use the pages at the back of this Souvenir
Convention Booklet to record their names
and addresses.**

Take notes, ask questions.

**This is a unique opportunity to increase your
knowledge of our aquatic environment.**

Please join in and enjoy yourself



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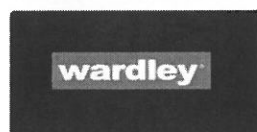
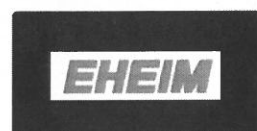
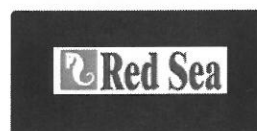
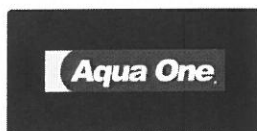
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Glynn Aland

Talk – “My Island Home”

Abstract of talk:

Glynn's talk outlines a trip taken by himself and his siblings after they lost their mother to cancer. It details the highlights of their trip to Thursday Island and then on to Mabiaug Island the ancestral home of his adopted brother's family. They then continued on to Moa Island also populated by his brother's close relatives. The talk outlines the links to the land and people using pictures that were taken of the scenery and aquatic critters that were encountered throughout the trip.

Brief biography:

Glynn was born on Thursday Island and holds a Bachelor of Applied Science Degree (Natural Systems and Wildlife Management). He became involved with ANGFA in 1993 as a hobby to get away from keeping exotic fish, lived up on the Atherton tablelands and puddle pilfered the Eastern states of Australia as both a hobby and in roles as a technician and a biologist for governmental agencies for a number of years. Glynn now lives in South East Queensland due to family commitments.



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Tom Barr

Talk – “Methods for Aquatic Horticulture – How are Non CO₂ and CO₂ Enrichment Different?”

Abstract of talk:

Aquatic planted aquariums often have seemingly contradictory methods that at first appear diametrically opposed. However, the rates of plant growth, CO₂ stability (whether enriched or low (non CO₂)) and the aquarist's own set of goals illustrate that these two general methods (and permutations in between) are more similar than is often suggested in text and on the internet. By examining how plants are able to adapt to a wide range of natural and artificial conditions, insight can be gained to better suit the aquarist's goal with planted aquariums to understand a more global holistic approach rather than basing approaches on fear and myth.

Brief biography:

Tom has maintained planted aquariums as a business and has done so for about 15 years. He has kept planted aquariums as a focus since 1989; but has had some plants in his tanks since about 1977.

Tom has spoken at many societies and meetings over the years on aquatic plants (both marine and freshwater) as well as on a wide range of other topics. He is involved with a number of local societies and is a charter member of SFBAAPS in San Francisco, CA, and SAPS (Sacramento Aquatic Plant Society). Each has about 200 and 100 members respectively. Tom has the distinction of having had articles published in Polish, German, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Swedish, Finnish, French, German, Danish, Spanish and English and several other languages. Promoting aquatic plants and challenging assumptions has been his main aquarium focus.

His CV is also quite impressive:

1994-1995 Drinking and waste water Treatment [72 unit in Engineering dept]: Sacramento State University, California;

2002 B.S. in Aquatic Biology: University of California, Santa Barbara;

2004 M.S. in Botany, University of Florida, Gainesville 2005-present;

In Progress: M.S. in Environmental Horticulture and Agronomy, University of California, Davis (Fall 2007)

Ph.D. UC Davis, Plant Sciences (anticipated: Fall 2009).





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Heiko Bleher

Talk – “Adventure Report”

Abstract of talk:

Heiko will again entertain us with another presentation on one of his fish collecting expeditions to an unknown part of the world in his pursuit of finding some new and rare species of fish, flora and fauna.

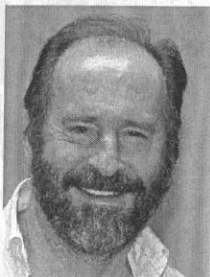
Brief biography:

Heiko Bleher is one of the best known aquarium fish collectors in the world. Heiko travels the world seeking new fish, and has had many varieties of fish named after him, including *Chilatherina bleheri*, so beloved of rainbowfish enthusiasts.

