



The Living Reef
February 2004 - FRAGFEST II

Editorial....

The time is 9:45pm and the air temperature outside is still over 30 C! Although this heat can be annoying to me it can be deadly to our fishy friends. Not merely from the air temperature heating the aquariums but from the risk of power blackouts because of Western Power's outdated power grid. A few hours is all it takes for the precious oxygen to start to drop to dangerously low levels inside our reef aquariums. All the corals, fish and bacteria and invertebrates that live in the live sand and rock quickly use up the available oxygen until.....crash! The first casualties start to appear! Be careful, be prepared! Have a backup plan and equipment!

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MASWA Meeting Calendar....

February 25th 2004 – David Bloch
18 Currambine Blvd, Currambine
FRAGFEST II

March 31st 2004 – Elmer Elison
Special Raffle

April 28th 2004 – ?
Guest Speaker

May 26th 2004 - ?
FRAGFEST III

June 30th 2004 - ?
Special Raffle

July 28th 2004 - ?
Guest Speaker

Meetings start promptly at 7.30pm!

The Marine Aquarists Society of WA is a name that we, as a group of friends with like interests have applied to ourselves for the purpose of information exchange. No one person, nor the group as a whole, can be held responsible for liabilities, injuries or other that may result either directly or indirectly as a result of our gatherings or the information exchange therein. The same applies to the information contained in this newsletter.

MASWA Contact Information....

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MEMBERSHIP PAYMENTS

Cheque: Make all cheques payable to Paul M. Tayler.

EFT: Make all EFT transfers to BSB 086 217 A/C # 69355 1664 (please include your name on all EFT transfers!).

Cash: Make payment in person only.

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NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

If you would like to make a contribution to the newsletter please don't hesitate to contact the Newsletter Editor, David Bloch on the phone number or email address listed above. Contributions to the newsletter need to be received no later than 7 days prior to the next meeting date.

Fishy Patent?

In 1961 Robert Oropei Martini proposed that fish in public aquariums be fitted with small waterproof shirts, to earn extra income.

How would they do so?

With restaurants in mind, it was his thought that advertisers would buy space to display their messages on the shirts!



Ref: FACTS & FALLACIES,
Readers Digest

January Meeting Rundown....

The January meeting was held at the home of our treasurer, Paul Tayler. This meeting was the first for 2004 and was also the venue for our AGM. The turnout of members was rather poor however there were some new faces that came along all the way from Mandurah! We tried very hard to discourage them from joining however we were unsuccessful so guess what that means? We will be heading on down south one of these days for a meeting at their place – fair is fair though as they have to come all the way up to my place this month!

Paul's tank was looking quite good however he and a few of us were concerned with his *Acropora* corals (staghorns) as they were showing signs of tissue recession. After much debate and speculation we pinpointed the reasons for this. They were that Paul has not cleaned the intake sponges on his two power heads or main pump for god knows how long and because of this they were firstly acting like super nitrate producing filters and secondly they were restricting the water flow to the pumps so much that there was very little water movement at all in the tank – tut tut Paul! The two things that *Acropora* corals don't like – nitrates and low water movement!

Let this be a lesson to everyone – don't use a sponge as a prefilter for a pump because you WILL forget to clean it with disastrous effects!

The AGM was conducted with the following positions being filled for the 2004 MASWA committee:

President – Nathan Cope
Vice President – Tony Fiorentino
Secretary – vacant again, 4 years running!
Treasurer – Paul Taylor
Webmaster – Bill Blakers
Newsletter Editor – David Bloch
Science Officer – Paul Groves

Our social director, Tony was supposed to give a talk at the meeting however at short notice he was reminded by his lovely wife that they had a prior arrangement. Like the good husband he is he listened to his good woman and made his apology to MASWA that he wouldn't be able to attend. He was solely missed but not forgotten – we made sure he wasn't able to escape his obligation to the MASWA committee!

As usual Paul's wife, who I will not ridicule or poke fun at due to extreme fear, cooked a great spread of nibbles that filled myself and everyone else up. Thanks Paul, and Paul's wife for your hospitality. See you all next month.

February Meeting Information....

It only happens once a year and guess what? That time has arrived! Pack your passports, camping gear and supplies cause it's time to head north! North to the land of Currumbine. Far for some, not so far for others, this month's meeting will be the home of our newsletter editor, David Bloch (me!). The last time a meeting was held here was back in January of 2003, exactly one year ago.

David has a small tank by most standards. It's a mere 61cm X 61cm X 61cm holding around 200L of water. The aquarium is lit by a 250 watt 20000K Radium metal halide and 2X 18 watt fluorescent lamps, one an actinic tube and the other a daylight tube. Filtration consists of live rock and sand and a DIY downdraft protein skimmer.

Being a bit of a DIY freak, (this comes about by not having much money!) David has built a wave maker that controls three power heads and a temperature controller to keep the water temperature nice and stable. Aside from these few gadgets the rest of the tank is pretty normal.

