

# Something for Everybody: A Report from the 2001 NANFA Convention in Hocking Hills, Ohio

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Photographs by the author except where noted.



NANFA has a diverse membership reflecting a diversity of perspectives rallied around a single subject—native fishes. Many members are aquarium hobbyists. Others are professional scientists. Still others are environmentalists, anglers, educators, resource managers, hatchery workers, and nature lovers in general. Other organizations might fracture or wobble under such a variety of approaches and agendas. NANFA, however, thrives on this eclectic mix. Nowhere was this more evident than at the 2001 NANFA Convention in Hocking Hills, Ohio.

Brook trout. Desert fishes. River resource economics. Aquarium lighting techniques. Walleye genetics. Aquascaping. Sucker sex. Fish collecting. And of course, beer. This meeting had something for everybody. I hope this summary gives you some idea of what we learned and the fun we had, and why we can't wait to meet again at *this* year's convention in Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 1-4.

First, though, let me say that there could not have been a more beautiful meeting venue than Hocking Hills State Park. Whereas the last two NANFA conventions have been held at hotels (and very nice hotels at that), it was a refreshing and appropriate change of pace to have the formalities in a more natural setting. Meeting host and organizer Rob Carillio likened the convention to a retreat. And sure enough the park, with its hemlock-shaded gorges, nightly cricket chorales, and rustic (though comfortably appointed) cottages, succeeded in making our retreat a veritable sanctuary of fellowship and native fishdom.

## A Rough Life Getting Rougher

Day One of any NANFA convention is actually Thursday, the day before the convention officially starts. Attendees start arriving from various points near and far (including three blokes from as far away as Merry Ol' England). After viewing the native fish tank in the lobby of Hocking Hills Lodge (wow! fish already!) and securing keys to our cabins, we gradually made our way down to the meeting room to begin meeting our fellow NANFAs. For some people this is the best part of NANFA conventions. With so much contact taking place over e-mail and in Internet chat rooms nowadays, it's a rare treat to actually chat with someone over a beverage instead of a keyboard. Plus it's a hoot to finally put a face—a real person!—to that Internet persona.

After a night of chatting it was time for a Friday full of listening—to speakers, that is. First up was Mac Albin, Aquatic Ecologist with Franklin County Metro Parks. Mac's topic was the fishes of Big Darby Creek, one of the last great places to find native fishes in Ohio. (We would go there on Sunday.) Ninety-nine fish species are native to the creek.

"That's a lot of species for a stream that's only 83 miles long," Mac said. Of those 99 species around 87 of them are still present today.

Among the most spectacular of Mac's slides were several showing the spawning and agonistic behavior of variegated darter (*Etheostoma variegatum*). Nuptial males turn pitch black, and their fighting can be so intense that their fins are torn and tattered.



“It’s a rough life down there,” Mac said.

Unfortunately, it may be getting rougher for the darter and all of the Darby’s inhabitants. Although one rare darter species, the spotted darter (*E. maculatum*), is reappearing in some parts of the Darby (Mac has no explanation why), other species are doing poorly. Nearly all of the creek’s 38-40 mussel species are in “serious trouble,” due mostly to farming (the Darby flows through rich agricultural bottomland).

“Don’t know whether to drink it, plow it, or what,” Mac said, showing a slide of the creek turned a muddy brown from soil erosion after a thunderstorm. High sediments suffocate filter-feeding mussels and the eggs of fishes that need clean gravel to survive.

Several riparian corridors have recently been added, but Mac worries that the suburban sprawl of the Columbus metro area will eventually overpower the river and wipe out its aquatic fauna.

“If you want to see some of these things,” Mac said with a sigh, “I don’t know how long you have.”

### Warm Ovation, Very Cold Water

Before he introduced the next speaker, Rob Carillio introduced a special person who had just walked into the room—NANFA’s founder, John Bondhus.

“If it wasn’t for John,” Rob said, “we wouldn’t be sitting here today.”

