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Dear Readers,

About a year ago, I made the National Geographic website my default homepage when I connect to the internet from the office. When I log on in the morning, I'm immediately in touch with some bigger issues that affect the planet, not just one group of people, one country, or one community. I find a different perspective and an alternative to the media storm I subject myself to every morning with my coffee in front of the TV. On the National Geographic site I find other types of world news that matters to me.

When there's a news byte about Bluefin Tuna, or images of sharks entangled nets, I stop to read. I've been fascinated with marine life as long as I can remember. My interest in the animals is what led me to become a marine hobbyist in my early teens, and what eventually led me to change my career path and enter this industry as a professional a number of years later. Too often, however, I get caught up in the business, development, growth, technology, and efficiency. In the end it's about the animals, and it's always refreshing when I stop to read about new discoveries or advancements in the hobby. On a recent trip, I stopped at an airport newsstand and picked up the current copy of National Geographic, on the cover was a full page image of a swordfish entangled in a net. It's a massive issue with nearly half of it detailing the current state of the world's food fishery. The status report is not encouraging. There's an article on the health of our coral reefs, with a focus on the growing trend of reef fish being harvested for the food trade... also not very encouraging. When I read some of this type of content, I become somewhat uncomfortable because I cannot with absolute certainty proclaim that we as an industry are doing everything we can to harvest every species we handle in a sustainable matter. I do know we at Quality Marine try much harder than most, and although many others are trying to participate in the trade in a responsible way as well, I also know with 100% certainty that we can all try harder, and do more.

A few weeks ago I caught the first of a 3 part mini-series addressing concerns over global warming, the growing problems of pollution in China (who incidentally, and not entirely through their own fault, is inheriting the entire world's problems of industrial pollution), and many of the same issues I had recently read about. When we launched our new website late last year, I hoped it would include a dynamic, active, informative and regularly updated News and events section that would not only trumpet the efforts the industry is making in terms of ecological responsibility, and new scientific discoveries in the oceans, but also to keep people objectively informed about news we find of interest to the industry and more importantly, to the hobby from an environmental perspective. I feel we are achieving more of the latter, and less of the former. I hope to see the balance change. For it to do so, the industry needs to make more effort.

With 2008 being the year of the reef, we can expect more and more scrutiny as the state of our world's reefs weaken. More frequent bleaching events, growing effluent and pollution problems from coastal development and industry, and over-harvesting concerns, are becoming regular news items. In the worst case scenarios, our trade makes a negligible impact by comparison, but we may easily get caught up in the sweeping reform and regulations. If we operate responsibly and in a sustainable manner, our trade makes no lasting environmental impact, and yet brings far greater value for the same animals than any other stakeholder industry to the communities that rely on the oceans as their resource. Quality Marine is going to try harder than ever to do things the right way and buy responsibly from responsible operators who treat the resource and the communities that live from it with respect. I urge you all to do the same.

G. Christopher Buerner, President

Calendar of Events



Aquarama 2007
May 24-27
Suntec City,
Singapore

"The Future of Reefkeeping"
International Marine
Aquarium Conference '07

IMAC:
International
Marine Aquarium
Conference
June 1-3
Chicago, IL
www.theimac.org

DFS 3rd Annual
Coral Conference
and Frag Swap
June 29-July 1
Rhineland, WI



Species Spotlight: Midas Blenny

Scientific name:

Ecsenius midas (Starck, 1969)

Common names:

Midas Blenny, Persian Blenny,
Lyretail Blenny

Taxonomy:

Class: Actinopterygii (ray-finned fishes)
Order: Perciformes (perch-likes)
Family: Blenniidae (Combtooth)
Genus: *Ecsenius*
Species: *midas*

Description:

The Midas blenny is a member of the Blenniidae family, a large group of combtooth and mostly scaleless fish comprised of 345 known species. Being similar to the goby family, blennies are distinguishable by their fully continuous dorsal spines. As adults most blennies lack swim bladders enabling them to perch on rocks and forage around the substratum. Blennies are mostly bottom dwelling species feeding on a mixed diet of algae and benthic invertebrates; some, like the Midas blenny, are planktivores.

Found over a vast range, the Midas Blenny has been reported being seen all the way from the eastern shores of South Africa to the distant Marquesan Islands in the Central Pacific. They are normally collected for the aquarium trade in Sri Lanka, the Red Sea, and Africa.

The Midas blenny was named after King Midas, who in Greek Mythology was best remembered for his ability to turn everything he touched into gold. These gold colored fish are known to be found in a variety of shades of yellow and orange. The more desirable specimens are found in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea where they normally have a deep golden-orange body with bright blue rings around the eyes and a faint touch of blue around and beneath the jaw. Their Pacific counterparts also have blue rings around their eyes but typically have a yellow body and occasionally display streaks of blue and yellow along the head and body. The Midas Blenny has an elongated cylindrical body with a round head and large dark eyes with a small dark marking around the anal passage. Midas Blennies are also known as Lyretail Blennies due to their deeply curved, lyre-shaped tails. The similar colored and shaped Fangtooth Canary Blenny (*Meiacanthus oualanensis*) is often mistakenly sold as the Midas Blenny and vice versa.