Born in war torn Germany in 1944, into a family with a history of collecting aquatic plants and fish, Heiko followed on from his grandfather and mother in developing Frankfurt's largest aquatic plant and fish establishment.

Heiko spent much of his youth in Rio de Janeiro and the Brazilian interior with his Mother and siblings. Fluent in seven languages, he has authored articles which have appeared in more than 100 publications, including *Aqua Geo* which he set up himself to highlight studies of aquatic environments worldwide.

Heiko uses the “Heiko-mobile”, a go-anywhere vehicle, built to his specifications, in quests to the last unexplored places on earth that may reveal new aquatic species. His expeditions into New Guinea have provided us with much of the knowledge of New Guinea species we have today.



Culum Brown

Talk – “Why Fish are Smarter Than You Think”

Abstract of talk:

Fish in general have had pretty bad press. Most people think they are pretty dumb having just a 3 second memory, others don't even think of them as animals at all. Despite all the myths and misconceptions, fish are much more intelligent than we give them credit for. This talk will introduce you to the fishes world, enable you to see things from their perspective and will be rounded off with some fascinating fishy facts that are bound to make you think twice about our fishy friends intellect.

Brief biography:

Dr Culum Brown is an Australian Research Fellow & Senior Lecturer, Department of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

His qualifications include Ph.D. August 2000 (Australian Post-graduate Award), Department of Zoology and Entomology, The University of Queensland; Class 1 Honours (Zoology) The University of Queensland 1995; Bachelor of Science The University of Melbourne. Major in Zoology, 1993.

Employment has included positions in various departments of Universities both here and overseas. He is also an author of over 30 peer reviewed research articles, two edited volumes on fish cognition and behaviour and a number of reports for both government organisations and private foundations. Culum has received over \$2 million dollars in research funding in the last 7 years.

Culum's research interests: Of all animals on earth fishes are the least understood. It's something of an irony given that the earth is largely covered by water and there are more species of fish than all the amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals combined. Contrary to the common misconception that fish are completely stupid (eg the 3 second memory fallacy), fish are in fact rather clever. My research has shown that they have good memories, recognise each other, can be left or right handed (finned), have personalities and even have culture.

Besides busting a bunch of fishy myths, his research has direct implications for welfare, fisheries and aquaculture.



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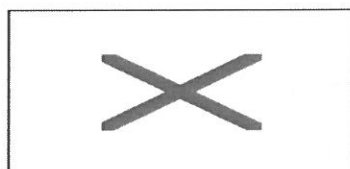
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Dean Gilligan

**Talk – “From genes to ecosystems:
NSW Department of Primary Industries research
into all three levels of aquatic biodiversity”**

Abstract of talk:

The NSW Department of Primary Industries has a team of 48 staff and students working on aquatic ecosystems research projects. These cover a broad spectrum of issues and knowledge gaps and include broad state-wide surveys of fish communities and assessments of river health, to site specific habitat rehabilitation studies, studies into the biology of specific species of interest and down to the level of genetic diversity within populations. Included in these are studies into the recovery of threatened species and populations and the detection, impacts and control of freshwater pests. This presentation will touch on some of the projects that may be of interest to ANGFA members and will present some of the more interesting results and outcomes.

