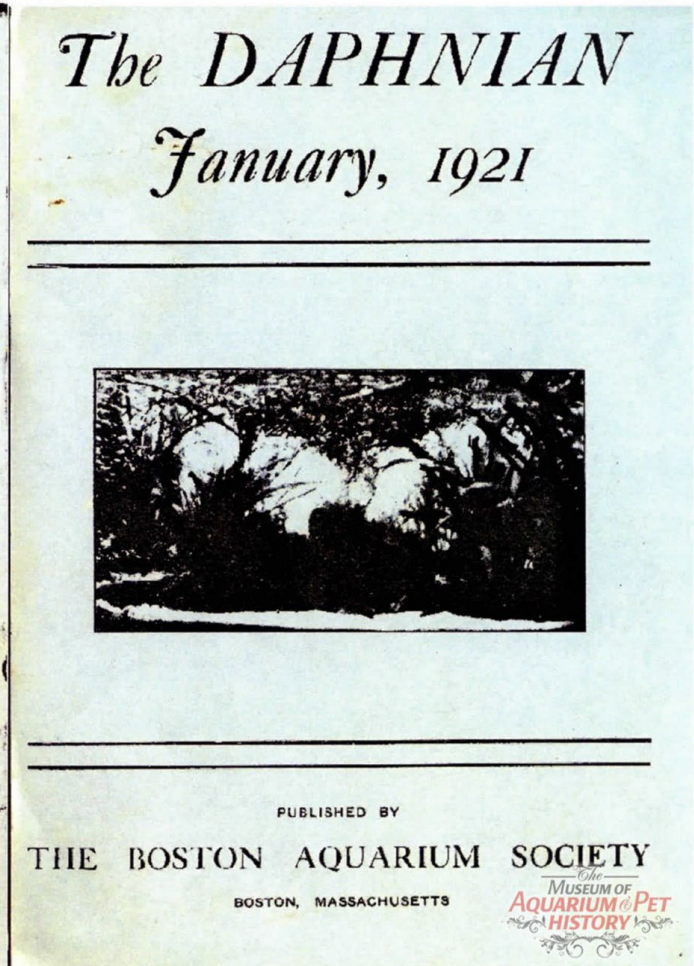




# On Some Early Publications of The Boston Aquarium Society. Part One: The January, 1920 “The Daphnian”

By Lee Finley



The title of “The Daphnian” has long been attached to some publications of The Boston Aquarium Society [hereafter BAS]. Pictured above are copies of the covers of two such early publications. I apologize for the quality of the pictures. They are scans of not-so-great pictures which appeared in the October, 1981 issue of the club’s then monthly publication also bearing “The Daphnian” name.

In 1919, 1920 and 1921 there were published for each of the annual shows a small publication titled “The Daphnian.” The 1920 edition, for instance, consists of eight pages. What is predominantly known regarding this series of publications is based on the history of the BAS prepared by George and Frieda Meserve. The following is taken verbatim from Part 3 of their history:

*“A special feature of this third annual exhibit at the Boston Poultry Show was the publication and sale of a pamphlet called The Daphnian containing an article on the hobby, information on the Society, and advertising space purchased by dealers and manufacturers of aquarium supplies. This little pamphlet paid for itself and became a feature of later shows. The January, 1921 Daphnian contained an article by Secretary Walter H. Chute entitled The Balanced Aquarium and its Inhabitants.”*

Little beyond the above is currently known regarding the publications. Palmater (1981) noted that materials from the Meserves made “ ... up the bulk of the magazine.” The pictures of the 1919 and 1921 issues (see above) were used but no information on them is evident. I am assuming that these pictures were from the Meserve collection. The current whereabouts of these two issues is unknown, so they are not available for any additional comments. I will note that Chute (1919) in his article on the 1919 BAS show noted the following: “*No record was kept on the attendance, but 900 copies of a little pamphlet called “The Daphnian” were distributed.*” And now, not one of these has surfaced. Such a find would provide additional important information on the activities and projects of the BAS. In fact, all three pamphlets are beyond rare. Gary Bagnall of The Museum of Aquarium and Pet History has noted to me that none of these reside in the organization’s library. That will soon be remedied with the 1920 edition which is covered herein.

Both Chute and the Meserves refer to these publications (1919 and 1921) as pamphlets, a designation which from the 1920 edition that follows, seems fitting. I will note that Sausaman (1994), on page 22, refers to the three as “Yearbooks”, but I think this is a bit of an overcall. I will also make a note here in that Sausaman gives the date of the 1921 edition as 1920. This is obviously a typo (as opposed to factual error) as I know that Jare did have access to the Meserve history of the club. The 1920 issue is 6 by 9 inches. I assume the other two comply with this.

