New Fish Studies

Four new fish studies suggest some interesting things for fishkeepers.

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Several interesting news stories have been reported recently that I think fishkeepers will be interested in. Here's what's up in the world of fishes.

Is it Hot in Here?
First, an interesting study looking at two species of young damselfishes located on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia has determined that changes in water temperature affect these fishes' aggressiveness.

The study was carried out on fishes that had just emerged from their larval stage and before settling on the reef. They were transported to research tanks kept at the Lizard Island Research Station in Australia where researchers could directly manipulate water temperatures.

Apparently, young fishes used in this study became much more active and aggressive when water temperatures increase even slightly.

One researcher associated with the project commented that fishes on a reef would experience similar temperature fluctuations in a normal day on a reef.

This struck me as interesting. If all other factors are equal, marine and reef aquarists should be able to witness the same behaviors in their reef aquaria.

If this is true, it would be another example of hobbyists having access to information that is just being discovered by researchers. Of course, there are many variables in this experiment, and a number of factors could influence the results and the experiences of aquarists.

The study was carried out by researchers at the UNSW School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences. It will be published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

Catfish Venom
Another study being published in the open access journal BMC Evolutionary Biology examined catfish species' venom glands. The principal researcher, Jeremy Wright, from the University of Michigan, looked at 158 species of catfishes and determined that far more than previously thought possess venom glands. Watch out when you're handling your catfishes.

Ich Bacteria
A study carried out by researchers from the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine have found that the infamous protozoan obligate parasite ich harbors two intercellular bacteria species that are new to science.

This may lead to new treatments for ich. The study is published in the December 2009 issue of Applied and Environmental Microbiology.

CO2 and Shell Formation
In another surprise turn of events, scientists from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution have found that some shell-building invertebrates actually increased their shell formation under conditions that may be experienced if the oceans become more acidic due to CO2 increases.

This definitely isn't what the researchers expected to find. More study is definitely needed, but the CO2 ocean acidification issue may not be as dire as previously thought.

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