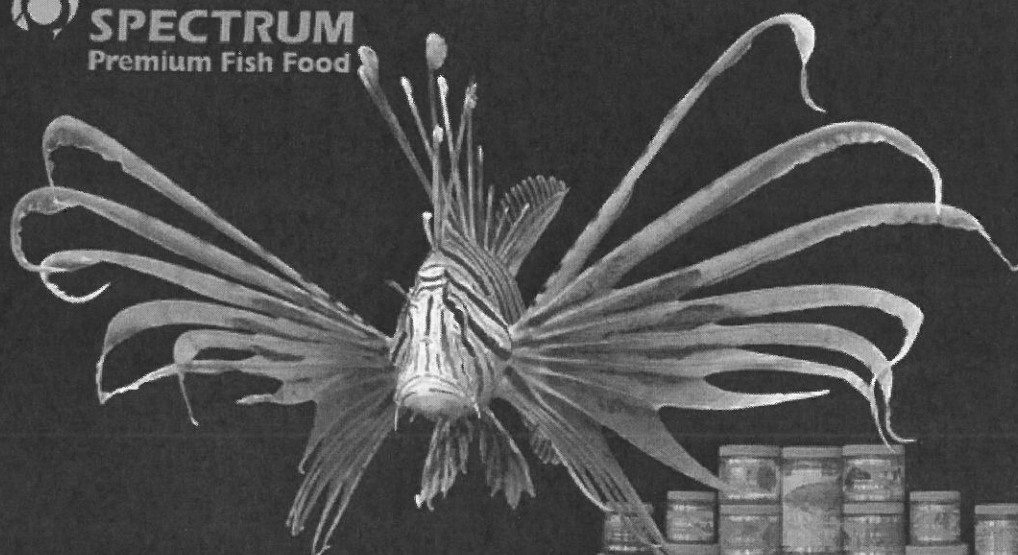
Brief biography:

Dean Gilligan leads NSW Department of Primary Industries Freshwater Biodiversity & Habitats research team. He joined NSW Fisheries in 1998 and has undertaken research into fish passage, state-wide freshwater fish monitoring, environmental flows, threatened species biology and recovery, carp impacts and control and population genetics. He has worked from the Port Stephens Fisheries Centre, Narrandera Fisheries Centre (where he spent 7 years as Director of Research) and is now based at Batemans Bay Fisheries Office. He has produced 54 scientific outputs and has co-supervised 12 post-graduate students at various Universities.

Dean has had a passion for fish and conservation from an early age, having been a home aquarist since his early teens. He has been a member of ANGFA for around 10 years, but regrettably hasn't had much chance to contribute at meetings or field-days. His research interests include: State-wide freshwater fish monitoring; environmental water allocations and fish; captive breeding and reintroduction of threatened fish; Carp control and fish genetics.



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Bruce Hansen

Talk – “Perils of Piscatorial Pursuits”

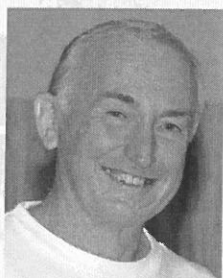
Abstract of talk:

Bruce's talk will focus on fish keeping and his fish collecting experiences over many years throughout Australia but shouldn't be considered a travelogue.

Brief biography:

Bruce has been catching and keeping fish for over 50 years and was overjoyed to find that other grown men did the same thing – so he joined ANGFA back in 1983. At that stage he had no fish and one old 4 foot aquarium in the garage that hadn't seen water for 15 years. Soon he was right into the fascinating hobby of native aquarium fish and all that goes with it.

Since then he has made numerous collecting and surveying trips to many parts of Australia and even one to New Guinea, most of which have been shared with fellow ANGFA members through the pages of the various club publications. He contributed 6 years as National President of ANGFA, as well as several terms on the Committee of ANGFA (Queensland) and is an ardent supporter of the educational charter of all such hobby organisations. He has also served as a hobby representative on several government committees.



Although he has maintained a wide variety of native species (from Ambassids to Zenarchopterus) he has always had a soft spot for Blue-eyes as well as an ongoing interest in native aquatic plants. Over the years he has amassed a significant library of “mostly aquatica” and is always interested in checking out the natural history sections of bookstores for new or second-hand “fish books”.

Bruce has usually called fish-keeping his “sanity-saver” from his “real” job as a suburban G.P. and moved to Cairns in late 2006 to semi-retire and spend more time with his grand-children.

