

ANNUAL REPORT

2010 - 2011

1991

... 20th ANNIVERSARY ...

2011

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DIRECTORS' REPORT

Twenty years ago when OATA was started in its current format, the industry feared for its future. Some might say little has changed. Legislation from Brussels was then the issue, while the threats from the global economic circumstances are causing concern now. Both then and now, the very existence of many businesses is threatened.

Both then and now we regard membership of OATA as an investment in the industry's future. In saying that, we are mindful that we cannot have unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved. While some may argue with figures on the cost savings made by OATA for the industry, it is in our minds quite clear that the return that investment has brought has been very significant.

OATA can and has stopped us losing "product lines" e.g. sturgeon, fish treatments and oxygenating weeds, but cannot create markets. We as individual businesses probably can't do what OATA does and we should not anticipate they are able to achieve what our combined PR and marketing budgets are or are not.

OATA has proven its worth but we must look to how to ensure its existence in 20 years' time and not just admire its achievements in the last two decades.

To be sustainable, the funding of OATA must be fair to all and be seen to be fair to all. The levy has been the income stream that has been our bedrock. Even if you believe OATA's work largely concerns "fish" issues the fundamental truth "no fish - no industry" is inescapable. This being so we will be looking at how the cost of ensuring OATA's future can be more evenly spread across the sectors.

Even while we do that we are conscious that ALL businesses in the sector benefit from OATA's activities and really ALL should contribute. Clearly this is not the case at the moment as many retailers and manufacturers (some who took the opportunity to exhibit at AQUA) are not members.

We will be trying to ensure we recruit as many new members as possible so the costs of maintaining OATA, and helping ensuring the future of the industry, is as fairly divided as possible. Your assistance in recruiting retailers or asking why your suppliers are not members will be invaluable in helping our recruitment efforts. It would help us, the Directors of OATA, if you could feed back any responses you get back to the office - such information will be treated anonymously, so that we can consider them and act appropriately.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



A lot can happen in 20 years and that is certainly of the time since OATA was established in its current format. I was asked to take the job of getting a trade association for the sector underway at a time when the industry feared for its future. I accepted, and despite comments by some that I had taken leave of my senses and that the whole enterprise would crash about my ears in six months and if I was smart I would stay at Sparsholt, both I and OATA are still here.

I have learnt many things in the last two decades in working to protect the industry. A strong membership and cash in hand are important but would be useless unless OATA is seen to be creditable by officials and politicians both in the UK and globally. If you are not able to get the ear of such people and when you have, be taken seriously then little will be achieved other than perhaps an awful lot of wailing and screaming.

Another key thing I have learnt is that often issues start at a global level and move slowly down the global political food chain to the UK. Thus it is best to address issues as early as possible and as far away from the UK as possible. This not only means you might prevent a snowballing effect but also you have certainly have chances to raise arguments so the outcome favours the industry along the way.

However this approach does leave me with a problem that I hope to find a solution to as soon as possible. When we are most successful what happens is that nothing changes or the changes have little impact. On other occasions things have to change massively and it looks like we have achieved nothing except if the truth be told the alternative might be far, far worse such as major airports facing the prospect of no longer being allowed to import fish for us.

I can be pretty certain that I won't be at OATA in 20 years time but I do hope it continues to offer the industry a creditable voice in the places where often unknowingly officials are making decisions that could make or break the industry.

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OATA CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

OATA in its current form with a fully paid staff was formed in 1991 so this year it celebrates its 20th Anniversary. It's perhaps useful to remember why it was formed. Richard Sankey, the first Chairman of the fledging organisation, summed up the reasons by saying "A point came when a series of threats surfaced within the growing regulatory framework that would likely effect the importation of live fish, the very lifeblood of the industry. Additionally a growing number of NGOs, either by doctrine or misunderstanding, were focused on stopping the industry. Significantly, unlike the industry, they had long since developed effective lobbying processes in government and its agencies. Threats ranged from disproportionate economic and physical burdens to the outright banning of some or all of the live fish trade."