So, without anything further I will present a scanned copy of the 1920 issue of The Daphnian which can now bring to light a bit of the important and long history of the BAS.

### **References and suggested reading**

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Sausaman, Jare A. 1994. Aquatic Societies and Periodicals of the New World (A Check List). Privately published; limited to 15 copies. 234 pages.

# *The DAPHNIAN*

## *January, 1920*

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### A BALANCED AQUARIUM

At the time this picture was taken, this aquarium had been set up as shown,  
without a change of water for over 14 months

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## Native Wild Fish in the Aquarium

By C. L. Hauthaway

It is not at all necessary to get expensive or exotic fish in order to have an interesting or attractive aquarium. There are a great many native fish well worth keeping. Diamond Sun Fish, (*Enneacanthus Obesus*) live well in an aquarium. They are generally of a peaceful disposition and soon learn to eat dried Shrimp or most any other prepared food. They are easy to tame, in fact they soon get so tame that they will not only take a fly or worm out of ones fingers, but will actually come over to the side of the tank nearest you, and swim up and down the glass teasing for attention and food, as soon as you come into the room. Sometimes they will follow one's finger snapping at it through the glass, as long as you care to play with them. They are not only very beautifully marked with contrasting bands and blotches and points of color, (that are very brilliant in the spring breeding season) but are also graceful and at times almost dignified in their movements.

The Black Nose Dace (*Rhinichthys Atronus*) is another native fish that lives well in the aquarium. They will eat almost any good prepared food and are absolutely harmless to other inmates of the aquarium. They are pleasingly slim and graceful;—always in motion chasing others of their kind. Being a fish that by nature goes in schools, they keep this habit in the aquarium, and no matter how many or how few you have in a tank, they are always together,—forever harmlessly chasing each other in a perpetual game of tag.

Young Cat Fish, or Hornpout, as they are often called, make an interesting if rather grotesque aquarium fish. They will eat anything, are very hardy, and if taken when they are small enough and kept with other native fish of about equal size may be trusted as a general rule. It is never absolutely safe, however, to have them in with Goldfish, especially fancy Goldfish. The excessive tail and fin development of the fancy Goldfish seems to be too much of a temptation for any Cat Fish to resist and they are very apt to take a nip at them now and then. This is far from beneficial to the slower moving, heavily finned Goldfish.

The Sticklebacks (with their peculiar muff shaped nest built of leaves of aquatic plants, and similar substances, and constantly guarded by the male fish) are exceedingly interesting. They do best in slightly brackish water, and really need a certain amount of live food, although one of our members succeeded in having a pair nest in his tank (a tank, by the way, of only about 2½ gallon capacity) upon a diet of

dried shrimp exclusively. We have several varieties of Sticklebacks in and around Boston, all of them well worth the little extra care that keeping them entails.

The Darter, if anyone has a very shallow tank with lots of plants in it, makes an attractive novelty. Being without a swimming bladder it can swim only by jerks, and acts more like a water newt than a fish. You will often see this fish climbing all over and through the plants with short jerky hops,—using its pectoral fins as props, at times, and at others almost as if they were front feet. He also needs something beside prepared food, but is not at all fussy about what it is. Enchytrae worms, small earth worms, shredded fish, pieces of raw meat, bits of clams, shreds of oyster, or fish spawn, all meet with the same gobbling from Mr. Jimmy Darter, and for a fish so small he certainly has an enormous mouth and appetite.

There are many other wild fish, some strictly native to Massachusetts and some from nearby states that are easily procured, hardy, and attractive. Almost all of these native fish you can easily catch yourself. In general they should be caught from small ponds or sluggish streams, when intended for aquarium use, because fish from large ponds or swiftly flowing streams are apt to be accustomed to more oxygen and more swimming room than can be well provided in most aquariums. Of course if you have running water these suggestings may be disregarded. Most any pond in or near Boston that does not dry up in the summer, and is not polluted in some way, will have one or more of the above mentioned wild fish in it. A long handled dip net and a pair of rubber boots is all anyone needs to catch them,—and even the rubber boots can be dispensed with often times.

In catching wild fish be sure and return at once to the water any young Black Bass, Pickerel, or any other game or food fish that may be caught. They are protected by the State and should you be found with any in your possession you may be subject to a rather heavy fine. They are apt to be voracious and not suitable for keeping in an ordinary aquarium at any rate, so returning them to the water is not in any way a hardship.