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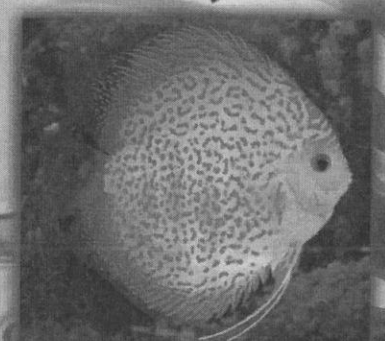
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Doug Hoesé

Talk – “Goboid Fishes of Australia and New Guinea”

Abstract of talk:

Gobioid fishes are one of the the largest groups of modern fishes, with over 2000 species (about 400 in Australia). Gobioid fishes include about 7% of all known fish species.

This group of fishes is diverse in adaptations and many species have unusual habits, which are of general biological interest, such as semi-terrestrial life style, air breathing, sex change and commensal associations with invertebrates. Because of their small size (10-500 mm) the species are often suitable for ecological, behavioural and physiological studies, and can be easily maintained for breeding or experimental studies. However because of their small size, little was known of their taxonomy until recent years.

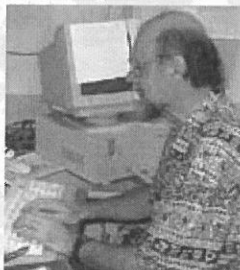
About one quarter of the species are found in freshwater environments. The group has had a long evolutionary history associated with freshwater and mangrove environments, with a very major diversity of higher taxa (genera, families and subfamilies) in the group found in these environments. Recent work has shown that many species previously thought to be widespread are much more localised. Some genera, such as *Glossogobius* and *Rhinogobius* may contain as many as 50-100 species.

Many of the freshwater species are diadromous. Many species breed in freshwater and larval stages disperse into the sea. After a year or more the advanced larval stages and juveniles migrate back into freshwater and adults of some species migrate further upstream. In many areas (New Guinea, Philippines and Indonesia), species have become landlocked. In some lakes mini species flocks are known in lakes of a relatively recent origin. Many other species are found only in swiftly flowing streams.

The talk will focus on species from Australia and New Guinea.

Brief biography:

Dr Doug Hoesé joined the Australian Museum in 1971



He worked as a research scientist and manager becoming Head of Science in 1999. He has published over 80 scientific and popular articles, dealing with the systematics and ecology of shore fishes of the world. His research interests are the systematics and general ecology of shore fishes of the Indo-

Pacific. He is currently a Senior Fellow at the Australian Museum.

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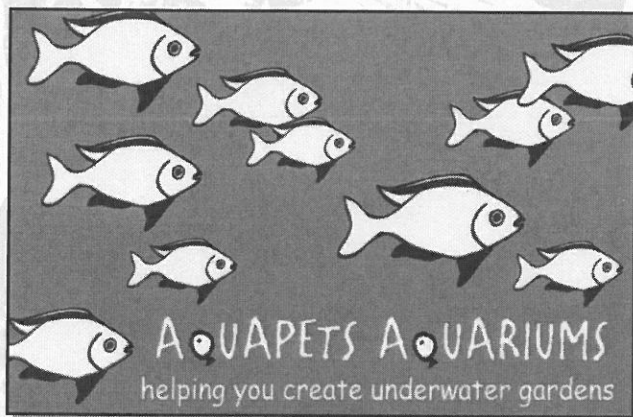
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Jean Joss

Talk – “Australian (Queensland) lungfish: past, present and future”

Abstract of talk:

The first vertebrates recognisable as tetrapods appeared in the mid-Devonian. It is generally agreed that their ancestors were lobe-finned fish. What is not agreed is how close either of the extant groups of lobe-finned fish, lungfish or coelacanths, is to the actual ancestor of the tetrapods. The soft anatomy of living lungfish shares many similarities with that of living amphibians. These similarities are not present in either coelacanths or any members of the other extant bony fish, the ray-finned fishes. Many very well preserved lungfish from the Devonian possess specialized features that would appear to exclude them from being ancestral to tetrapods. I am hypothesizing that lungfish in the Devonian may have included metamorphosis in their life cycle and that neoteny may have been an early corollary. These reproductively mature larval lungfish would not have had the specialised features of the metamorphosed adults. They may have had a closer relationship than currently thought with the ancestral lobe-finned fish, believed to be a panderichthiad fish. Living lungfish have a number of larval features, which suggest paedomorphosis. Also of interest is the very large genome of living lungfish, which, in some families of urodele amphibians, is a feature correlated with neoteny. In this talk, Jean will present a precis of lungfish in the past and present and make some comments on the future of the Australian lungfish.