To put none too fine a point on it many in the industry were frightened that the industry could be steam rolled by legislation and no administrators would notice because they never knew the industry existed.

Twenty years on, we have a track record of getting noticed and changing developments. This has led to massive savings for the industry in terms of retail sales. If all these issues had not been resolved to a greater or lesser extent in the industries interests then the fears of the worst fears of the industry could have become a reality. This hasn't been achieved without robust exchanges with officials but as is evidenced by a number of key officials OATA is recognised as force to be reckoned with.

Neil Hardy who has been on the board of OATA since 1991 summarised the change in circumstance brought about by OATA's work by commenting "OATA by representing the whole of the membership, which is a large cross section of the sector, gets the attention of many of the key government officials whose activities could impact our sector. Undoubtedly we face challenges, OATA will not be able to avoid all the changes proposed, we may lose species and products from the trade. However unlike in 1991 it is barely conceivable that the trade could be brought to a halt by an official not knowing of the industries existence."

(Continued on page 4)

BIG FISH CAMPAIGN

The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquaria (BIAZA) are likely to launch a campaign aimed at members of the public buying certain species of fish that they cannot accommodate because of the size they grow to. OATA has been involved in preparatory meetings and support the project but have argued the message should be widened to try to ensure no one makes ill-formed purchases of any species. By widening the message, we would hope to ensure that the public aquariums problems are solved but deliver a greater welfare bonus for fish sold, regardless of their size. Also if particular fish are



named as too big for retail sale then in a couple of years, different species of similarly large adult length or even the next size echelon down may be targeted. Of course individual members may choose to forgo sales of larger species and highlight that to their customers but at an industry scale maybe the wider "informed purchase" message is the one to support.

Adult Pacu, Colossoma macropomum, need a big aquarium to accommodate their size, but even small fish need an appropriately sized aquarium. (Photo Copyright ©Tino Strauss, Creative Commons)

OATA CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Looking back over the past 20 years, OATA has reflected upon the numerous campaigns and activities achieved throughout this period. Some of these achievements have led to direct savings, be it for example through the credit card scheme or maintaining low CITES charges, whilst others have allowed businesses to continue trading unhindered by detrimental legislation. None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our members who have recognised the benefits of the work we do to protect the industry and their businesses.

Year	Issue	Estimated savings to date
1994 - present	Plugs and Sockets Regulations – removed need to put plugs on outdoor items for ponds etc. (estimated 1 million items per year)	£17 million
1994-1996	Prevented ban on coldwater fish imports – probably would have affected 2.5 seasons. Estimated loss from livestock and associated goods approximately £60 million per season	£150 million
1997 - present	Credit card scheme & improved merchant rates for OATA members. Merchant rates decreased by up to 3% Non-participating members may have also benefitted by using these improved merchant rates as a benchmark.	£1.5 million +
1997 - present	CITES – avoided soft corals being CITES listed enabling continued trade with Singapore and the Philippines Avoiding certification charges for import and export permits	£213,000
1997-2007	Avoided live rock being CITES listed	
1998 - present	Avoided ban/individual certificate requirements to own sturgeon – Estimated loss from livestock and associated goods approximately £2million per year	£26 million
2002 - 2009	Helped avoid increase in CITES charges from £5 to £59	£220,000
2005 & 2011 - present	Avoided additional checks on courier vehicles (allowing couriers to continue transporting fish). This would have increased costs to members for using own means of transport.	?
2007 - present	Delaying and changing proposals to ban certain plant species sales (<i>L. major</i> retail sales alone estimated at £2million pa.)	£9 million
2007 - present	In co-operation with OFI avoided the Banggai cardinal being listed on CITES-avoiding costs of 3100 per consignment?	?
2005 - 2007	Avoided malachite green based remedies removed from shelves (2 years)	£10 million
2007 - present	Ensured all fish medicines remained on shelves (SAES)	£32 million
2007	Helped avoid restrictions on Maldives exports for six months.	£125,000
2008 - present	Worked in co-operation with OFI to avoid ban on importing tropical fish from Malaysia. Avoided the requirement for testing for imported tropical fish to be EUS free.	?
2009 to present	Avoided additional data recording requirements etc under the transport provisions of the Aquatic Animal Health Regulations (UK) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/463/part/3/made	?
Total	In excess of :	£250 million

During the last 20 years, OATA has collected £2.25million through membership fees and import levy. In return, OATA has saved the industry in excess of £250 million – that's well over £100 saved for every £1 spend!