John was given a warm round of applause with a few cheers mixed in. He was visibly moved by the ovation, and was no doubt moved to see how large and prestigious and active his fledgling fish society—first announced in the August 1972 *Tropical Fish Hobbyist*—had grown.

*Fig. 1.*

Central stoneroller, *Campostoma anomalum*, is just one of the 23 fish species sampled during our field trip to Salt Creek.

John waved for the talks to continue, and they did. Next up was Ohio NANFA member Mark Smith, who had converted

his basement into a micro-trout stream and brook trout hatchery. I won’t summarize Mark’s excellent talk because you can read the equally excellent article version in the May 2001 issue of *Freshwater and Marine Aquarium* (which marked the first time, we think, that a native fish had graced the magazine’s cover), or in the Winter 2001 issue of *American Currents*.

During a break I went up to Mark and congratulated him on his work and article. I told him that every native fish species deserves an aquarist as skilled and as dedicated as he.

“What’s next?” I asked.

Mark shrugged and said he hadn’t given it much thought. Considering the infrastructure of his fish room—large tanks, expensive chillers, very cold water—I offered a suggestion: “What about . . . burbot?”

Maybe I’m wrong about this, maybe I just saw what I wanted to see, but something in Mark’s eyes, the way he appeared to mull the possibility over in his head, indicated that burbot was a pretty intriguing idea.

### 350 Million Years in 15 Minutes

“My slide presentation doesn’t have a single fish in it.”

So began the next talk, by Pat Quackenbush, a naturalist at Hocking Hills State Park, on the region’s geographic history and indigenous flora and fauna. Pat was good to his word. His quickly paced and entertaining presentation started 350



*Fig. 2.*  
We sampled plenty of longear sunfish, *Lepomis megalotis*, confirming that it's the most common centrarchid in Ohio's Salt Creek.

million years ago, when Hocking Hills' shale and sandstone bedrock was deposited in the warm shallow sea which covered

Ohio at the time. Subsequent millions of years of uplift and stream erosion created the deep pockets, cracks and grooves that form the basis of Hocking Hill's awesome beauty today.

The glaciers stopped seven miles short of Hocking Hills. In their retreat they left behind a lush, moist, and air-conditioned landscape of eastern hemlock, Canadian yew, and yellow and black birch—all relics from the glacial age. Here the rocks are wet to the touch. Many are pockmarked with small holes resembling a beehive comb. These holes are formed when water, seeping through the permeable sandstone, washes out small pockets of loosely cemented sand grains. This permanent wetness makes rock climbing and otherwise leaving the marked hiking trails a dangerous and prohibited activity in the Park. (We received special permission to leave the trail and collect fish the following day.)