Brief biography:

Jean Joss is a Professor in Biological Sciences at Macquarie University, best known for her studies on the Australian lungfish. In 1993 established spawning ponds for lungfish on campus at Macquarie University. Eggs are collected each season and reared to provide embryonic, larval, juvenile and sub-adult lungfish for research. She has been president of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW and the Asia and Oceania Society for Comparative Endocrinology. She has presented invited talks all over the world, including the Jenkinson Memorial Lecture at Oxford University in 2007. She is currently co-editing a book on the Biology of Lungfishes and will retire in 2011.



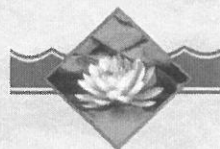
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Gilbert Maebe

Talk – “Western Australia”

Abstract of talk:

In Vol.8 no. 2 of “*Fishes of Sahul*” (1994) was an article from Keith Hand about the rainbowfish *Melanotaenia australis* from the Carawine Gorge. Together with Franz-Peter and Ulli Müllenholz they did a trip to Western Australia with this fish being their main goal. After contacting Keith Hand they started planning. They eventually arrived in Australia and started in Perth and arrived at the Carawine Gorge 15 days later. In between they enjoyed the natural beauty of Western Australia: flowers, Pinnacles, dolphins at Monkey Mia. They met up with Keith at Carnarvon. They saw many things of interest but most important to Gilbert were the creeks and rivers they passed. They caught fishes in the Murchison, Ashburton, Robe and Fortescue Rivers, in Bea Bea Creek and Carawine Gorge.

In 2004 they made a trip to the Kimberleys starting in Darwin and drove via Timber Creek, Kununura, Drysdale River Station, Honeymoon Bay, Mount Barnett Station, Bell Creek camping ground, Windjana Gorge, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Bungle Bungle, Lake Argyle and back to Darwin in 18 days. They fished many creeks and rivers along the way. Gilbert also had the opportunity to make a few fish safaris with Dave Wilson at the end of this trip. All this will be shown to you in a 40 minutes presentation.

Brief biography:

Gilbert has been an aquarist for over 40 years. His special interest in rainbowfishes dates back to the late 1970's. He became a member of ANGFA in 1984 and did several egg shipments from Ron Bowman. In 1986 he was co-founder of IRG in Europe and has organised 4 conventions for them in Belgium. Together with the Müllenholzes and his wife he has made 8 trips to Australia the first in 1990. He has also visited Irian Jaya (Lake Sentani and Biak Island) in 1991. Gilbert has taken part in 5 ANGFA conventions, this being his 6th. Back home in Belgium he is President of the Rainbowfish Division of IRG which has about 30 members. Gilbert has given over 400 presentations in Europe, USA and Australia on Australian freshwater fishes. He is also a judge of the Belgian Association of Aquarists as well as an extensive author of articles for IRG and the Belgian aquaristic magazine. On top of this he maintains 60 tanks all with rainbows and other fishes of Sahul and hopes to be doing this for many more years to come.



Dr. John R. Merrick

Talk – “The Big Murray – Where to from here? Conservation of the Murray crayfish”

Abstract of talk:

With increasing political awareness of water resource problems, especially in the Murray-Darling Basin, there has been rising concern for conservation of river faunas. One of the iconic species of this region is the Murray crayfish (*Euastacus armatus*). This is the world's second largest freshwater crayfish and endemic to a range including parts of SA, VIC, NSW and ACT. It is important in recreational fisheries and regional tourism, but populations are still declining due to habitat modification, degradation and overfishing.