DATA since its inception has always been professional in its dealings with those of us in regulatory organisations. Keith has had a huge positive impact on how legislation is implemented within the U.K. and ensured that common sense has (mostly) prevailed.

Of the trade organisations I deal with, DATA is without doubt the most respected and has been most helpful when we have had problems with the trade. It has been a pleasure to work with Keith and his team, not only where we have had common aims, but even when we have been coming at things from opposite ends.

- Rob Quest, Assistant Director, City of London Corporation, Markets and Consumer Protection, Animal Health and Welfare Service

ON behalf of the licensing arm of the CITES Management Authority I have to say that it is extremely useful to us to have responsible trade associations who provide an easy entrance point in disseminating information to the industry and of course to represent their views back to us. It is always the most difficult part of the regulators job to ensure that people affected by a set of legislation are actually aware of the law and just as importantly are aware of what the law means. In that respect OATA has been an invaluable interface and I wish it the best for the next 20 years.

-John Hounslow , Head of UK CITES Management Authority (Licensing & Compliance), Animal Health

What the officials say...

Thank you Keith. I am very happy to confirm the very positive contribution that you made to the work that we did to prepare the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Responding to consultations, attending stakeholder groups and inviting members of the Bill Team to explain its content to your membership. You have also continued to be a valuable resource for Defra officials. We are very grateful to you.

- Henry Hoppe, Defra, Animal Welfare Act Implementation Team

I think it fair to say that without your (OATA's) 100% commitment to the Small Animal Exemption Scheme we would have struggled to have reached the positive place we are now at. We have engaged in some very robust meetings along the way, with a great deal of open and honest discussion, and following your lead the same can certainly be said about your members. Without such honesty from both sides I do not think the Scheme would have worked. I think you have worked long and hard behind the scenes to ensure that your members have benefitted as best they can from the Scheme. It is also fair to say that you and your members have been patient in helping my colleagues and myself gain a good understanding of your industry.

- Simon Hack, Enforcement Team, Veterinary Medicines Directorate

"As head of the Defra Aquatic Animal Health unit from 2007 to 2009, I worked closely with [Keith Davenport] [OATA] on the implementation of the then new EU Directive 2006/88/EC on animal health requirements for aquaculture animals and products thereof, and on the prevention and control of certain diseases in aquatic animals. I always found that the working relationship with OATA to be very professional and helpfully informative. I certainly learned much during that time, in particular about the ornamental fish sector, which was extremely helpful in finalising the UK approach to the Directive."

The issue of invasive non-native species (INNS) is increasingly recognised – both nationally and internationally – as a major problem for biodiversity, ecosystems and economic interests. The GB Administrations have been highly active in this policy area, especially over the last few years and fully recognise that a significant part of the solution lies in mutual understanding and collaborative working with relevant sectors, those involved in trade in plants and animals are particularly important. We have pursued this partnership approach in both the development of the GB Strategy and its subsequent implementation over the last 3 years.

Keith has been a key industry representative with whom we can have frank, informative and robust exchanges. On occasions we may reach agreement or agree to differ. Nevertheless, we realise that effective action to address the threat of harm from INNS whilst minimising burdens on users and industry is an aim we share in common. Collaboration on campaigns such as "Be Plantwise" both serves the Government's objectives and testifies to the industry's responsible attitude.

In short, Keith is an industry representative who draws his line in the sand but also with whom we can do business and with whom we have developed a very good working relationship.

