

Why Show Fish ?

- improves the auction experience for everyone
- opportunity for others to see what an adult of a particular species looks like, most fish for sale in stores are juveniles or sub-adults
- show fish that are usually not for sale in stores (they might even be in the auction)
- compare your fish to others, is yours a good example of the species ?
- promotes your club at another club's event
- personal challenge of catching, transporting, and showing fish in good condition
- another aspect of the hobby like photography, tank and stand building, preparing food and so on

How to get ready

- a couple of weeks before the show, look at the rules and classes of fish, usually found on the host club's website, print out registration form and tank tags (more on these later)
- choose fish that are good candidates, separate the fish to its own tank if possible, especially if in company of aggressive cichlids
- fish should be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ full grown adult size
- check a Baenck Atlas and trusted web sites for known colouration, body shape and general appearance
- do not choose any fish with major fin damage of rays, holes, deformities
- do not choose any fish with scars, hollow bellies, curved spines, cloudy eyes
- the fish should swim normally, no listing or rapid breathing
- stop feeding the fish a day or two before the show (less poop in the show jar)

Show Jar considerations

- fish need adequate space to turn around
- use common sense, large fish in large containers, small fish in small containers
- should use 5 or 10 gallon aquariums for larger fish (South and Central American Cichlids, large Goldfish, well over 15cm 6 inches), 1-2-3 gallon aquariums for most mid-size fish (Africans, Loaches, Cyprinids, plecos 5-15cm 2-6 inches), Beanie Baby boxes for smaller fish (tetras, small barbs, corys, guppies, killifish, dwarf cichlids, dwarf plecos)
- gives large surface area for oxygen exchange
- if you must use a drum bowl, half fill, to maximize surface area
- drum bowls and other "jars" may have imperfections in the glass, ripples, bubbles
- best to have a lid to prevent fish from jumping out, use black tape to secure
- most show jar rules do not allow anything in the tank with the fish, other than an airline and airstone
- plain black or blue backgrounds work best
- wash your show jar before hand and wipe dry to avoid water spots

Morning of the Show

- wake up early to catch the fish when they are sleeping (consider travel time and when registration begins)
- use a soft net or chase the fish into a container like an ice cream bucket or margarine container
- can transport fish in the show jar or a plastic bag, the bag involves an extra transfer to the show jar
- if transporting in the show jar, put in enough water from the tank to cover the fish, more water can be added from a pail you bring from home
- can add stress coat and ammonia remover, the water in the show jar must be clear, or slight brown tannin, not yellow or blue (bag buddies okay for transport, but not on the show table)
- pack show jars, aquariums, bags, in a styro box or Rubbermaid bin to maintain temperature, easier carrying, stacking on a 2 wheel dolly cart
- some use pails for transport because of the convenient handle, but I find that pails cause eye rub damage to the fish
- fill in your tank tags with fish species, your name, club name, class number, the entry number will be assigned at the show registration
- do not attach your tank tags yet, they will get wet and the entry number still has to be assigned at registration
- fill in your registration form

Arrival at the Show

- hand in your registration form and tank tags, pay your fees
- glance over the show tables to see where the classes are to be displayed
- usually there is an assembly area with work tables to get your show jars ready by siphoning up poop and add more water (pail from home)
- place the show jars in the correct class
- if desired, hook up an airline and airstone
- make sure the show jar is wiped clean and dry (judging is easier)
- get the tank tags, make sure your name is folded behind out of sight, and attach with clear tape to the upper left hand corner of the show jar
- check that the correct tank tag is going on the correct jar, and that the jar is placed in the correct class
- help others get set up
- leave the show room and scout the auction tables

What is in your Show Kit ?

- use a plastic box with removable or hinged lid (tackle box)
- black tape to secure lids and backgrounds, clear tape to attach tank tags
- scissors, pens
- air line, valves, air stones
- spare background material
- small bailing cup (yogurt cup)
- spare fish bags
- spare Beanie Baby box (they do crack and split)
- small net
- small siphon (can use air hose)
- water conditioner, in case you need to treat more water at the show site
- turkey baster to siphon fish poop
- two dry towels (because one is never enough)

Judges

- are CAOAC trained/sanctioned for standardization
- usually two judges, sometimes 3
- may be apprentices being trained
- judges may make notes that you can ask to see after the results are announced
- no appeals, no whining

Awards

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each class, several Best in Categories, including Best in Show and sometimes People's Choice
- can be trophies, medallions, plaques, certificates, and/or cash
- person with the most points in the season gets an award from CAOAC
- club with the most points in the season gets an award from CAOAC

Back Home

- after the stated time, you can start to pack away the show jars
- check with the Show Chairman to remove fish early
- remove water down to just cover the fish
- put show jars back into styros or Rubbermaid bins
- after arriving home, add some tank water to the show jars and wait 15 minutes before netting and returning the fish to their home (puts water closer to tank temperature)
- rinse and wipe clean the show jars to prevent odours and less work for next show
- check on fish that have been returned to their home to make sure they are acclimatizing okay