This talk briefly summarises the major aspects of biology of *E. armatus* and identifies parts that are still poorly known; key results of very recent studies are presented. The current conservation status and management situation is outlined and finally, some recommendations for short-term conservation and general longer-term management are provided.

Brief biography:

With a PhD for studies on Australian freshwater fishes, John's research has involved extensive field-work on streams, lakes and dams throughout eastern and northern Australia. While actively investigating diversity of fishes and crayfishes, research programmes have emphasised the practical and applied aspects of freshwater fishery management as well as conservation.

Some 80 publications include 6 internationally distributed books, as well as many refereed papers and general articles which discuss aquaculture, ecology, reproduction and taxonomy. In addition to teaching and post-graduate supervision at Macquarie University, Dr Merrick has undertaken other activities related to publishing. These include: editing of Scientific Journals and Conference Proceedings, as well as refereeing of papers or articles.





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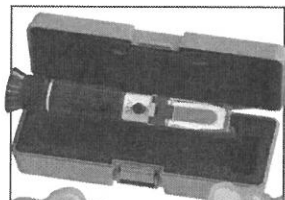


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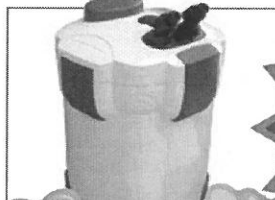
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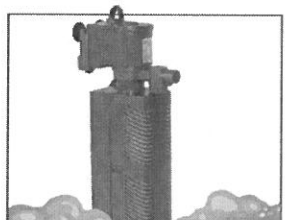


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Gary Moores & Leo O'Reilly

Talk – “Hidden Jewels of the North”

Abstract of talk:

This will be a combined presentation given by both Gary Moores and Leo O'Reilly and will be about the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve on Cape York and the incredible diversity of aquatic and plant life that lives in the springs on the reserve.

Brief biography (Gary):

Gary Moores has been an ANGFA member for over 10 years and the Victorian Field Trip Coordinator for 4 years.



Over the years Gary has been able to combine his two passions in life, regularly travelling to remote regions of the country and surveying the waterways in these areas. For Gary it's the entire experience, from the landscape to the flora and fauna and of course aquatic fauna.

“I love big ugly aggressive native fish, the stranger the better, I have a real soft spot for Grunters and currently keep 14 different species.” This theme continues with his two pet crocodiles!

Gary has recently branched out into the species *Melanotaenia trifasciata* in its many location varieties. After many years he has now discovered the joy of propagating and distributing native fish for others to enjoy.

Brief biography (Leo):

Leo O'Reilly has been a keen sport fisherman for many years, although his target was larger fish such as Barramundi, Saratoga, and Bass. He discovered native aquarium fish during a chance meeting with Dave Wilson in 2003 and soon joined ANGFA.



Under the watchful eye of people like Dave Wilson and Bruce Hansen it didn't take long for ANGFA and small native fish to become an obsession (much to the annoyance of she-who-must-be-obeyed). Living in QLD and travelling regularly to the Northern Territory and northern Queensland only helped to inflame his passion. Within a year he was field trip coordinator for the Queensland Club and two years later became President. A new house provided the opportunity for a large fish room and this was quickly filled. His passion for fish was quickly followed by an expansion into aquatic plants and planted tanks. His fishing exploits feature regularly on the pages of *In-Stream* magazine, *ANGFA News*, and occasionally, *Fishes of Sahul*. He enjoys travelling to remote places and specialises in keeping those fish that are hard to get or difficult to raise.

Franz-Peter Müllenholz

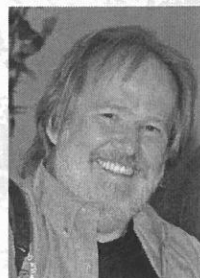
Talk – “ABC: Australia's Beautiful Colours”

Abstract of talk:

Franz-Peter and his wife Ulli have now travelled 16 times to Australia – they regard it as their second home – and have travelled to many parts of this wide brown land – sometimes together with Hilda and Gilbert Maebe. Franz-Peter's presentation will show you Australia in all its beautiful colours – how they as tourists see it and what they do to explore and discover the fantastic wildlife of Australia.