It is not necessary to see your fish to catch him. Simply reach well out from the shore with your net, dip it into the water, and quickly sweep it toward you, scraping the bottom as you do so, and through whatever water weeds you happen to see. Wild fish hide under and around stones, old logs,

stumps, water vegetation, and in fact any place where they think they cannot be seen. Therefore, don't bother to try to see them; just sweep your net through the most likely looking places and ten to one you will have a fish or more in it when you lift it out of the water.

There are a few "Don'ts" that are absolutely necessary to observe in collecting wild fish, if you want to succeed in keeping them in an aquarium:

Don't put an injured fish into your pail, he is almost sure to become diseased, and disease in fresh caught wild fish spreads very fast. Life in a tank is very different from that in a pond, and besides, they are going to get very different food. These two changed conditions are almost sure to kill off any injured fish, and often a few of those that you think are uninjured.

Don't overcrowd your pail,—you won't want more than one or two pair of each variety anyway. Why try to take home 50? You will only have them all dead when you get there. This leads to the statement you so often hear: "Oh I can't keep wild fish in my aquarium; why, I caught some beautiful ones, lots of them, only a little while ago and they did not even live until I got home." You wouldn't think of putting 50 Gold Fish in one small pail, and expect them to live,—and Gold Fish have been in captivity all their lives. Why expect wild fish, unused to any restraint, to live under similar conditions?

Don't try to feed them as soon as you get them home. They are badly frightened and not used to their new home, to you, or to prepared fish food. Let them stay a day or two undisturbed, with perhaps a handful or so of some plants taken from the same pond that you took them. There will be ample live food in these plants to keep them for a few days at least.

Don't try to scare them or poke them out of hiding places so you can look at them. Let them have their own pet nook to hide in. More than that, put plants and large stones in the tank in such a way that they can easily make for themselves hiding places. Coax them out at first with some particularly tempting food.

Don't neglect your wild fish. They want to be fed just as regularly and with just as much care as any of your highest priced Goldfish. Just because you caught them and you can get more, do not leave them to shift for themselves.

With a little care, regular and intelligent feeding, and a suitably arranged tank, I venture to say that almost any of the above mentioned wild fish will soon become so tame and exhibit such interesting habits and characteristics that you will always want at least one tank devoted to wild fish.

## LIVE FOOD

By Walter H. Chute

Goldfish and other aquarium fishes may be kept in the aquarium for long periods by the use of the so-called dry foods, but to keep them in the best condition and to induce them to breed one must resort to the use of live food. Live food is the general name given to those minute aquatic creatures on which the majority of fish live in their natural habitats. There are a great many forms distributed throughout Massachusetts, the following ones being the most plentiful:

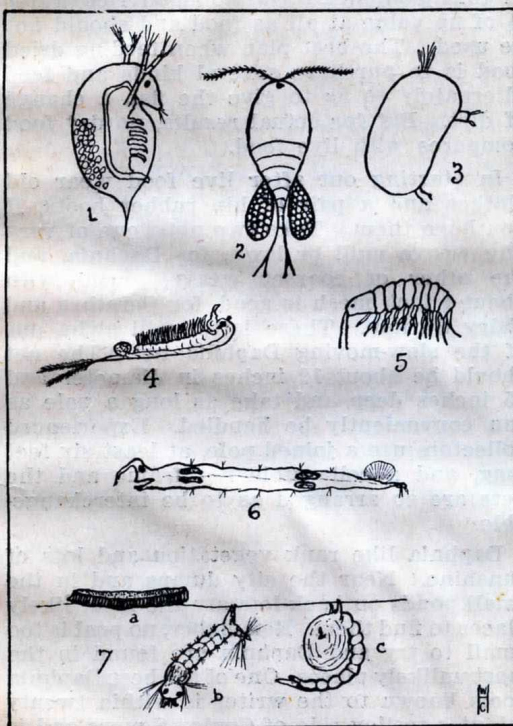
The best known to aquarists and the most desirable is the Daphnia. Daphnia (Fig 1) are small crustaceans about the size of a flea, possessing two prominent arms or branchæ. These are the swimming arms and, as Daphnia are heavier than water, these arms are kept constantly in motion to prevent the insect from sinking to the bottom. When a strong light is held close to a jar full of Daphnia, all the swimming arms stop moving and their owners sink to the bottom.

