

REFLECTIONS ON THE JUNE 12, 1993 NANFA CONVENTION
by Fred Batzer, Carmel, Indiana

For me, the recent NANFA convention at Urbana, Illinois presented an opportunity to meet others in NANFA and learn more about various species of native fishes. For a while I only halfheartedly thought about attending. It was only around the end of May that I finally decided to attend. I chose to drive over to Urbana from the Indianapolis area and I arrived early enough on Saturday morning to register before things got started. I was also able to meet and to talk to several others such as Bruce Gebhardt and Ray Katula before the proceedings began.

A total of 14 people were in attendance, and only two of those present (Bruce and Ray) had attended the first convention, in Maryland, in the early 70s. Some of the longest drives were conducted from Georgia, Texas, and Pennsylvania. Finally, there were also a number of darters, killifish, minnows, etc. that were in attendance in display tanks. Phil and Carrie Nixon arranged the displays, and indeed took care of many other logistical matters.

The convention began with Ray Katula giving a short history of NANFA and where it is today in terms of members, etc. After this introductory talk, he presented his experiences with many of the fishes that he has bred. His talk provided a lot of interesting information on the maintenance and breeding of darters. Dr. Carol Johnston had been added to the speakers' list after the convention folder had been sent out to the membership. She presented some interesting material on the various reproductive guilds of North American minnows. This informative talk was illustrated by numerous slides of minnows in breeding coloration (as well as preserved specimens). Dr. Lawrence Page gave a talk on the various reproductive modes of darters which were broken down into a number of reproductive guilds. This talk was also accompanied by numerous color slides of live and preserved darters, and the talk was every bit as interesting as all of the other presentations. A video presentation about darters was given by Bill Voiers. He showed several tapes of darter spawning sequences. It was very interesting to actually see how some of the darters spawn. Bruce Gebhardt gave a very good talk on the New Jersey Pine Barrens and its fishes. He also indicated that habitat degradation over the years had reduced the number of fishes that he has been able to collect there. After all the talks were completed, many of the conventioners went over to the home of James Sternburg to see his backyard ponds and his native and tropical aquariums. He has devoted a lot of time to his hobby!

It was after this that I left for home even though the others were planning to go out for dinner and talk fish until who knows when. Several people were planning to go on a

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collecting trip in the morning despite the high waters in the local rivers and streams. Perhaps someone else who went to dinner and/or the collecting trip will share their thoughts on these events.

Overall, I was very pleased that I had decided to attend. The convention was a great opportunity to meet other members--the primary function of any convention or meeting. All of the talks and presentations were great and they clearly showed the wonder and diversity of fishes inhabiting North America. My interest in, and appreciation of, native fishes definitely increased because of this weekend. Great job, everyone!

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