

# Something Fishy

The Newsletter of the Ilford & District Aquarists & Pondkeepers Society

## Last Month

### Dick Mills – On Characins



As usual Dick gave an excellent talk on Characins, going from the smallest about an inch to the largest at about five foot. Covering Hatchet fish, Pencil fish, Piranha, Tetras, Tiger fish and everything in-between. Dick had excellent pictures interspersed with anecdotes, which made for a good evening's entertainment.

## This Month

### The AGM



Yes it's that time of year again when the membership can tell the Committee where it is going wrong and what they would like in the way of talks and things.

At the moment the club is going through (as are many clubs) not attracting any new members.

With Dave having moved, myself moving in September and Rab in the near future (all of us moving far afield) the Committee is dwindling which puts extra pressure on the Committee members that remain.

**Next Meeting**  
**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August**

With no members willing to join the Committee to fill these positions and with some meetings not well attended, the Committee are not sure if the club can continue in its present form?

Please make an effort to come to this meeting.

**The AGM is YOUR opportunity to discuss the future of YOUR club.**

### Are You A Responsible Aquarist?



On the breakfast show they have an item called the travel show. This one was on Bermuda and showed the devastating effect the lion fish is

having on the eco system.

The lion fish does not belong in the Atlantic - they are native to the coral reefs of the Pacific Ocean.

But they have been released in to the wild by irresponsible aquarium owners. Here in Bermuda they don't have any natural predators so the numbers have grown and they are rapidly destroying the oceans marine life. The problem is that the fish in the Atlantic Ocean don't recognise the lion fish as a potential threat so don't try to avoid them.

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The Bermudan government realises that if something isn't done to protect the eco system from the invasion of lion fish it could all be destroyed.

Experts think that the only way to control the lion fish is to cull them.

The expansion of the lion fish population, as well as their consumption rate, is having a huge impact on the eco system and the eco system can't evolve fast enough to deal with this new species.

Dr Gretchen Goodbody-Gringley of the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences said since we put it there it is our problem and we should try to control it.

Conservation groups such as the Reef Environmental Education Foundation regularly organise and sanction fishing trips aimed at reducing the population.

Uniquely here in Bermuda the lion fish tend to congregate in very deep waters, so it's really hard for fishermen to catch them in large numbers.

It is hoped that pioneering technology could provide a more effective answer. They have made a robot that can be controlled from a boat and guided and operated by looking at a computer screen.

The way it works is that the robot is positioned so that the lion fish is between the two electrodes, you then push a button. This stuns



the fish. You then push another button which sucks the fish into the robots tube (see above). Each robot can scoop up about 15 lion fish in a single trip. The final design will operate well below depths that can be reached by divers down to a thousand feet.

Hunting the lion fish here may seem to go against the usual ideal of conservation which is aimed at preserving rather than destroying marine wild life, but by controlling the lion fish population now, scientists say that will give the underwater eco system a chance to repair, evolve, adapt and remain for generations to come.

The Bermudan government have started a project called "eat them to beat them". They even had chefs from around the world competing to make the most tastiest lion fish meal.

This is a long article but it shows what happens when irresponsible aquarist release unwanted fish in to the environment, so don't be tempted to release that unwanted goldfish, koi etc into the local river or lake.

**It's the AGM so please make the effort to get to this meeting, it's your chance to have your say.**

*See you all Tuesday Barry*