Currently the tank has a mixture of soft and hard corals with a few of the hard coral specimens approaching 10 years of age! Fish life is pretty sparse – mainly because they keep killing each other, doing the old disappearing act or jumping out!

The most important part of the February meeting is the **FRAGFEST** that will take place. This will be the second **FRAGFEST** meeting held and if it's anything like the first one at Glen's place then it will be a great success. If you are unsure of what the **FRAGFEST** is then please read

the **FRAGFEST** information in the MASWA Message Board section of the newsletter.

The address of the meeting is **18 Currumbine Blvd**, in **Currumbine** and starts at 7:30pm. Hope to see you all there.

PS please limit the amount of luggage as the Bloch residence is a little cramped! If it's not too windy or cold then we can go outside and then we will be fine!

A Tale of Two Prawns *(as overhead being told by Dion)*

Far away in the depths of the sea, two prawns, Justin and Christian, are swimming in the water. They are constantly being threatened by sharks.

One day Justin says: "I'm bored and frustrated with being a prawn. I wish I was a shark and then I wouldn't have any worries about being eaten..."

Suddenly a mysterious cod appears and says: "Your wish is granted," and Justin turns into a Shark.

Horrified, Christian swims off immediately, afraid of being eaten by his old mate.

Time goes by and Justin is bored and lonely as a shark. All his friends dash for cover whenever he is near. So when he chances upon the mysterious cod again he can't believe his luck. He begs the cod to change him from a shark, and lo and behold, he's turned back into a prawn.

With tears of joy in his tiny little eyes, Justin swims to his friends and buys them all cocktails. Looking around at the gathering reef, he searches in vain for his old pal.

"Where's Christian?" he asks.

"At home, distraught because his best friend turned into a shark and became his enemy." came the reply.

Eager to put things right, Justin sets off for Christian's house. He bangs on the door and shouts: "It's me, Justin, your old friend. Come out and have a drink with me."

"No way!" Christian shouts back. "You'll eat me. You're a shark, the enemy. I'll not be tricked by you."

Justin cries out in despair: "But I've found Cod. I'm a prawn again, Christian!"

MASWA Message Board....

MASWA 2004 ARTICLE PRIZE!

To try and encourage members to get actively involved we have decided to offer a \$100 prize to the person who has contributed the most hobby related articles, cartoons or jokes etc to the MASWA 2004 newsletters. The content must be suitable for general audiences (no rude jokes Nigel and Tony! Ed.). The winner will be announced at the **December 2004 CHRISTMAS** meeting.

MASWA FRAGFEST THIS MONTH!

One of the Objects of Association of MASWA is to encourage the captive breeding or propagating of marine organisms and facilitate their exchange. With this aim in mind, the MASWA Committee announced at the July committee meeting that a register will be held to record the number of propagated animals brought to MASWA meetings. In fact, a register for two separate categories will be held - one for invert propagation (mostly coral frags are expected, but other inverts are also eligible) and the other for fish breeding. A point will be awarded for each separate animal or colony brought to MASWA meetings for the purpose of trading or raffling them to other members (points will not be awarded to members for animals that are sold to other members). The person who has the most points in each category at the end of the year will be awarded a prize. The results of these registers will also determine the winner of the "Fecund Fishy" and "Slice and Dice" Trophies.

Please note, frags made on the day of the meeting will already be stressed and moving them to a new aquarium will only stress them more, potentially killing the frag. This may give people the indication that fragging corals is not very reliable or successful. As we are trying to encourage propagation, it is preferable that frags are made a week or two prior to the meeting you intend to bring them to in order to ensure that they have stabilised. We will be setting up a holding tank at the "Fragfest" meetings to hold the frags in so that they can be seen properly and kept in healthy condition prior to trading.

Likewise, if you would like to trade or raffle fish you have bred, please ensure they are old enough to no longer require special diet before bringing them to a meeting.

The Fish Files, with Dr. Groves....

By Paul Groves

Welcome to the fish files, my name is Paul Groves and I am the MASWA Science Officer. Every month I will bring you articles about the everyday critters that you may find in your aquarium. My philosophy is to try and

assist with identification and aquarium suitability so sit back, relax and enjoy.

Phylum Urochordata; Sea Squirts

At our last meeting one of our members was attempting to describe some unusual beings tormenting them in their aquarium. From the descriptions and with the help of Paul's array of textbooks we concluded that they were sea squirts or tunicates. Sea squirts are barrel shaped animals that filter water through a mucous sheet. Interestingly, sea squirts have a tadpole like larvae, known oddly enough as tadpole larvae that place them closely related to vertebrates.



These larvae, pictured below have a trunk and tail. The tail is stiffened with a rod, called the notochord, and has a dorsal tubular nerve. The animal also has gill slits. These traits are characteristics of vertebrate embryos. They also possess a heart with vessels and a brain. They feed via a lattice shaped pharynx, which is covered by cilia (small hairs) coated with mucous. Water is pumped from an inhalant siphon, through the pharynx and out the exhalant siphon. I guess you will never look the same at the humble sea squirt!