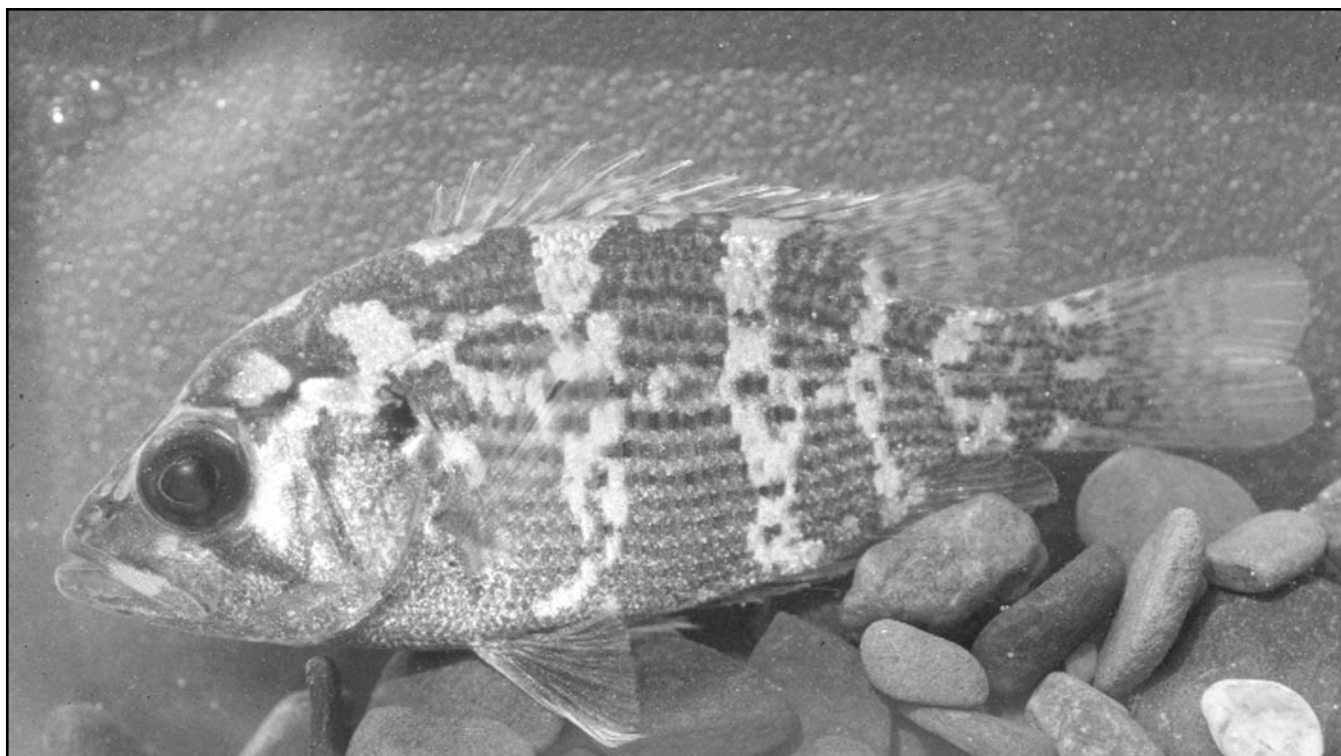
#### **Can Two Talks Be More Different and Still Be About Fish?**

The next two talks exemplified the divergence of topics that fall under the domain of NANFA, and the "something

for everybody" theme of the convention. Matt White, Associate Professor of Biology at Ohio University (Athens), spoke on genetic variation in walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum*). Then Nick Zarlina, Aquatic Biologist at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, showed us how to create natural-looking habitats in the aquarium using "artificial" materials.

Dr. White is a geneticist. He uses molecular markers to evaluate patterns of genetic variation and differentiation in natural populations of fishes. One such marker is mitochondrial DNA, which allows you to see how long historical populations have been separated. His study of Ohio River walleye has revealed at least two distinct forms: a Lake Erie (or Great Lakes) population, and one that's found in upstream portions of the Ohio River Valley. Using microsatellite assays and mitochondrial DNA sequence variation, Dr. White and his team have determined that the Ohio River form is 1.2 million years older than the Lake Erie form, and likely hails from the mighty Teays River, which flowed northward through Ohio and into Indiana over two million years ago. Many of the unglaciated headwater streams where the Ohio River form is most abundant today were present during Teays' time. Unfortunately, pure forms of the Ohio River walleye probably no longer exist since they have hybridized with Lake Erie walleye that have been stocked for sportfishing purposes.

No sooner did the implications of Dr. White's talk begin to sink in, than we had to switch gears and immerse ourselves



*Fig. 3.*

This rock bass, *Ambloplites rupestris*, also from Salt Creek, is stressed out as evidenced by its distinctive “fright pattern.”

(pun intended) in the world of the professional aquarist. This is a world where biology and art interact, as aquarists such as Nick Zarlinga strive to create natural-looking exhibits without using natural materials that leech organic materials and affect water chemistry (e.g., logs) or are prohibitively heavy to use on a large scale (e.g., rocks). The alternative is to simulate mud banks, rockwork and woody debris using polyester resin and fiberglass. Unfortunately, these materials are smelly (work outdoors or in well-ventilated areas) and hazardous (you need to wear gloves, a long-sleeve shirt, and a respirator). But given the right tools and a touch of creativity, it’s remarkable how one can turn a chunk of polyisocyanurate (available from commercial insulation suppliers) into an authentic-looking water-worn rock, or strips of fiberglass matting glued to chicken wire into the root wad of a submerged tree.