-The personal thoughts of Huw Thomas, Head, Protected and Non-native Species Team, Biodiversity Programme Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING (ABS)

ABS refers to the access and sharing of benefits from the exploitation of biodiversity. Though much debate has focussed on the notional two leaves taken from the jungle on advice from the local medicine from which a billion \$ drug is produced, ornamental fish could be caught in the web. Some species in our industry are produced in significant quantities with substantial financial benefits accruing a long way from the home range of the species. For instance many of the most popular fish species exported from Singapore are South American in origin, while an alternative name for the neon tetra is the “Hong Kong tetra”.

After seemingly interminable wrangling (negotiations) lasting years and years, the 192 countries that are Parties to the Convention on Biological Biodiversity (CBD) agreed to establish an international protocol in Nagoya, Japan last November. This means little until countries actually implement national laws to enforce the protocol and are in a position to formally ratify it. Sixty-five countries, including all those in the EU have already flagged up their intention to do just that and are working on developing and implementing the relevant national laws.

Japan was a driving force behind the agreement on the protocol. The next big political meeting of the CBD will be held in India in the middle of next year. It can be assumed they will be trying to get the protocol ratified by 50 countries by then; this will mean it enters into legal force internationally. However, it must be open to considerable doubt as to whether countries that struggled to agree the Protocol can set up networks of sophisticated laws internally in the less than two years between the Nagoya meeting and next year’s in India.

This is one to be watched in the coming year(s) as potential laws in exporting countries, which “own” the biodiversity, will be made to bite in importing countries.

OATA WATER QUALITY CRITERIA REFERENCED BY THE HEALTH PROTECTION AGENCY (HPA)

In their report on the health implications of using *Garra rufa* in foot spas, the HPA noted that maintaining the fishes’ welfare reduced even further the risk of disease transmission between clients. To help ensure good health and welfare among the fish the OATA Water Criteria were referenced. Many local authorities already include them in their pet shop licence conditions.



Garra rufa, or Doctor Fish as they are sometimes known, and their use in fish spas continues to be popular in the health and beauty industry.

WHY CAN'T PET SHOP LICENSING BE THE SAME ACROSS THE COUNTRY?

Pet shop licensing really is a postcode lottery. Each local authority can impose almost any conditions it wants or give it the priority (high or low) it sees fit. Competing businesses in close proximity can face vastly differing conditions and costs. Businesses with stores across the country can face a multiplicity of seeming randomly differing costs and conditions.

The outcome beyond those listed above is that the industry still faces criticism that there are bad pet shops. The industry gets tarred by the standards of the worst. However if local authorities were or are doing a good job then there should have been no poor pet shops since at least 1951 when the Pet Animal Act requiring pet shops to be licensed entered into force.

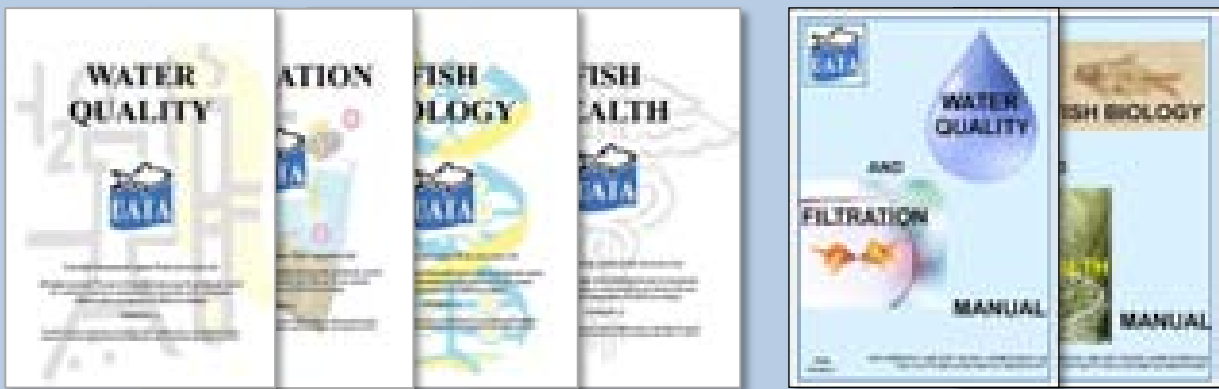
Last year we surveyed members and asked on a scale of 1 to 5 how confident were members that local EHOs were doing a good job. The resounding result was that most respondents gave the EHOs inspecting their premises a 1 – that is they had very little confidence in them. However a number gave a score of 5. These few results indicate the job can be carried out competently and to a good standard.

