

Heiko Bleher: 5th lesson

Lesson number 5, December 28th 2006

Cari amici de discuspassion.net (perche c'è anche un discuspassion.com en Francia) y cara Patrizia (e anche tatore el bravo elevatore dei wild... molto bello i tu pesci Salvatore...)

Finalmente sono capace de scrivere i Lezione numero 5 con bastansa ritardo, pero io avertito en ottobre, chi poteva solo fare en dicembre. Io fatto tanti espedizioni a richerca dei pesci en el fine de questo ano, anche 19 conference (en 12 paese diverse), 6 fiere internazionale (en 3 continente) i io fatto anche de valutazione dei discus (11 categorie) en Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (sensa un discus wild....).

Bene, here it goes: Lesson number 5:

Patrizia had asked me, after the 4 past, important, lessons on wild discus to talk today about the filters, materilas and the specie più indicate alla convivenza con i discus. But before I go into those details (and part of that only during lesson number 6 in Janaury), I must point out, that the water parameters is a very (extreme) important factor for wild discus and comes first.

In my recent book, BLEHER'S DISCUS one can find all the water parameters one needs to know, in order to keep each species at its best aquatic condition.

In this respect we must understand, first of all, that the 3 species (and I will not go into detail here what the publication of Ready, Ferreira & Kullander, 2006, and their *S. tarzoo* is concerned, but remain with my identification of the Green, the Heckel discus and the third species, which is the so called brown and blue discus), have different parameters. Now, one does not have to make clear water as in the Tapajós, the Xingú, Alenquer, Canumã or Rio Içá region for browns and blues, or the blackwater like for greens, and extreme black waters for Heckel discus, but the values should be right.

That is, at least the pH, conductivity (microsiemens) and the temperature. Oxygen concentration is not the most important, as discus can take very low oxygen concentration (as shown in my book), providing you have a good water (filter) circulation.

Important is not only that you never mix wild with tank breed variants (as mentioned in lesson number 1), but also that you normally try not to mix Heckel discus with te other wild ones (for a period of quarantaine time at least, but better never). Simply because Heckel discus (if they come from the Rio Nhamundá, Rio Negro-system, the Rio Jatapu (were there are no blues, or royal blues found as Andrea M. still writes it in this forum recently), Abacaxis, Marimari or Urubu, they all need – definately – very (very) acid water and the lowest conductivity possible.

That is: Heckel discus need a pH below 5.0 (better below pH 4.5 even) and the conductivity of less than 10 µS/cm (microsiemens). Temperature for Heckel discus should be between 28 and 29 degree Celcius. And if you can filter biologically over peat moos (renew like every 1, to max. every 2 month), that would also help for your Heckel discus to feel happy and healthy.

I understand that most aquatic plants will not grow under such low pH, but remember what I mentioned about plants and decorations in my previous lesson...

For the green discus, which for me is *S. aequifasciatus*, described by Pellegrin already 1904 (and not *S. tarzoo*, 1959), the parameters are not as critical as with Heckel's. These red spotted (more or less spotted, but always in the anal fins) are used to waters with pH of 5.0 and above (but hardly ever over 6.0). and a conductivity value of 10 µS/cm and more. Temperatures are similar to Heckel's, sometimes lower (around 28 degrees Celcius).

And browns and blue discus (which includes all discus called like: semi royal; royal blues; gypsy; Alenquer; Manacapuru; Jatapu=Uatumã; Nhamundá (not Heckel's from Rio Nhamundá – remember), Madeira= Canumã; Rio Içá; Purus; etc.), are the most easy for our water parameters to keep. As they can take (and breed) around pH 7 (up to pH 7.5 and even higher), and need not such low conductivity: 30 µS/cm and higher is no problem to them. and they also take temperatures up to 30 degrees Celcius without any damage. (No wonder that most of all the tank breed variants today come from this latter species...).

This will give you an idea, what kind of water parameters you should have for your wild discus. (Naturally, not that I want to advertise my book again, but anyone really interested in wild discus should really read it, as there are more than 250 pages only on that topic, habitats and chemical water parameters.) In general you will (should) have no problems in keeping in a good aquarium greens, browns and blues (and those names mentioned under the latter two above) together in one and the same aquarium (providing you do not want to breed with them). But try not to mix Heckel discus with those two former species. Heckel's are very, very particular and live always in extreme waters and also have extreme food requirements – much more extreme than the other two (because of the water they live in).

Having said that, I want to next time go in detail into filters and material, and what "i specie più indicate alla convivenza" is concerned. With this topic dear Patrizia, I have a problem and I must say, also to you: do not be to lazy and read over the holidays in my book the pages 596 to 623, it will tell you everything about this topic and give you

numbers and ideas of: "What to place in the aquarium with your discus". It is definately different from anything published so far (if in books, or magazines, or in the internet – which in this respect is the worst...). And you can even write it yourself...

But I want to mention here a few things of the nice new discuspassion website you made (or better had have someone make for you).

1. When I open it (home), I have always on my screen about 25-30 cm empty space in the center, before I find the center texts (every time when I open it, on any one of our 9 office computers, does everyone have this problem?), which than (today) starts with Botia Sidthiminki (which actually his name is: Yasuhikotakia sidthimunki – and note: a SPECIES NAME IS ALWAYS WRITTEN IN small letters – ALWAYS – only the genus name is the first letter large: Hemigrammus bleheri), which is only found in Thailand, border with Myanmar and Laos, NOT in India.
2. Mi piace el discus bapo natale, bellino e buona idea.
3. When I want to go from (i.e.) "Esclusivo – intervista a Mr. Heiko Bleher" e faccio click sur "pros." su, me porta a "Invasionediscus, pero no en la prossima pagina de "Esclusivo...", perche?
4. S "eventi" there is nothing except the visit to Lorenzo: why not the other visits? Maybe you should change this into: "Eventi futuri" and "Eventi passato" or something similar...think about it.

And I wanted to mention a few things I saw (and comments):

– for Zig Veliki (Slovenia, message from 5.11.2006) I wanted to thank him for his nice comments about me, and mention that in Slovenia discus (and aquarium fishes) have become very popular, and although it is a very small country there are many (discus)hobbyist and lover and we sold more books than in Italia... (do they read more?). Thanks again and keep up the good work dear neighbor...;

– biago (dal 10.12.2006) voleva direte: poi sempre contare su de me per aiuto !

– Salvatore ei grande confantastiche foto su tu wild – complimenti; e anche

– Vincenzo della Grotta fatto bellissime foto su picolini dei su blue diamond.

– I am amazed, that now someone calls a typical pigeon discus: "Wild Dragon" - this is really crazy ! Stop all with these silly names...

– also Andrea, stop with "Royal Jatapu" (and read my book, or previous mails...). Just Royal Blue is ok

Last but not least:

I have seen P. altums which arrived (imports) on discuspassion.net and they could really be imports – but they are P. altums from Colombia (Rio Inirida) and those are VERY weak. Every importer (around the globe) who does the error to import P. altums from Colombia loses the entire stock – almost without exception. And if they do not die at the quarantine, nor in the aquarium of the importer, they surely die in the aquarium of the customer (hobbyist).

Take only P. altums imported directly from Venezuela – not from Colombia.

This is an advice of 40 years experience with P. altums...

Now you all have a very, very healthy, and a very happy and (discuswise) successful 2007...

Always
heiko Bleher