



**NORTHERN GOLDFISH  
& PONDKEEPERS  
SOCIETY**  
A Nationwide Society  
**NEWSLETTER**



January 2016

**The Winter Ponds - by David Ford**



My Three Ponds in a January of past years

There are many myths about how to overwinter pond fish. For example – water gardening books will say ‘stop feeding from November to March’ or ‘shut down the filter system’. My ponds were running for 25 years and I have found these directives - and more - to be wrong. I used to let the fish decide when they no longer wanted food, which may, in milder years, be December, and feed again when they rise to look for some food, which can be February.

Of course, digestion is slow in cold waters. The critical temperatures are below 10 degrees Celsius, when digestion slows down. Then the fish should *not* be fed

chunky foods such as prepared pellets or sticks, or fresh foods such as worms, vegetables or fruits. I use flaked foods because few are needed for complete nutrition and they are easily and quickly digested with little excreta, even at lower temperatures.

Even the largest Koi will Hoover flakes from the surface and it can be easily judged how much is enough. The only care that is needed is during gales! If there is a mild spell during the winter, Goldfish and Koi will rise to look for a snack. A few flakes will satisfy these needs.

Only Winter-feed however if the fish are seen to be looking for food. If they have sunk to the bottom in hibernation, leave them alone. Again, contrary to some books' quotes, this does not happen at 10 down to 5 degrees Celsius water temperature, but at 4 degrees. This is a critical temperature for water's physical properties, when it reverts from getting denser to become lighter (which is why ice floats) and the fish must sense this change, going into their 'sleep' mode.

As always – my opinion, if yours is different, send to me at [drdmford@outlook.com](mailto:drdmford@outlook.com)

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**Member's write** – now Part Four of Alex Stephenson's articles.

...which he has called '**Further Features**'...

This final part looks at a few more of the many varieties available to the Goldfish enthusiast.

It may come as a surprise to Goldfish Keepers but, not everyone wants to be the proud owner of a fish with bags under its eyes, or one which appears to have its brain on the outside of its head. If you are among those who dislike these fish, I am not going to try to change your mind. I will however, attempt to put things in context.

Over the years I've probably heard most of the arguments against developing exotic forms. You might want to call these designer variants. Usually objections stem from the fact that it is unnatural and fish like these could never survive in the wild. Well, I think it's worth pointing out that all captive bred fish are unnatural and, with very few exceptions, none of them would survive if returned to the wild.

Think about it! As fish breeders we select the fish we think are best to be the parents of the next generation, so we replace natural selection "at a stroke". Furthermore, as fish breeders, we want to raise the majority of the young. In

nature this doesn't happen, as very few offspring survive. Remember, any two fish only have to produce two more fish in their whole lifetime for the population to remain the same. So fish breeding is, in itself, unnatural and is bound to produce many variations which would never survive outside of the protected environment. This situation is not peculiar to fish, all of our domestic animals and pets have been developed this way. It only remains for us to take proper care of what we have produced.

All living things produce variants, this is how evolution works. By selecting some of these variants, we can breed from them in an attempt to repeat the variation, so fixing the feature in a strain. Because Goldfish are so polymorphic, this has, over many years, given rise to a wide selection of forms.

First let's look at scales. Different strains of Goldfish can have different size scales. Most have what we can call average, while some can have noticeably larger or smaller scaling. As far as I know, no-one has set out to develop this feature, it just seems to have occurred by itself in certain strains.

Two types of scaling which have been "worked on" are the Pearl Scale and the Hammer Scale. Hammer Scales are a form where each scale has a dent in the middle. This produces an effect like beaten metal, a process known as planishing. When I was a lad, many years ago, there was a strain of Hammer Scaled Nymphs, which were very attractive, and I think it is a shame they don't seem to exist any longer.

Almost the opposite of the Hammer Scale is the Pearl Scale. Here the scales have a raised centre, giving the effect of having a pearl on each one. The variety of Goldfish known as "The Pearl Scale" is a round bodied fish with short twin-tail finnage and, ideally, a full set of pearls. Many don't. In addition to the Pearlscale proper, there are one or two other varieties which sport Pearls, one example being the Pearl-scaled Oranda.

Orandas are one of the varieties which carry a hood and those which don't should be relabelled. I'm sure we have all seen fish described as Orandas which show no signs of any hood. These, as far as I am concerned, are nothing more than Twintail Goldfish. Hoods vary in both extent and shape, for example, a Red Cap may have a hood confined to the top of the head, in other words, the red bit. Other varieties, where appropriate, will have a full hood.

Telescope eyed fish, which is those whose eyes bulge and protrude out from the head, have been around a long time. Old oriental prints show examples of

"Telescopes". Opinions vary as to the effect this development has on the fish's eyesight. Some say these fish are long-sighted while others claim they are short-sighted. Whichever is true, the fish don't seem to be at any disadvantage. Sense of smell and the ability to gain much information from the lateral line sense organs, seem to be of more benefit, and would need to be in murky waters.