Rob Carillio was to follow up Nick’s talk with his own on affordable lighting alternatives for native fish aquaria. But the talks (and the animated question-and-answer sessions that followed) were running late. So in order to maintain some semblance of a schedule, Rob opted to give his talk as a workshop later that night. I did not attend, but Rob’s talk more or less followed what he wrote in his Fall 1997 *American Currents* article, “Putting Native Fishes in Their Best Light.”

### Desert Fishes in Ohio

NANFA conventions always attract speakers from the surrounding area. This year is no exception. But since we’re the *North American* Native Fishes Association, it’s always a treat to see what native fish enthusiasts enjoy on the other side of the Continental Divide. The next speaker, Ken Wintin, gave us such a glimpse. Ken’s an aquarist at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum in Tucson, Arizona, a zoo/natural history museum/botanical garden that celebrates the flora and fauna of the Sonoran Desert—an arid region that encompasses parts of Arizona, California, and the Mexican states of Sonora and Baja California.

Ken led us on a video tour of the aquatic components of the Museum, including the behind-the-scenes holding tanks and back-up systems. We got to see video of such rarely seen (for easterners, at least) desert fishes as longfin dace (*Agosia chrysogaster*), beautiful shiner (*Cyprinella formosa*), Gila chub (*Gila intermedia*), Sonora chub (*Gila ditaenia*), speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus*), loach minnow (*Rhinichthys cobitis*), desert sucker (*Catostomus clarki*), flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), Yaqui catfish (*Ictalurus pricei*), Apache trout (*Oncorhynchus apache*), Gila topminnow (*Poeciliopsis occidentalis*), and Sinaloan cichlid (*Cichlasoma beani*). Video of this last species showed it spawning and guarding its fry.



Fig. 4.

Museum specimen of the harelip sucker, *Moxostoma lacerum*.  
Last documented capture in 1893. Courtesy: Randy Sanders, ODNR.

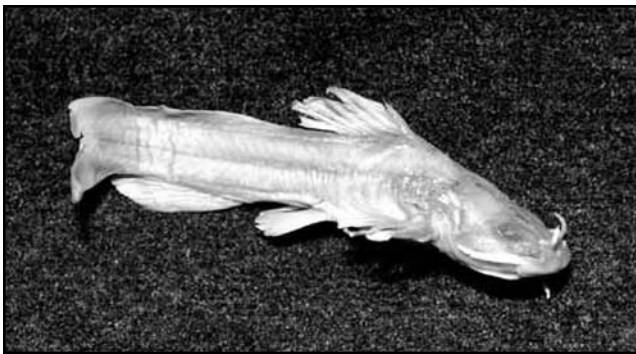


Fig. 5.

Museum specimen of the Scioto madtom, *Noturus trautmani*.  
Last documented capture in 1957. Courtesy: Randy Sanders, ODNR.

### River Resource Economics: A Brief Introduction

Most of us don't need to be told why clean, healthy rivers are a good thing. But Mike Fremont, president of Rivers Unlimited, an Ohio-based river protection and restoration organization, is using a new tool and methodology to convince policymakers of the same thing: river resource economics.

As Mike explained it, our nation has yet to understand the connection between an inviting river and a better economy. River resource economics aims to elucidate that connection by projecting the economic benefits of removing dams, improving riparian corridors, restoring eroded banks, and other stream restoration efforts. How much money is a healthy river worth to a community? How much more valuable is waterfront property on a clean river than it is on a river that's polluted? How much money can be made from increased recreational opportunities such as boating and fishing? Do parks, greenways, and increased open spaces for wildlife improve the quality of life for people? And if so, does improving the quality of life in and of itself yield a measurable economic return?

"Only 60 percent of our nation's waters are fishable and swimmable," Mike said, citing one example. "That's about \$9 billion lost in sportfishing alone."