The Midas blenny is well adapted to rapidly change color. This change in color can be brought on by mood, feeding time, fear or stress in which case it can almost instantaneously darken its color to blend in with surrounding rock structure for safety.

Due to the lack of swim bladders, the Midas blenny is not neutrally buoyant. As such it has to work harder than most fish to stay afloat and constantly uses its caudal fins. This generally upright motion gives the fish a very eel-like appearance when swimming.

In the wild the Midas blenny has been reported to reach a length of over 5 inches, although seldomly seen this large in captivity. Females are typically smaller than males, and the first dorsal spine is generally smaller than that of the males.

Natural Habitat:

The Midas blenny is most often found on reef ledges at a relatively large range of depths from near the surface to below 125 feet. Here they are commonly found mixed amongst large schools of anthias. With the similarities in coloration some believe that the Midas blennies are mimicking the female lyretail anthias, *Pseudanthias squamipinnis*. This is not scientifically considered a true mimicking behavior as apart from the coloration there are quite a few physical dissimilarities between the two fish (Springer, 1971). It is only believed that the Midas mixes with the Anthias for safety purposes. Due to this unique and un-blenny-like behavior along with other features, scientists nearly

re-classified the Midas under a new sub genus.

The Midas blenny is an oviparous fish, laying its eggs with little development within the mother. Males attract egg bearing females to lay their eggs in a small whole or crevice, or underneath empty bivalve shells (Breder, et al, 1966). Eggs are then guarded by the male or by both parents.

Aquarium Suitability:

The Midas Blenny is an excellent choice for beginning aquarists. Advanced hobbyists also often keep this species due to the unique behavior and color changing abilities. It is reef-safe and well suited for aquariums with corals and invertebrates, unlike most other members of the family and takes relatively quickly to the captive environment and get increasingly personable with time.

The Midas blenny prefers an aquarium of at least 30 gallons with a good mix of open swimming space and rockwork. It tends to become more aggressive in smaller aquariums, especially towards other small planktivores such as dartfish and gobies. This aggressive behavior is not as prevalent in larger tanks when it presumably feels less confined. Aquarists should only keep one Midas blenny per tank unless the aquarium is very large.

This species typically finds a hole in the rock which they make their own, often times leaving nothing but their heads poking out while investigating their surroundings. These holes offer a safe haven for the blenny which quickly swims into it if it feels threatened. This is an amazing sight to see as the blenny backs up into its hole, entering tail first. This amazingly skillful maneuver is done nearly instantaneously. When not tucked away in their favorite hiding spot or perching on rock ledges these blennies are typically found swimming throughout the middle of the aquarium.

The Midas Blenny is a very attentive fish and will typically be the first fish to come to feed, swimming all the way out of it's hole when food is placed in the aquarium. They are omnivores and require a mixed diet which should include finely chopped crustacean flesh, mysid or vitamin-enriched brine shrimp, along with frozen herbivorous preparations, micro and blue-green algae.

Midas Blennies prefer to live in temperatures between 75 and 78 degrees Fahrenheit. As with most fish they prefer clean, well filtered and well oxygenated water. They are also excellent jumpers, so we recommend tanks to be covered and prevent sudden movements and loud noises in and around the tank. They are a diurnal species, meaning they are inactive at night when they are usually resting in their favorite cave.

There are few fish that are as entertaining or have as much personality as the Midas. With very minimal effort these colorful fish can be kept very happy, healthy and well fed.

Bibliography:

Breder, C.M. and D.E. Rosen, 1966 Modes of reproduction in fishes. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune City, New Jersey. 941: 670-671.

Springer, V.G. 1971 Revision of the fish genus Ecsenius (Blenniidae, Blenniinae, Saliriini). Smithsonian. Contrib. Zool. 72:1-74.



Featured Product: ReeFlo Commercial Duty Pumps

ReeFlo was created to focus directly on the needs of the growing consumer aquarium market. Using the most reliable and efficient commercial duty pumps, ReeFlo began engineering several different models to fit the various needs of the modern aquarist. With a whole new branding strategy and consumer focus, ReeFlo quickly became a favorite for hobbyists and professional aquarists.

ReeFlo pumps are all commercial duty units, using a combination of Baldor and A.O. Smith Totally Enclosed Fan Cooled (TEFC) motors. This ensures the motors run cool and energy efficient. In addition they are remarkably quiet and robust.

All ReeFlo pumps are made in the USA and manufactured out of the ReeFlo factory in Colorado Springs. They have excellent customer service and will quickly replace any pump that encounters a problem covered by their 3 year warranty.