Among the popular varieties with this feature are the Telescope Fantail, both Metallic and Calico, and the distinctive Moor. An interesting observation with Calico Telescopes is that they are often of much better colouring than other Calico types. This has led some breeders to conclude there is a genetic link between eye development and colour.

At this point I think the Moor needs special mention. We have all seen in Pet shops and such places, telescopes described as Red moors, or Calico moors. This is quite wrong as the word Moor refers to colour. To be a Moor a fish has to be an all-black Twintail with Telescopic Eyes. Other names which have been used to describe Telescopes are Globe-eye, dragon-eye, and in Japan, Demekin.

A further development to do with eyes is the Celestial. With this variety, the eyes turn upward and look skywards. In extreme cases, the development goes further so the eyes look at each other. There is an old wives' tale which says these fish were raised in jars with narrow tops causing the fish's eyes to turn upward to the light. If this were the case, this variety, raised in normal tanks would not turn their eyes up...and they do.

Bubble-eyes are one of those varieties which can polarize opinions. Some like them, some don't. The startling thing about them is the fluid filled sacs under each eye. In the great scheme of Goldfish breeding these are comparatively recent. The first Bubble-eyes I ever saw were some imported in the early sixties. These had relatively small, firm sacs by modern standards. Today the sacs are much bigger and more wobbly.

It should go without saying that all the more exotic types of Goldfish need extra care. It isn't only careless neglect that kills fish, ignorance can be just as effective.

Broadly speaking, most types come in both Metallic and Nacreous (Calico) forms. Long-bodied fish are generally hardier than round-bodied types. Extensive finnage and other major developments all contribute to making fish more sensitive to adverse conditions. Ask any breeder, when they lose fish, it's always the best ones. In my opinion, for what it is worth, you should not indulge in Fancy Goldfish until you have at least some experience as a fishkeeper.

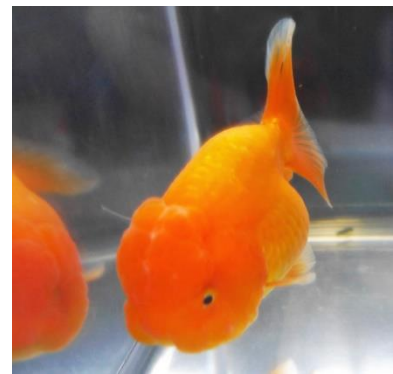
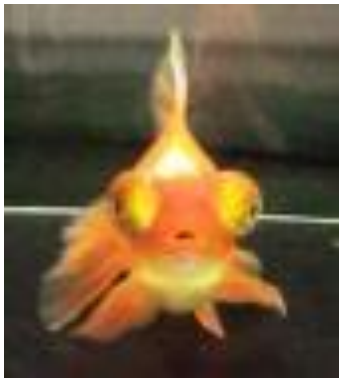
This series of articles has not attempted to cover all the many popular varieties of Goldfish; it has simply tried to show just how wide and varied the choice can be.

END of the four-part series by Alex...but there will be more from him in February.

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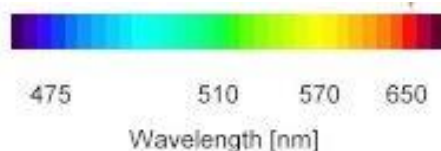
Alex's articles on Pedigree Goldfish are interesting and the above final one includes the 'strange eyes' varieties. Hence, the next article on Goldfish Facts....

## Goldfish Facts – No.2 Eyes



Goldfish eyes, like all the fishes, are spherical and they focus by moving the internal lens back and forth (we do not – we stretch or relax the lens to focus). Breeding unnatural eye formations interferes with this mechanism and so poor eyesight is common in some varieties. Without doubt my Moors are blind as a bat. They swim excitedly as I approach the aquarium which I assume is vibration sensing from the lateral lines. A cloud of flakes fed to them is ignored until they discover one near their nose (nares) so it must be smell that triggers a feeding response.

'Normal' eyed Goldfish will spot and chase particles of food as if it is live prey. This is because they actually see better than we do. Water absorbs light via molecular vibration and the H<sub>2</sub>O structure means the red end is absorbed better than the longer wavelengths at the blue end...hence the sea is blue under a blue sky, but so is the indoor swimming pool....



This is the range of light, as visible to us. To compensate for the 600+ nm light loss underwater, Goldfish can see beyond this range – into the ultra violet (below 470 nm) and into the infra-red (above 650 nm). This makes them sensitive to bright lights...switching on overhead bright LEDs in a dark room can trigger a heart attack. Don't do it. Fish cannot even blink.

The Laser pens used for lectures are considered toys for giving a moving spot that cats, and some dogs, can't resist chasing. Goldfish may well do it too...but if the light enters their lidless eyes, it could give instant blindness. Never shine Lasers into an aquarium.

We blink to wash the eye, but Goldfish depend on their water quality...clean, flowing water will avoid dull eyes, cloudy eyes, red eyes, pop-eyes, fungus eyes, eye-loss...!