Wrasses, family Labridae

The family Labridae contains over 50 genera and is represented by over 500 species. Many wrasses vary from juvenile to adult and also between sexes, often making identification of some species difficult. Many wrasses are hermaphroditic, and begin life as females only changing to males in the absence of a dominant male. These wrasses are generally found living in harems, with one male to many females.

Wrasses are found worldwide in shallow waters and vary in size from small wrasses such as the cleaner wrasse to behemoths such as the hump head Maori wrasse that can grow to over a metre. Some wrasses burrow under

the substrate at night to avoid predation. Therefore finer grade sand is recommended if you intent of keeping wrasses in your aquarium. Some wrasses, such as the moon wrasse can be territorial.

Wrasses have larger scales than most fish, which gives them a greater ability to avoid infections from cryptocaryon (white spot). Most wrasses are hardy aquarium inhabitants but a few are specialist feeders so it pays to research your fish before purchase. Cleaner wrasses, which naturally feed off parasites infecting larger fishes can be difficult to maintain in aquariums with low stocking densities. The chiseltooth wrasses are coral eaters and not recommended for reef aquariums. The rockmover, or reindeer wrasses are cute when small, but when they get larger they can redecorate your reef tank and bury low-lying corals.

Some wrasse genera...

Bodianus (Hogfishes) Hardy but some can grow large and will eat some invertebrates

Cirrhitilabrus (fairy wrasses) Can be shy feeders and prefer tanks with dim light. Generally harem, so do best in schools.

Halichoeres (includes **slippery dick** (Is that a typo Paul? Ed.), checkerboard wrasse) Generally hardy.

Lienardella (Tusk fish) Hardy but grows large and will eat shrimp

Thalassoma (moon wrasses) Hardy, harem and sometimes aggressive species.

Labroides (cleaner wrasses) Often difficult species (watch for mimics that harm fish instead of cleaning them)

Coris (clown wrasse, king wrasse)

Anapses (chisel tooth wrasses) Coral eaters!

Fishy Links and News....

AMPHIBIAN PARASITE FOUND LIVING IN A HUMAN!

Last week in the US a gentleman was diagnosed as having a parasite known as an "Anchor Worm" in his body. This parasite is not the freshwater fluke that is commonly found in the gills and on the body of fish, but a small parasitic species of copepod. Such an infection is MOST unusual and noteworthy. These copepods are usually found infecting amphibians and it is rare that an infection has occurred involving an animal with unkeratinized skin (i.e. a human). Of course, copepods can do some odd things now and again! The male anchor worm is not parasitic while the adult female is a mesoparasite that normally is found hanging partially out of the host. It would seem that in a non aquatic host she would dry out and die. However in this case she somehow survived!

AQUARIUM DIVERS DEFEND THEMSELVES FROM KILLER TURBOT!

A full-scale media frenzy erupted after reports that the turbot were being evicted from McDuff Aquarium after attacking aquarium divers sent in to feed the fish. "They do get very excited when divers enter the tank, and they will try to eat anything - your mask, your regulator, your suit - but they haven't injured anybody" education officer Claire Matthews told Divernet.

The main victims of the voracious turbot appear to be the conger eels. "We take squid in for the conger eels, some of which are 2m long, and while we're holding it out for them it's not unusual for a turbot to nip in and grab the food. It leaves us facing a rather cheesed-off conger empty-handed," she said. The largest turbot are about to be released back into the Moray Firth to give the congers a break.

"We've had these turbot for 4-5 years and when they arrived they were no bigger than a 50p piece," explained Claire. "But they're not evil, they're just a bit stupid. The turbot are that dim that I've seen them choking on rocks they've tried to swallow." So if you're planning on diving in the Moray Firth this season, you know what to watch out for.

SCARED OF SHARKS? READ THE FACTS!

Worried about being attacked by a shark whilst chasing aquarium specimens???

Well more people get bitten by people in New York than get killed by sharks, more people die by getting struck by lightning, or die from falling coconuts, or die from falling vending machines than die from shark attacks!!

Did you know the movie JAWS has had the greatest influence on people's psyche than any other movie? Many people will not swim in the ocean because of this movie!

Buy, Sell, Swap and Wanted?....

FOR SALE:

Banggai Cardinalfish - **\$20.00 each**

Orchid Dottybacks - **\$25.00 each**

If you are interested please contact **Tom Devilee** on **9342 6076**

FOR SALE:

2ft cube tank on pine cabinet with hood & 32mm overflow in tank - **\$250 ono**

Tank 120cmW x 100cmL x 70cmH with tapered front on sandtone look cabinet with hood. Tank has 2X 40mm holes for external sump **\$450 ono.**

Contact **Paul Groves** on **0421 803 288** if you are interested.