Franz-Peter wants to show you through his large collection of images his interpretation of the country we live in.

Brief biography:



Franz-Peter Müllenholz: 57 years old; project manager at AXA Germany (Insurance)

- Fish keeper and fish collector for over 40 years – but currently without aquariums
- Long-time member of ANGFA and IRC
- 16 fishing trips to Australia
- More than 20 trips to other places all over the world
- Keen photographer and a Nikon fanatic and specialises in producing slide and multimedia presentations (has used in excess of 16 projectors for single presentations); doesn't play sport and last but not least is constantly hungry (and loves Aussie beer).



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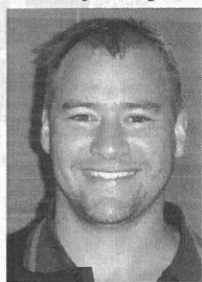
Talk – “Conservation management of threatened freshwater elasmobranchs in Northern Australia”

Abstract of talk:

Stirling will discuss his work on the NHT sawfish project and what has been learned about the life cycle of these magnificent creatures.

Brief biography:

Stirling completed a MSc on sawfish (*Pristidae*) in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland, Australia, and has over 12 years experience with QLD DPI&F as a Fisheries Biologist. Stirling was Principal Investigator on the NHT sawfish project entitled “Development of a Gulf community based natural resource monitoring program, with sawfish as an initial focus”. He is also a co-investigator on several freshwater elasmobranch projects across northern Australia and has produced numerous technical reports on *Glyphis* and *Pristis* in collaboration with other organizations. He has also published papers on the distribution and ecology of sawfishes and *Glyphis glyphis* in Queensland.



Gunther Schmida

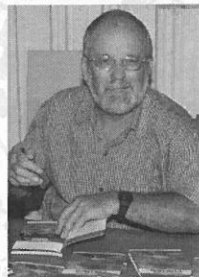
Talk – “Australia’s OTHER Wildlife”

Abstract of talk:

This will be a PowerPoint Presentation with 160 “slides”. Basically it covers freshwater fish, frogs and reptiles with 90% of the images never seen before. Gunther promises it will blow you away – he’s amazed at what can be done with PP.

Brief biography:

Gunther Schmida is in his 55th year of almost uninterrupted fish keeping and has photographed his charges for over 48 years. For the past 38 years his interests were focussed on native freshwater fish resulting in four books, his latest the recently published “*Wild Guide Freshwater Fishes*”, a small guide aimed not at fish keepers, but rather as an introduction of this unique part of our fauna to the general public.



He has been a member of ANGFA QLD for over 23 years. He was one of the original people attempting to form an ANGFA group in Sydney before that, and is well known to members nationwide.

Now living in the hinterland of the Gold Coast, his interest in native fish is greater than ever and his quest to create superb images of all native fishes and their various forms continues on a larger scale than ever before. Although native fish are his main interest he is also very fond of reptiles, frogs, crustaceans, and all kinds of other wildlife including aquatic and terrestrial plants. He has travelled widely in the pursuit of his subjects.

Having spent most of 2008 in the Northern Territory creating the naturalistic interiors of reptile exhibits at Darwin's new Crocosaurus Cove tourist attraction, he used the opportunity to photograph as much as he possibly could of the Northern Territories wildlife.

He will present some of the results of this venture at the convention.