A Celestial may gaze adoringly at you...but can it actually see you? I doubt it...do you? (email: [drdmford@outlook.com](mailto:drdmford@outlook.com))!

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### **Cash for Asquascaping**

During 2015 there was a competition called 'The International Aquatic Plant Layout Contest' with many honorary prizes, then cash prizes for Bronze, Silver and Gold awards, with the top prize 'The Grand Prize' being won by a Japanese aquarist called Takayuki Fukada - with the following display he called "Longing". This was chosen from over 2,500 entries from 69 different countries.



The competition is called 'iapc' (International Aquatic Plant Layout Competition), log-on at <http://en.iapl.com/> if you want to enter in 2016. The website has all the details. Mr Fukada's prize was 1 million Yen (£5,550) but with this kind of competition all I can say is 'good luck'.

### **Goldfish Shows 2016**

The Tropical, Town or Association Clubs listed below have a Goldfish Class in their Open Shows, where you can surely win Firsts...plus details of our Goldfish Shows.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>Contact</b>
15 <sup>th</sup> May Sunday	BDAS Spring OS	Bradford Academy	Type: Bradford & District Aquarist Society in Google, Bing or Facebook.
12 <sup>th</sup> June Sunday	Ryedale OS	Kirby Misperton Village Hall, Malton	See <a href="http://www.ryedaleaquaristsociety.co.uk">www.ryedaleaquaristsociety.co.uk</a>
18 <sup>th</sup> or 25 <sup>th</sup> June Saturday	AMGK OS	West Orchard Church Hall	See our Newsletters
3 <sup>rd</sup> July Sunday	YAAS OS & Auction	Stockton-on-the-Forest Village Hall	See <a href="http://www.yorkshireaquaristsociety.co.uk">www.yorkshireaquaristsociety.co.uk</a>
17 <sup>th</sup> July Sunday	NEGS	Redby, Sunderland	See our Newsletters
4 <sup>th</sup> August Sunday	Friends of YAAS OS	Stockton-on-the-Forest Village Hall	See <a href="http://www.yorkshireaquaristsociety.co.uk">www.yorkshireaquaristsociety.co.uk</a>
4 <sup>th</sup> September Sunday	Bristol Aquarist Society	The Manor Hall, Henfield Road, Coalpit Heath, Bristol BS36 2TG	See our Newsletters
10 <sup>th</sup> September Saturday	NGPS	Stretford	See you there!
24 <sup>th</sup> September Saturday	Nationwide	Horsehay Village Hall	See our Newsletters
24 <sup>th</sup> September Saturday	GSGB at St. Paul's Church Hall, Chigwell Road, Woodford Bridge, Essex, Woodford Bridge, IG8 8BT – but you need to attend our Nationwide OS		
In October	FBAS Festival of Fishkeeping at Hounslow Urban Farm		See our Newsletters
14 <sup>th</sup> November Sunday	BDAS Winter OS & Auction	Bradford Academy	See BDAS in Google, Bing or Facebook

## **Minutes of the January Meeting**

The January meet was traditionally small with Sherridan announcing lots of apologies – but at least the Committee was there!

Discussions were mainly reminiscences – not 2015, but back 50 years! The final Nationwide Meeting was announced – at Telford on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January, see February's Newsletter for the result.

## Chairman's End of Year Review

Here we are at the end of another year; it really is hard to believe that twelve months has passed since the last time.

2015 proved a rather difficult year for breeding with a very cool spring and early summer and many members found it impossible to get their fish to spawn under such conditions, Those that did have spawnings either managed to pick the couple of warm weeks we did have or kept their fish in fish houses provided with heating facilities, all that is needed is a cheap standard heaterstat of a lowish wattage set as low as possible for a few weeks as the fish are conditioned with extra high protein food and then raised a few degrees each week to about 75 degrees. Many members, especially those with glass fish houses will find the sun heating the water to such temperatures but they will plummet in the night and this really puts the fish off. The fish that were bred all seemed to be of a good quality; personally I had one of my best results ever with my calico Bubble-eyes, bur the low numbers were reflected in the breeding classes in the Open Shows.

The shows themselves were all up to their usual standard and ours went off with the usual bang, thanks to all members and all attending, it wouldn't work without you. Let's make this year just as good. One difference this year will be that the third Nationwide Open Show will be held at a new larger venue in Telford, which should give much more space. There will be a Nationwide Committee meeting in January where, hopefully, the latest edition of the Nationwide Standards will be finalized so completing over thirty years of their development.

Our Society continues to prosper, the major development of last year was Dr David Ford taking over publication of the Newsletter and switching the majority of members to e-mailed delivery. Many thanks to David for all his hard work on this major and essential project.

I wish all members a very happy and prosperous 2016 and a trouble free and successful year with their Goldfish.

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**Next meeting at the Church Inn, Prestwich, is Shrove Tuesday February 9<sup>th</sup>. Be there.**