The ReeFlo pumps are divided into three main sections:

Flow Biased (Low Speed)

Perfect for 50-500 gallon closed loop systems where low Watt draw (as low as 90 watts), quiet operation and low heat transfer is important.

Models:

Snapper:	2500 gph max, 11' max head, 98 Watts avg. (A.O. Smith)
Dart:	3600 gph, 12', 135 W (A.O. Smith)
Barracuda:	4300 gph, 20', 225 W (Baldor)
Hammerhead:	5800 gph, 23', 335 W (Baldor)

Pressure Biased (Low Speed)

Made for applications when narrow lines and long runs require a higher pressure (18' to 30') and a relatively low flow. These pumps are made with Baldor motor featuring a low Watt draw (180-300W), low heat transfer & quiet performance.

Models:

Tarpon:	1440 gph max, 23' max head, 175 Watts Avg.
Wahoo:	1550 gph, 32', 265 W
Marlin:	2050 gph, 37', 310 W

Both Flow and Pressure Biased (High Speed)

Ideal when high flow & pressure is required. This pump is great for long distance runs requiring high flow (5000-11000 GPH) and high pressure (up to 84'), running multiple tanks and/or multiple features. These pumps run on Premium Efficient Baldor motors.

Models:

Manta Ray: 5200 gph max, 55' max head, 3.4 Amps average @ 230V
 Tiger Shark: 5200 gph, 84', 4.6A

Power (PWR) Series:

Made with Industrial Grade motors these pumps are ideal for very large aquariums, fish stores, and wholesale facilities.

Models:

7400: 8500 gph max, 55' max head, 5.2 Amps average @ 230 Volt
 8400: 9200 gph, 69', 6.4 A
 9000: 11000 gph, 72', 9.1 A

Tips for plumbing pumps:

1. Plumbing diameter and head loss can significantly impact pump performance. It is always best to invest in large diameter tubing to get as much as possible out of your pump.
2. Two pumps run in parallel (running side by side on a manifold) approximately double their flow rate and keep same head, whereas two pumps run in series (in line with each other) double head but keep the same flow. This also applies to when more than two pumps are configured in series or parallel.

Conservation Corner

Launch of the Marine Aquarium Council Certification Preparation Kit

The Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) would like to invite you to join them to help ensure the future of the marine aquarium hobby, the professional trade and the health of marine aquarium organisms.

As an independent, not-for-profit organization, MAC has worked with its diverse international stakeholders to create international standards for the marine ornamental trade, with a certification and labeling system. Aquarists can now identify responsible industry operators that comply with these standards and provide MAC Certified organisms that are marketable as MAC Certified subsequent to the certification of their facilities.

After the launch of the MAC international Standards in 2001, many industry operators have successfully become MAC Certified. It was in 2002, that the first importers in Europe and first importers and retailers in North America achieved MAC certification. As of the beginning of 2007, more than sixty (60) industry operators are MAC Certified worldwide.

Our sales of MAC Certified animals grew significantly in 2006, and we look forward to offering a broader range of certified fish this year. Two of our best supply lines have been MAC Certified, meaning that these sources have been identified as to employing "Best Practices" in their respective operations, the implementation of collection area management plans, and that the quality of their animals sold through us with the MAC Certified Label are compliant with MAC standards. To ease the certification process for retailers, MAC has also developed a concise, clear, and easy to follow certification preparation kit to guide retailers through the

certification and process.

MAC has developed this information kit to assist the increasing number of industry retailers interested in becoming MAC Certified in the most time and cost efficient manner as possible and better serve the industry's needs. This responds to the necessity for a "tool kit" designed for companies willing to become MAC Certified under the MAC Handling, Husbandry and Transport (HHT) international Standard. The "HHT Certification Preparation Kit" provides companies with the materials to get started with their certification process as well as to prepare them for a certification assessment by a third-party MAC Accredited certifier, without the necessity of visits by a MAC representative.

The Certification Preparation Kit targets the different users of the MAC HHT international Standard, and most particularly importers and retailers. This kit includes:

- A general background information fact sheet about MAC and its certification system.
- An introduction to the certification process.
- A self-assessment questionnaire and model templates.
- Reference information about MAC Accredited certifiers and the MAC HHT international Standard.

This kit guides companies through the certification process with a description of all the steps to be taken. Using the self-assessment questionnaire, companies can easily review whether they have all the necessary policies and procedures in place, and determine their compliance with the requirements of the MAC HHT international Standard. When the questionnaire is completed, the company can contact MAC with the results, thus giving the opportunity for a MAC representative to carry out a gap analysis and recommend corrective action to be taken in order to help ensure compliance with the MAC HHT international Standard when then formal third-party assessment takes place. The process of self-assessing and follow up corrective action may be repeated until all non-conformities are addressed and the MAC representative can recommend the company for certification. During this process, MAC treats all submitted information confidentially.

For more information about receiving the HHT Certification Preparation Kit, please send an email request to MAC at info@aquariumcouncil.org.



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