The Quest

25 year wait
1980’s/90’s

• I had the privilege of knowing 3 great aquarists who guided me on my path
• They were great in giving advice, assistance and shared their knowledge
• I had joined the local fish club where I was introduced to livebearers
• They suited my water conditions perfectly, So I was soon hooked
Three Mentors

Derek Lambert

Ivan Dibble

Mervyn Strange
Goodeids

• Following on from the (Usual suspects )
• My first Goodeid available then and probably now, Ameca’s probably the most robust fish I know followed by X.eiseni both had a bad reputation
Once it was noticed I liked these fish
And enjoyed breeding them
I was given the chance to get some different types
Groups

• S.L.A.G
• Livebearer information service
• Basingstoke and district
• London Livebearer Group
• Scottish Livebearer Group
• Viviparous
• British Livebearer Association
• GWG
Old list

Skiffia bilineata 'A.S.
Skiffia bilineata 'Queretaro, 88'
Skiffia francesae 'Rio Teuchitlan, 76'
Skiffia lermae 'Rancho el Molino, 88'
Skiffia species 'Zacapu, 88'
Xenoophorus captivus 'Rio Santa Maria, 68'
Xenotaenia resolanae 'Rio Purification, 76'
Xenotoca eiseni A.S.
Xenotoca eiseni 'Golden Saddle'
Xenotoca melanosoma
list

Allophorus robustus Camecuaro 76’
Allotoca diazi Rancho el Molino 87’
Allotoca dugesi Quiroga 87’
Ameca splendens Rio teuchitlan 66’
Ataeniobius toweri Rio Verde
Chapalichthys encaustus Rio Tanhuato 70’
Characodon lateralis Los Berros 68’
Goodea atripinis A.S
Cont

Goodea atripinnis luitpoldi
Skiffia bilineata A.S
Skiffia francesae Rio Teuchitlan 76’
Skiffia lermae Rancho el Molino 88’
Skiffia sp ‘Zacapu 88’
Xenotaenia resolanae Rio purification 76’
Xenotoca melanosoma
Xenotoca variata A.S
• Several years of fish drought
• A couple of failed re-starts
• But always looking at fish magazines
• Other animals were kept
• None seemed to satisfy
• Eventually an opportunity arose
• Built a fishroom then the search began
Dissapointing

• Local clubs disappeared
• Many people left the hobby
• Many more had passed
• Mainly aquarium strains available
• Fewer collecting trips
• Only a few Goodeids available
• Derek and Mervyn had passed away
Search

• I tried to fill my list from before my break
• Several species were available
• Not exactly the same locations
• Some however remained elusive
• Skiffia sp Zacapu was my goal
• I spoke to James Langhammer who told me there had not been a successful collection since Derek’s
Aztec gold

• Yahoo group for Goodeids
• Accepted
• Started to realise there was hope
• Found a few Goodeids
• But some species were not available
• Found there was more of us with a passion for Goodeid conservation
• Then the GWG meetings started
GWG

- Barcelona
- Pont L’eveque with France vivipares
- Vienna Haus des Meeres
- Asperen Poecilia Nederland and KFN
Number 5

Morelia Mexico
IV Viviparous symposium
Mexican and Latin American Ichthyological Congress
So I had the chance to follow in the Footsteps of my friend Derek
Journey

• First long haul flight
• Apprehensive about a leg injury
• 24 hour delay
• The rest seemed plain sailing
• Airport to bus station in Mexico city
• Luxury coach travel to Morelia
• Taxi to hotel
Fixer

- Mike knew of my search
- Arranged a trip to Zacapu in addition to the schedule
- And several other places
- The hunt was on
Hit list

- Skiffia Sp Zacapu
- Allotoca dugesii black sport Rancho el Molino
- Allotoca diazi
- Allotoca zacapuensis
- Hubbsina turneri
Lago de Cuitzeo

Wet my net

Neotoca bilineata
Not just fish

Recluse spider

Water scorpion
Zacapu

First sight

Fish
1 species

- Allotoca zacapuensis
Rancho el Molino

Well used by the locals

Typical pose
2 species

Allotoca dugesii

Allotoca diazi
Bonus
Opopee
Allotoca meeki
To the lab

I was a little disappointed. The pictures we had seen previously showed many more tanks. But the lab was clean and functional, with Goodeids.
Zacapu at dusk
Darker than it looks
By touch
2 species
Full house +bonus
Home

- I managed to get all 5 species home
- Allotoca diazi
- Allotoca dugesii
- Allotoca zacapuensis
- Sliffia sp Zacapu (lermae)
- Hubbsina turneri(Girardinichthys ireneae)
Breeding

- diazi and dugesi quite prolific
- Skiffia sp enough to spread around a few people
- Hubbsina and A.zacapuensis a real struggle
- Made a school boy error of giving away too many fish, I was left with a very small number of each and I am only now seeing and increase in stocks
- It is great to spread new fish around but it is not always successful
Future
And of course?

- The most important group
- Aquarists and fish keepers
- Unpaid
- Overlooked
- Guardians
- Of many species
Preservation and Conservation

- Anyone can do it
- Everyone should do it
- Not just the fish
- Locations are as important if not more so
- Unfortunately this is not unique to our beloved Livebearers
- Many freshwater species are in need
Wild Mexican Livebearers are in serious trouble; most species are endangered and/or in serious decline.

Some are thriving unfortunately, as they do not belong there.
Rubbish and contaminants
Is it all bad?
Why

• Because We can
• We can make a difference
• Millions of fish tanks
• Thousands of Aquarists
• Thousands of fish breeders
• But only a small percentage are conservation breeders
• Only a small percentage breed livebearers
Why Us

- Governments and politicians are not interested in small fish
- Institutions and Zoos may be interested
- But costs, space and logistics are a problem
- Keepers have multiple tasks not just the fish
- Restrictive flow of livestock
We have

• The expertise and passion
• Dedicated facilities
• Extensive network of breeders
• Free flow of stock
• Information exchange
• Multiple stocks of species
• No as many restrictive problems
How

- A single species tank
- A dedicated fish room
- A classroom exhibit
- Students studying
- Commercially (with care)
- It doesn't matter
Success ?
But

- It needs to be ongoing
- Information kept
- Correct name (latin)
- Location precise
- Year ?
- Collector ?
- Aquarium strains ?
Can it work

• I hope so
• We want it to
• They need it to
• We think it is possible
• They need it to work
• But we are a minority
Obstacles

• Governments
• Industry
• Many locals are unaware or not educated to their plight
• Habitat loss
• Alien species
• Human nature
Reintroduction

• Possible ?
• No habitat
• New
• Alternative location
• Removal of aliens
• Repeat of problem
• survival
Then what

• Monitor
• Maintain
• Learn
• Report
• Analyse
• Modify
• Repeat
But

- Work with locals and land owners
- Educate and explain
- Local support
- Regional council
- Financial incentive
- Funding
- Are we ready and able
Comments

• Questions
• Ideas
• Solutions
Future

• I would like future generations to see these fish, Not in books and pictures but in the wild or at worst in our tanks