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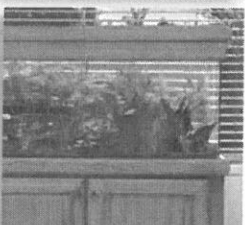
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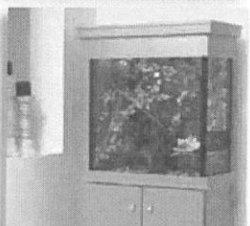
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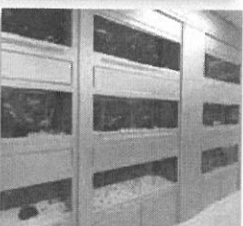
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Michael Young

Talk – “Colourful Characters: Exploring the evolutionary biology of the western rainbowfish”

Abstract of talk:

Like most rainbowfishes, the western rainbowfish *Melanotaenia australis* (Castelnau 1875) exhibits geographic variation in its phenotype (its colour and shape). In fishes, natural selection via predation can act upon the genetic component of phenotype, leading to the evolution of among-population differences in phenotype when predation regimes differ. I hypothesise that the differences in colouration and body shape exhibited by *M. australis* are the result of a balance between selective forces. In areas where predation risk is high, cryptic (camouflaged) phenotypes are selected for, and in areas where predation risk is low, conspicuousness is selected for. Here I present data suggesting that the link between predation and phenotype in *M. australis* is not a simple one, and that identifying cryptic and conspicuous colour patterns in this species requires not only the measurement of phenotypic traits, but also requires those trait data to be viewed through a “filter” of environmental data. *M. australis* does not appear to exhibit uniform cryptic and conspicuous phenotypes from place to place – what is cryptic in one environment may not necessarily be cryptic in another. I also present data supporting the second prediction of my hypothesis; sexual selection occurs in *M. australis*, whereby large males with large colour pattern elements are more likely to gain access to females for mating. This may provide a mechanism for more conspicuous colour patterns to be selected for in areas where predation risk is less important.

Brief biography:

Michael Young, 26, is a research scientist currently studying toward a Ph.D. at the University of Western Australia. His research focuses on the evolutionary biology of one of W.A.’s native freshwater fishes, the western rainbowfish. This species is very common and exhibits striking colouration which differs from place to place. Michael’s Ph.D. project is concerned with trying to explain this remarkable colour pattern variation. Michael is using a variety of cutting edge techniques and technologies to answer a range of questions, and by the end of his research will be able to shed some light on whether there is a genetic basis for colour pattern variation in the western rainbowfish, and on which evolutionary forces have been responsible for selecting the colour patterns that we see in this species today.



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Diana Walstad

Talk – “Why Natural Planted Tanks are Better”

Abstract of talk:

Diana Walstad, author of *Ecology of the Planted Aquarium*, will explain why a planted tank is healthier for fish than an unplanted tank, why a tank with soil is better off than a tank without soil. She will present scientific evidence for how both plants and soil contribute to the tank ecology resulting in healthier fish with less work and expense. Topics will include ammonium preference by aquatic plants, neutralization of toxic hydrogen sulfide by soil bacteria and iron. The above talk is designed to convince the audience that plants are more than just idle decoration. And soil is a lot more than just a growth medium for plants.

Brief biography:

Diana Walstad comes from a family that always had tanks in the house and a pond in the backyard.



She trained as a microbiologist and now manages a molecular biology lab at the local University (Chapel Hill, NC USA).

In 1999, she published the first edition of “*Ecology of the Planted Aquarium*”. The book has been translated into Polish, German, and Italian.

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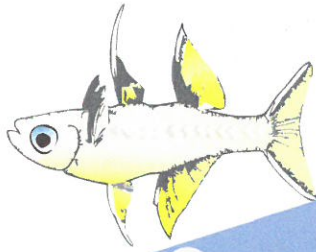
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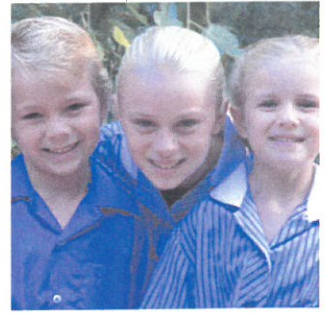
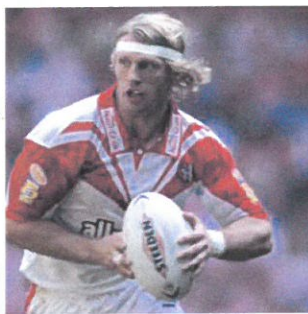
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