Daphnia are found in nearly every ditch or pool in which there are fish. Stagnant pools in which there is decaying vegetable or animal matter are generally the most desirable. They can be found in all shades, from red to pale yellow or olive. Their habits are peculiar in that, where one finds thousands of them today, a week hence there may be none. However, when trying out a pool, do not be content with one dip of the net. Walk around the edge and try the net every few feet. Very often a net full of Daphnia will be found in a part of the pool only a few feet from where the collector tried and found none. In the early morning hours the Daphnia come to the surface to get the warmth of the sun. Later in the day, it is necessary to go down deeper after them. If one is lucky enough to make a good find, care must be taken not to take too many in the net at the same time as they will crush each other with their own weight. Also, as they are oxygen breathers, too many must not be kept in the collecting cans at the same time. In the hot weather put a piece of ice in the water in the pail. This keeps the temperature down until home is reached. In cool weather a great number of "water fleas" can be safely transported without ice.

Daphnia is the preferred food of all aquarium fishes and they seem to be able to eat great quantities of them without any ill effects. A young goldfish is capable of consuming daily a quantity of Daphnia equal in bulk to its own body. Do not put too many Daphnia at a time in a tank.

young fish as they will quickly exhaust the supply of oxygen and the fish will suffocate.

In the spring when the ice goes out, Daphnia begin to appear. These are all females which carry their eggs inside their shell. These eggs can easily be seen with the aid of a magnifying glass. The eggs hatch out more females until in June or early July the water is fairly alive with them. They seem to thin out during July and August and then in September appear again, now accompanied by the smaller males. At this time of year the females lay small thick shelled eggs. These eggs sink to the bottom where they lay all winter, hatching out, in the spring, the big females again.



#### COMMON FORMS OF LIVE FOOD

1. Daphnia (female), greatly enlarged.
2. Cyclops (female with egg sacs), greatly enlarged.
3. Cypris, greatly enlarged.
4. Fairy Shrimp (female), natural size.
5. Fresh Water Shrimp, natural size.
6. Corethra, twice natural size.
7. a Mosquito eggboat. } Twice natural size.  
    b Mosquito Larvae, 1st phase. }  
    c Mosquito Larvae, 2nd phase. }

The theory has been advanced that the difference in abundance of Daphnia each year is regulated by the severity of the winters. It is claimed that, during a mild winter, some of the eggs hatch out during each thaw and the Daphnia are killed off again by the following freeze up. While, if

the winter is severe and long, the eggs do not hatch until the final spring thaw and then it is generally too late in the season for any more severe frosts to kill them. This theory is strengthened by the fact that Daphnia were much more plentiful in 1918 than during the past summer, and we all have cause to remember the severity of the winter of 1917-18.

Two other forms of live food frequently found with Daphnia are Cyclops (Fig. 2) and Cypris (Fig. 3). The former is about the same size as the Daphnia and is often confused with it. The Cyclops has two very delicate antennæ perched on its head at right angles to the body and a long tail divided into two parts. It does not use the antennæ in swimming and, while the Daphnia moves through the water by a series of upward jerks, the progress of the Cyclops is much faster and steadier. When placed in a jar of clear water, Daphnia will generally sink slowly to the bottom, while the Cyclops may be observed swimming in every direction with equal speed. They are generally white but may often be found in greens and deep reds.

The author found one pool in the Fellsway in which there were large numbers of exceptionally large Cyclops whose bodies were pale blue and whose antennæ and tails were crimson. It is doubtful if the fish enjoyed the beautiful colors but there is no doubt about their appreciation of the food value.

Cypris in Massachusetts are found in three distinct colors, white, green and brown. They are shaped similar to a clam and are equipped with cilia or swimming hairs which they protrude between the edges of their shells and with which they progress steadily through the water. Cypris are not liked by the fish as well as the other two crustaceans previously mentioned, as their shells are hard and young fish frequently choke to death trying to eat them. They are said to cause the death of Red Copenhagen snails by burrowing in the soft flesh under the shell. The writer has observed them attach themselves to the fins and tails of young fish.

Another form of live food in early spring is the Fairy Shrimp (Fig. 4). This is a beautifully colored creature about one half an inch long. They are found in nearly every pool that dries up during the summer. They may be obtained during early March while the ice is still in the ponds by cutting a hole in the ice as for ice-fishing and then by gently stirring the water with the net. They disappear in May when the water begins to warm up. Another form of fresh water shrimp (Fig. 5) may be obtained all the year round. They are somewhat smaller and are very rapid swimmers. They like to hide in a thick growth

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plants and are easily caught by picking up a clump of water moss or similar thick foliated plant and shaking it over the collecting pail. They should only be fed to the active fish as they can easily keep out of the way of the slow-moving goldfish. Incidentally they are excellent scavengers.