So what have we done about it this year:

- We have continued to offer free help and advice to EHOs whether by mail, electronically or over the phone. This has been appreciated by a number of local authorities who have commented on how prompt and professional responses have been.
- We have collaborated with a range of groups (including those representing EHOs, vets, welfare groups and other trade associations) to revise and update the Pet Shop Licensing Guidelines. This is the third time we have given freely of our time to ensure that local authorities have the best standards and advice available.
- In response to a consultation from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, we supported the notion that trade associations should be able to play a key role in developing primary authority agreements. This would enable businesses undertaking the same line of trade to have similar standards applied to them. We await a response on this one.

PET SHOP LICENSING AND QUALIFICATIONS

One thing that is certain to be included in the revised standards is the need for retailers to demonstrate competence through experience, or relevant qualifications for recent entrants to the trade. OATA has two distance learning courses that, to date, have always been accepted by local authorities to meet such requirements. Almost 1,500 have passed all parts of the Certificate course and over 160 the Advanced Diploma. Many hundreds of people are still working their way through the courses so the numbers completing the training will continue to rise.



INVASIVE SPECIES

Once again this year invasive species has been an issue that has absorbed a lot of our time and attention. Governments the world round have been energised by research that estimated the damage caused by invasive species could be as much as 5% of global GDP, that's TRILLIONS of £'s. A recent report in the UK estimated the costs of invasive species as at least £2 billion while a study suggested the figure was €12 billion a year.

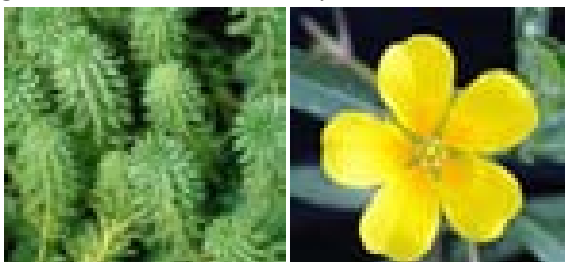
We have been active at levels demonstrating that as is being more and more widely accepted and recognised that our industry can be and is, in many cases a very significant part of the solution rather than just dismissed as the cause of it.

In this work, OATA co-operated with other trade groups worldwide including but not limited PIJAC (USA), PIJAC (Canada), OFI, European Pet Organisation and NZB in Norway.

GLOBAL

Keith Davenport was nominated to attend and accepted as a participant by the 190 member country Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) a Technical Expert Group on invasive pets. Unfortunately personal circumstances meant he was unable to attend, but he was able to have some limited input.

The issues of pets as invasives will be discussed again at a full scientific meeting of the CBD in November. Keith will attend and with other trade groups highlight the activities the industry has voluntarily undertaken to raise awareness of the issue to potentially 10's millions of customers across the globe - something we can do that governments can't so easily achieve.



Parrot's feather, Myriophyllum aquaticum (left); Water Primrose, Ludwigia grandiflora (right); Floating pennywort, Hydrocotyle ranunculoides (center top); New Zealand pigmyweed, Crassula helmsii (center bottom) – four species of plant that OATA recommends its members not to sell.