Mike's talk wasn't about fish per se, but it was easy to see how fish and other wildlife stands to benefit as more economic studies of river resources are conducted. Environmental laws such as the Clean Water Act can only go so far. Environmental advocates and groups such as NANFA can only raise so much awareness. In the future, the protection and restoration of imperiled habitats and species will primarily be justified and driven by *economic* concerns rather than strictly ethical or environmental ones.

### A Dream Career; In Praise of Sycamores

"These are exciting times for streams in Ohio," Randy Sanders said at the top of his presentation, "New Trends in Stream and Watershed Protection." Randy, an assistant administrator in the Fish Management and Research Group of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife, has spent 24 years in the streams of Ohio. During his tenure—my "dream career" he called it—Randy has seen Ohio's streams at their worst and at their pristine best. Fortunately, the general trend is good. Compared to the 1960s, when pollution throughout Ohio (and the country) was at an all-time high, Ohio's streams are showing vast improvements thanks to the following factors: improved water quality; improved science and technology; increased funding; increased habitat and protection; increased awareness and better education; more watershed groups and partnerships; and better regulations (although regulations show considerable room for improvement, Randy said).

Randy talked about how the concept of stream restoration has changed over the decades. At the beginning of the 20th century, wildlife management agencies sought to "improve" streams—which were already seriously polluted—by building dams and indiscriminately stocking fish. In fact, one of the first things the Ohio Fish Commission (precursor to the ODNR) did following its inception in 1873 was to stock carp in virtually every body of water in the state.

"Every single day I come to work," Randy quipped, "I ask myself, 'Am I doing anything as stupid as this?'"

Details regarding the status and future of Ohio's streams can be found in Randy's book, *A Guide to Ohio Streams*, free copies of which he made available to every convention attendee. (Thank you, Randy!) The one component of stream protection that Randy can't stress enough is preserving the

## *Our Rivers: So Much More Than Water*

The undisturbed forested land you see along the river, or *riparian zone*, provides numerous, yet often overlooked, benefits to both wildlife and people. ♻️ The riparian zone provides important habitat where animals find food and shelter. Just as roads and highways are important to humans traveling from point A to point B, forested riverbanks are equally important to birds and other creatures as they journey up and down the river. They're a sort of "natural highway" that provide animals a safe passageway through our cities and towns. ♻️ Riparian zones improve the quality of our drinking water by functioning like a gigantic water purifier. Harmful runoff filters through the ground where it can actually provide nutrients for streamside vegetation. The many trees and plants in the riparian zone help stabilize riverbank soil. Much like the steel reinforcement rods found in concrete bridges, roots from trees and other plants in the riparian zone serve a similar function in that they help to hold soil in place and thereby prevent soil erosion. Trees along the river also provide shade, preventing the river's water from becoming too warm during hot weather. Wetlands along a river's banks help retain floodwater after heavy rains or snowmelts. These wetlands mimic a huge sponge by absorbing and filtering water. ♻️ Most notably, riparian zones provide a wealth of recreational and educational opportunities for people of all ages, including hiking, fishing, hunting, canoeing and swimming, as well as birdwatching and photography. ♻️ When preserved as much as possible, riparian zones have also been shown to enhance property values. Lush forests and other habitats create areas that are highly desirable for marginal human settlement. Forested riverbanks are scenic places year round and add visual appeal to a community. They are invaluable resources and essential to our environmental, social and economic health. Please support riparian zone enhancement efforts in your local community.

— Nick Zarlinga and Rob Carillio

riparian corridor, or forested banks. (See the essay above.) Siltation is the leading cause of fish and mollusk declines and extinctions in Ohio's streams. The removal of streamside forests and resulting bank erosion is the leading cause of this siltation.

"We have more critters dying from eroding banks than from outright pollution," Randy said. "Yet [people who build homes or farm right up to the stream] are allowed to get away with it."

Mandatory riparian zones is one law Randy would like to see, but he acknowledges that getting such legislation passed would be a tough sell since 80 percent of Ohio's stream miles are on private land, most of them on farms. For now, Randy and the ODNR are working with farmers and other landowners to voluntarily maintain sufficient riparian corridors. (We met one such farmer on the next day's trip to Salt Creek.)