During the hot summer months, when *Daphnia* is scarce we turn to our old friend the mosquito. The mosquito lays her eggs in a boat-shaped cluster which floats on the water. Each boat (Fig. 7a) contains from 100 to 600 eggs which hatch out the familiar water wiggler of our rain barrel memories. These mosquito larvæ pass through two forms (Fig. 7—b and c) before hatching out the mature mosquito, both of which make excellent fish food.

Because of this fact the British government has shipped thousands of fish from one colony to another to help keep down the mosquito nuisance.

Mosquito larvæ may be found during the summer months in nearly every pool or ditch where the water is stagnant. They are greedily eaten by all aquarium fish, but if you want to keep on good terms with friend wife keep them out of the house while waiting their turn to go into the aquarium, and then only feed as many as the fish can eat at one meal.

The best winter food is *Corethra* (Fig. 6). *Corethra*, the "phantom larvæ" is the larvæ of the midge. It is very nearly transparent and of such rapid movement that it is difficult for the eye to follow them in the water. The midges lay their eggs in summer. The larvæ live throughout the winter in the ponds and then hatch out, the following spring, to live their short life as a flying insect. As *Daphnia* and kindred crustaceans form the principal food of *Corethra*, they can generally be found where there are *Daphnia*. However, the pool must be one that is fairly deep and does not freeze to the bottom and one that does not dry up in the summer. *Corethra* make excellent fish food and have the added advantage of being easy to keep until ready to feed. They are taken through the ice in the same manner as Fairy Shrimp.

For all year round feeding, *Enchatrae* are growing more and more in favor with aquarists. These are little white worms about one half an inch long. A setting may be obtained from most of the fish fanciers. They should be kept in the cellar, in a box about 12 inches by 6 inches by 6 inches, in mixed loam and leaf mold and, if well fed on cereals, sour milk and boiled potatoes, they will breed very rapidly and a box this size will keep your fish well supplied with good food. Directions for care and feeding may be obtained with the original setting of worms.

For those who are not fastidious, the common earth worm makes an excellent food for aquarium fish. These may be dug in large numbers in the spring and summer and kept in boxes in the cellar all winter. A piece of angle worm is relished by all fish big enough to swallow it, and the writer has seen goldfish less than one year old, whose bodies were nearly three inches long, that had been raised entirely on chopped angle worms. In feeding angle worms, it is well to rinse the pieces well before putting them in the aquarium.

Those who still desire to stick to prepared food should use either powdered shrimp, dried *Daphnia* or the specially prepared insect foods such as advertised by the dealers in this pamphlet. The common rice wafer is of no value at all as food and should not be used. The best plan when feeding dried food is to purchase several kinds and feed alternately so as to give the fish a change of diet. But for actual results, no dry food compares with live food.

In starting out after live food wear old clothes and a pair of hip rubber boots, if you have them. Take two nets, one of very fine weave mull or lawn, for *Daphnia*, and the other of coarser weave, scrim with about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch mesh is good, for *Corethra* and Fairy Shrimp. These latter will swim out of the slow-moving *Daphnia* net. The net should be about 12 inches in diameter and 15 inches deep and take as long a pole as can conveniently be handled. Experienced collectors use a joined pole, at least six feet long, and a collapsible net frame and the nets are so arranged as to be interchangeable.

*Daphnia* like rank vegetation and lots of sunshine. Near the city dumps and in the small ponds on back lots are the most likely places to find them. Remember, no pool is too small to try and *Daphnia* are found in the most unlikely places. One of the best *Daphnia* pools known to the writer is within twenty minutes trolley ride of Copley Square and is in the back yard of an apartment house. The mother of a well-known Boston aquarist has, through watching him try out *Daphnia* pools, acquired the habit of calling his attention to every "nice slimy pool" they pass. However, this does not mean that the *Daphnia* hunter must expose himself to disease. *Daphnia* are oxygen breathers and cannot exist in water that is chemically impure or full of poisonous gases. Where *Daphnia* are found, the collector can venture without fear of anything worse than a few mosquito bites and he will be well rewarded by the rich coloring and general health of his fish as well as by the chance to watch their interesting breeding habits. Is it not worth while?

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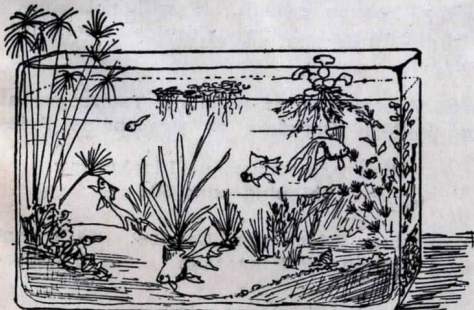
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