EUROPEAN

The Council of Europe (which is not the same as the EU having over 40 country members) asked Keith and Jim Collins of the UK's Sustainable Users Network (SUN) to write a code of conduct to help reduce the likelihood of pets becoming pests. One of the key points made in the code was that most pets released to the wild die an untimely death possible through starvation, disease, cold or predation-in

short rather it being an act of kindness it is cruel. To facilitate this work Keith has been asked to attend meetings with invasives experts.

The EC is developing a strategy on invasive species. OATA has not yet been able to participate but have done so by co-operating with EPO and SUN. A key issue is whether trade will be governed by black or white lists (see info box).

DOMESTIC

In the UK we have seen the summary of the consultation on the Import of Live Fish Act controls. OATA made very firm representations on this issue and

at least on the issue of sturgeon where we avoided tighter controls called for by the Environment Agency (see "The Fight For Sturgeon"). The government is proposing that ILFA listings be switched from a black list to a white list and that is a fight we will face in the future.

We still await the outcome of the government's consultation on plants that they propose to ban the sale of. OATA continues to argue that bans should only be applied to the four species we have recommended the trade not to sell and not other such as the oxygenators. We estimate sales of £2 million of plants per year are at stake.

THE FIGHT FOR STURGEON

While not popular with everyone, we estimate that there are between 50,000 and 75,000 sturgeon sold a year. The value of those sales and associated dry goods could be close to £2 million per year.

In response to the ILFA consultation the EA stated quite clearly:

“We believe that the general licence for sturgeon species, which enables suppliers to sell without reference to the purchaser’s ILFA licence, contributes to this illegal activity. We recommend that this general licence for sturgeon should be withdrawn and are disappointed that this is not being done within the amendments to the Order.”

In all other species where the public are required to apply for a license to keep a species the trade has dwindle to zero or nearly so.

OATA robustly countered these comments both by anticipating them in our own response and after seeing them. We did this at least in part by highlighting that illegally held ILFA listed species found in our sector were euthanized. In the angling sector in spite of the presence of ILFA species being advertised in a number of fisheries we were told practically no action had been taken. After much lobbying the government made the following comments in their response to the consultation:

“We do not rule out removing sturgeon from the ILFA General Licence in the future. However, in the short term, the government and its agencies are committed to taking strong action on illegal introductions of sturgeon into fisheries and are actively seeking their removal.”

“Indeed, the importance of applying legislation evenly across sectors is recognised”

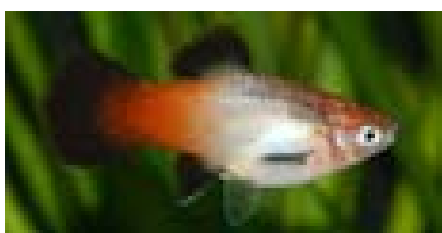
OATA continues to request updates on the progress of removing sturgeon from fisheries. Progress might be described as slow and we will keep reminding both DEFRA and the EA that until they are putting in place a sufficient effective deterrent to angling water owners and others not to stock these species they cannot be unfairly and disproportionately heavy handed in our sector.

BLACKLISTS OR WHITELISTS?

As the concern over invasives increases, there are debates certainly in the UK and Europe as to whether currently used blacklists should be replaced with whitelists.

The outcome of the debate could have major repercussions for the whole pet industry but especially for aquatics as we trade in thousands of species. At the moment ILFA lists those species the trade of which is controlled to a greater or lesser extent - this is the blacklist approach. Anything not on the blacklist may be bought and sold (at least as far as that piece of legislation is concerned).

A whitelist would mean that only those species you may trade in would be listed. Applications to add new species would be subject to a more (temperate species) or less (tropical species) robust and costly application system. In the UK that might be OK. But if applied across Europe the more robust approach might expand to those species capable of survival in Malta or Cyprus!



Some species, such as platies (Xiphophorus maculatus) may have to potential to become invasive in tropical or sub-tropical climates, but are highly unlikely to do so in the chilly waters of the UK.



The general ILFA licence for keeping sterlet and sturgeon species remained unchanged meaning that members of the public do not require their own licence to keep them.