And what's the easiest way to maintain a riparian corridor? Keep or plant sycamores.

"The keystone species in these corridors is sycamore," Randy said. "I spend a lot of my time now promoting sycamore trees. . . . When you throw in mussel beds, aquatic insects, fish communities, wood ducks that nest in them, eagles, herons, and everything else, I think the sycamore is

the single species that has more benefit to wildlife than any other tree. In fact, I think it should be the state tree instead of the buckeye!"

Randy closed his presentation with slides showing some of the fish species that are nearly gone from Ohio's streams, or gone already. Among them were stark, lifeless photos of the extinct harelip sucker (Fig. 4) and presumed-extinct Scioto madtom (Fig. 5)—all pallid and wrinkled from so many years in preserving fluid, museum jars being the only place on earth they now exist.

If the dream of Randy's dream career comes true, no more species will be joining them.

### **Fish That Are Technically Landfill: Invasion of the Gobies**

Finless carp, tumorous goldfish, and cancerous bullheads are just some of the deformed fishes that Roger Thoma of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has collected in Ohio's most contaminated streams. The slides he showed us were revolting and sad. In the Maumee River, Roger told us, "we get carp that have so much hazardous waste chemicals built up in their bodies—[e.g., PCBs, mercury, DDT]—



that technically they should be [classified as] landfill. They're that hot."

Along the shoreline of Lake Erie, Roger has documented the virtual disappearance of mottled sculpin (*Cottus bairdi*), fantail darter (*Etheostoma flabellare*), and greenside darter (*Etheostoma blennioides*). The reason? Competition with the extremely aggressive round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*), a Caspian Sea exotic that was carried to Lake Erie in the ballast water of ships.

"When a sculpin has a fight with another sculpin," as Roger described it, "they go up [to each other], they display, they put their fins out, and whoever's the biggest wins. Well, they have a little trouble with gobies because gobies tend to be bigger. But, more importantly, when a goby puts up its fins and the other guy doesn't back down, he bites. Sculpin don't know nothin' 'bout bitin'! *'That guy just bit me! What the hell was that?'* So the sculpin always loses the battle."

Snorkel the Lake Erie shoreline, Roger said, and the bottom is literally carpeted with round gobies. They're now the most abundant fish in Lake Erie. Scientists have no idea how to control or eradicate them. Evidence suggests that anglers are spreading them throughout the Lake Erie

*Fig. 6.*  
Paul Koop photographs an eastern sand darter, held by Linda Ireton, as Mike Wolfe looks on.

drainage in bait buckets. (It's illegal to possess a live round goby in Ohio.) And what's most chilling is the speed with which the wholesale replacement of darters and sculpin with round goby has taken place.

Round gobies were first seen in Lake Erie in 1993.

### The Mahoning River Died For Us

Roger Thoma's colleague at Ohio EPA, Robert Davic, was the final speaker of the day. Dr. Davic is responsible for biological and chemical monitoring of the Mahoning River, once one of the most degraded rivers in America and now staging a slow but promising comeback.

The Mahoning's misfortune is related to wars—Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War—and the military's insatiable appetite for steel. A 30-mile stretch of the Mahoning from Warren to Youngstown produced one-sixth of the nation's steel over the last century. With 56 blast furnaces and five coke ovens dumping hot water and thousands of pounds of toxins into the river each



*Fig. 7.*

Salt Creek is one of the few strongholds of the eastern sand darter, *Ammocrypta pellucida*, a state-endangered fish in Ohio.

day, virtually everything in that stretch of the river died. In 1979, the water in one section of the river was so hot—110°F—that fish surveyors had to wear special shoes to keep their feet from burning on the bottom of the canoe. Not that there were many fish to survey. The only fish seen alive that day were finless carp that swam by undulating their bodies like big fat snakes.

The Vietnam War ended. The federal government imposed cleaner water standards. The steel mills began to close. And while the quality of the Mahoning's water has improved, the river's bottom remains a veritable dump of toxic waste. Since nothing can live in this poisoned sediment—no worms, no plants, no beginnings of the aquatic food web—huge tracts of the Mahoning are a biological desert.