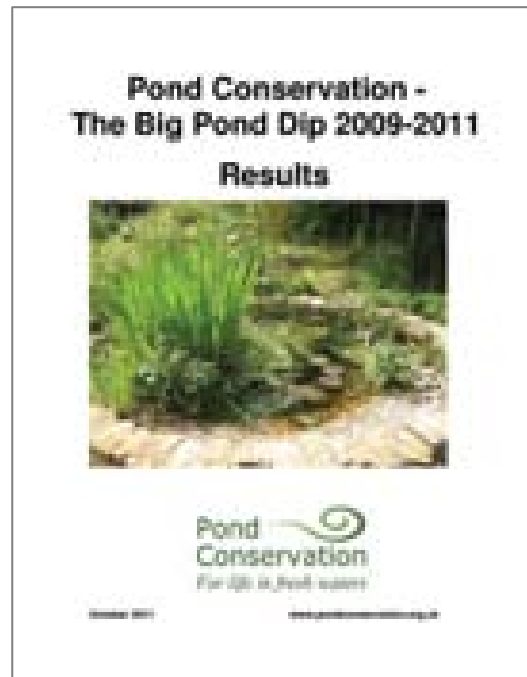
THE BIG POND DIP

The Big Pond Dip organised by Pond Conservation is an ongoing project to assess the biodiversity found in garden ponds. They achieve this by encouraging members of the public to undertake surveys of their own ponds and send the results to them for analysis.

We reported the results from the first year in the last Annual Report. An updated report taking into account the results from the first three years confirms that garden ponds (including those with fish present) offer a habitat in which a wide range of biodiversity can live and/or breed. The full report is available on the Pond Conservation web site

<http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/bigponddip/Big+Pond+Dip+results+from+2009-2011.htm>

and are summarised below:



The value of garden ponds as wildlife habitats

- Over a third of ponds surveyed were classed as 'good' or 'excellent' with more than half of the animal groups you should find in good wildlife ponds.
- Two thirds of ponds had breeding dragonflies or damselflies, and 75% water snails, water beetles and pond skaters.
- 90% of ponds were visited by amphibians, and over 60% had amphibians breeding, predominantly Common Frogs.
- 50% of ponds included in the survey were filled with rainwater – an excellent clean-water source.
- Clear water ponds had more diverse invertebrate communities than cloudy ponds.
- Ponds that favoured invertebrates were also better for amphibians, especially newts and toads. Common Frogs are not so fussy and, although they breed more often in good quality ponds, they will slum it in poorer ponds.
- Fish did not have a big impact on the range of invertebrate creatures present and, surprisingly, frogs were reported breeding slightly more often in fish ponds than in fishless ponds, and toads twice as often (because toad tadpoles are unpalatable to fish). However – and it's an important 'however' - the survey doesn't tell us anything about how many young amphibians emerge from garden ponds with fish: for frogs and newts its likely to be a lot less than in fishless ponds. These findings are in line with the governments wish to maximise the biodiversity benefit of garden especially in urban areas. Not only are they valuable in their own right but offer stepping stones between natural habitats.

The Big Pond dip will continue to gather results. Please encourage your customers to participate.

CUSTOMER SURVEY

Back in 1995 and 2005/06, OATA completed a survey aimed at the fish keeping public to identify volume and trends of the fish keeping hobby. This year we have relaunched the survey to build upon the data gathered in the previous surveys and also to identify other trends in our industry. The front of the survey card has been redesigned with the aim of obtaining a more accurate representation of the demographic of the fish keeping public. The reverse of the survey card endeavours to examine fish keeper behaviour, such as services they find important when visiting a retailer, reason for keeping fish and preferred means of finding out information about fish. This survey will be conducted twice; once over autumn/winter of this year and again during spring of the New Year. Keep an eye out on our website and notification email/letter for the resulting report.