Fortunately, removing the toxic sludge is technologically and economically feasible. The estimated cost of the clean-up, Dr. Davic said, will be \$100 million. But, hearkening back to Mike Fremont's talk on river resource economics, the Mahoning River is projected to generate \$30-\$35 million of extra revenue per year simply by virtue of its being clean.

Like so many soldiers in times of war, the Mahoning River paid the ultimate sacrifice. "So in a way," Dr. Davic said, "this river deserves every American to donate a few pennies to help clean it up."

### Happy Birthday to Me

During the talks I was keeping a secret: It was my 40th birthday. I had sworn my fiancée (now wife) Stephanie to secrecy, but she just couldn't hold it in. Late during the talks she began making arrangements to hold a surprise birthday party back in our cabin. Bob Bock's wife, Janet, volunteered to buy a birthday cake, pop and beer, and bags of munchies. The trick was letting other attendees know about it without me catching on. (Unfortunately, this meant that many people did not get invited.) I wanted to stick around and watch Roger Thoma's video on redhorse sucker sex. But Stephanie insisted that we return to the cabin. I suspected that something birthday-related was afoot and begrudgingly agreed, but made it painfully clear that what I really, really wanted to do was watch that sucker sex video in a darkened room full of guys with a keg of beer.



When we got back to the cabin no one was there. Some surprise, huh? We waited and waited, all the while I was threatening to return to the Lodge to watch the video. Slowly people started trickling in. And then when Janet arrived with the cake and beverages, I was finally treated to a collective “Happy birthday, Chris!” and suddenly missing the sucker sex video was not such a big deal anymore.

We were sharing a cabin with Mark and Susan Binkley, and Mark was using the cabin to conduct official Jonah’s Aquarium business. Some people were just stopping by to buy stuff from Mark and had no idea it was my birthday. It was funny seeing their faces when they entered the cabin and were immediately handed a slice of cake and a Budweiser.

Thank you, Stephanie, for not keeping my secret. Thank you, Janet Bock, for buying the cake and goodies. And thanks to everyone who stopped by to wish me well. I can’t imagine a better birthday party than the one I had surrounded by terrific fish-people like you.

### Enough Talking, Let’s Go Collecting!

Saturday morning we had two sampling trips going on at the same time and I was torn between them. Pat Quackenbush was leading one trip down into one of the Park’s gorges, and Randy Sanders was leading an electrofishing trip to nearby Salt Creek, a tributary of the Scioto River. I opted for the latter because we had a good chance of sampling eastern sand darter (*Ammocrypta pellucida*), a state-endangered fish I had never seen before.

Meeting at Salt Creek, Randy introduced us to a farmer named Bruce Ebert, on whose property this section of the creek flowed through. Bruce is concerned about stream quality and erosion, and is working with Randy to restore the riparian zone on his property. Bruce is also trying to encourage other farmers to do the same. We all thanked Bruce for caring about the river, and wished there were more like him.

The electrofishing was good. We caught 23 species, including lots of suckers and centrarchids. I set up a photo-station and took lots of photos (Figs. 1-3). The electrofishing didn’t yield any sand darters, so we hiked upstream a short way and found a promising riffle. Using a large seine, we didn’t take long to capture a specimen. We admired and photographed the darter (Figs. 6-7), then returned it to its home.

Meanwhile, the Pat Quackenbush-led gang at Queer Creek—so named because it flows south to north—were having a blast. Stephanie shot video of the trip and the scenery was gorgeous! Unfortunately, the water in the creek

was low, cold, and easily clouded, but no one complained because there were plenty of fishes to see and catch. Pat said that just about every month someone sees a species in the Park that’s never been seen in it before. This month’s new species was the trout-perch (*Percopsis omiscomaycus*).

After lunch back at the Lodge, we headed out for a Mac Albin-led trip to Pine Creek, another Scioto River tributary. Here we found 19 species, the most abundant of which was the redbreast dace (*Clinostomus elongatus*; back cover photo).

### Raffle, Banquet, Auction

The water pressure at Hocking Hills State Park must have plummeted as we returned to our cabins and showered before the night’s festivities. A buffet banquet dinner was served in the Lodge’s meeting room, and the keg of locally brewed beer began to give up the ghost after three days of reliable, refreshing service. There was a last-minute rush to buy raffle tickets before the winners were drawn. Which were:

- 7th prize, a wooden “Intaglio” wall clock signed by the artist Bruce “Gator” Scott, to Sharon Rosen (Monroe, NJ).
- 6th prize, a set of Ken McKeighen, Jr. fish paintings, signed by the artist, to Nick Zarlinga (Cleveland, OH).
- 5th prize, a set of Joseph Tomelleri fish prints, signed by the artist, to Bob “I-Never-Win-Anything” Bock (Kensington, MD).
- 4th prize, a 4’ x 8’ Delta 1/8” seine net and 17” x 17” dip net (courtesy Jim Graham), to Bill Hoppe (Yellville, AR).
- 3rd prize, a trio of *Enneacanthus* wood carvings by Leo S. Long, to Bob “I-Never-Win-Anything” Bock again!
- 2nd prize, a LT-24 Linear air pump (courtesy of Aquatic Habitats/Aquatic Ecosystems), to Carol (aka Mrs. Leo) Long (Troy, MI).
- And the 1st prize, a 30-gallon polyethylene tank (also courtesy of Aquatic Habitats/Aquatic Ecosystems), to Paul Wager (Ft. White, FL).

After a short break we settled in for the classic NANFA auction. I have no idea how many hours this marathon took to complete, but auctioneer Phil Nixon was up there the entire time with nary a break or drink of water. He auctioned off 186 items, ranging from a \$1 pair of feeding tongs to a \$175 75-gallon river habitat tank.

Combining income from registration, raffle, auction, shirt sales, and on-the-spot donations, minus expenses, the 2001 NANFA Convention added \$2013.70 to NANFA’s coffers! On behalf of future Conservation Grant and Corcoran Education Grant recipients, thank you, one and all!

## Special Thanks

The following individuals and companies were kind enough to contribute items to the NANFA 2001 Convention raffle and/or auction. For companies that made donations, we can acknowledge their support and properly thank them by giving them our business whenever we need the types of products or services they supply. Remember, these contributors helped make the convention enjoyable and successful!

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## Final Day, Closing Thanks

Stephanie and I had to leave first thing Sunday morning, so we missed the field trip to Big Darby Creek led by Mark Binkley. It sounds like we missed a good one. Mark took the group to Trautman's Riffle—named after *Fishes of Ohio* author Milton B. Trautman, honoring the site where he discovered the Scioto madtom in 1943. No Scioto madtoms turned up that day, but 27 other species did, including three other species of madtoms and seven species of darters.

Meetings like this are a lot of work, and many people must contribute in order for the weekend to be educational, profitable, memorable, and fun. Rob Carillio was always quick to point out that he had tons of help getting this convention off the ground. So let's honor those people here:

B.G. Granier, Mike Wolfe and Leo Long—thank you

for organizing the raffle. Mike Wolfe, thank you for the folders and name tags, for soliciting the auction donations, and for working the registration table. (Did you actually *see* any of the convention?) Jay DeLong and Dave Neely, thank you for the t-shirts. Phil Nixon, thank you for being auctioneer. Rob Denkhaus, thank you for carrying lots of heavy stuff. Bob Bock, thank you for the publicity. Nick Zarlinga, without you there wouldn't have been any beer. ("HA!" says Rob.) And to all of the speakers and trip leaders, thank you for your time, your knowledge, and your passion.

Of course, the biggest thanks must go to Rob Carillio, who lived and breathed this convention for 10 months. The day after the convention Rob told me, "Okay . . . now I need some sleep." Man, I hope you slept well. You deserved it.

You made sure the convention had something for everybody. And everybody thanks you for it. 🐟