The front and the reverse of the survey card has been carefully designed for quick completion and minimal “survey burden”

OATA VIDEOS

At the beginning of the year, the fishkeeping videos produced went live on YouTube and are now receiving a global audience. At time of writing, the videos have collectively received nearly 60,000 views and a number of positive comments. Remember, if you are an OATA member and find these videos useful or think they would be of value to your customers, please feel free to embed them into your website. The videos in the series include:



- Learning how to keep pet fish
- Keeping Goldfish Successfully
- Setting up a Goldfish Aquarium
- Keeping tropical freshwater fish successfully
- Setting up a tropical freshwater aquarium
- Keeping Marine fish successfully
- Setting up a marine aquarium

A screen shot from one of the OATA videos. The “Setting up a Goldfish Aquarium” video has had over 30,000 views alone.

ADVANCED DIPLOMA TRAINING REVAMP COMPLETED



The Advanced Diploma Distance Learning Package has now been fully updated with a new style of final assessment. The exam paper is now in multiple-choice question format – but this certainly does not mean that the exam is any easier! As with the previous version of the advanced diploma learning package, the telephone exam will continue as normal.

Front covers of the Water Quality & Filtration and Fish Biology & Fish Health manuals.

AQUA 2011



AQUA 2011, the UK's only dedicated ornamental aquatic and reptile trade show enjoyed repeated success following the AQUA 2010 event last year. With over 80 companies from within the industry showcasing

their products at Telford's International Centre, over 1,400 visitors (11% up on last year) were spoilt for choice.

The Wednesday night saw the return of the International Buffet featuring the AQUA New Product Award Ceremony, delicious Indian

cuisine, close-up magicians, music and the opportunity for networking among manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and retailers.

We would like to thank all those involved in the show including show directors Dave Pool (Tetra), Ruth Low (Gordon Low Products), Ray Valovec (OATA), Gordon Thomas and Annie Dyke (Impact Exhibitions) and a further special thank you to all the exhibitors and visitors for attending.

The AQUA trade show will be returning on the 9th and 10th October 2013. OATA is currently in the process of planning its 5th Conference to be held towards the end of 2012.



CARE SHEETS

In last year's annual report, we announced the release of a range of approximately 30 care sheets. A year later, this range has increased to cover even more groups of fish and areas of interest. The new care sheets include topics such as water quality, killifish, loaches, wild-caught freshwater fish, "tank busters", freshwater shrimps & snails, crayfish & crabs, terrapins & turtles and freshwater plants. Along with our commitment to help raise awareness and prevent the spread of invasive species, these new care sheets also carry the "never release your aquarium animals or plants into the wild" statement. The complete range of care sheets can be downloaded from our website. Once downloaded, these care sheets can be printed for distribution at point of sale.

To make access to these care sheets easier still, the use of QR codes (see INFO BOX 1) has been incorporated into each of the care sheets and in a dedicated care sheet list. With the QR codes on each of the care sheets, a retailer can print, laminate and display the entire series of care sheets at point of sale. Once the customer has found the appropriate care sheet, they can scan the QR code with their smart phone to download their own copy. Alternatively, the care sheet list featuring all the care sheets and corresponding QR codes can be displayed and used in a similar manner.



A selection of some of the new care sheets published. Care sheets covering Axolotls, newts and aquatic frogs will be made available soon.

INFO BOX 1 - WHAT ARE QR CODES?

QR codes (or "quick response codes") are essentially a type of barcode similar to those found on most goods. These barcodes differ in that instead of holding just a short string of numbers, they can hold a wide range of data, including small amounts of text, business card details and most usefully, internet links. With the popularity of smart phones with incorporated cameras now almost commonplace, it's now easy and quick to scan one of these barcodes to take to you an internet resource or save the information held on the QR code for future reference. We can

use these QR codes to display all the links to relevant internet resources, such as our care sheets at point of sale. Rather than a retailer informing a customer that our care sheets or other on-line resource can be found at a particular website address (where pet shop licence conditions allow), the customer can quickly scan one of these codes and get instant access on their phone.

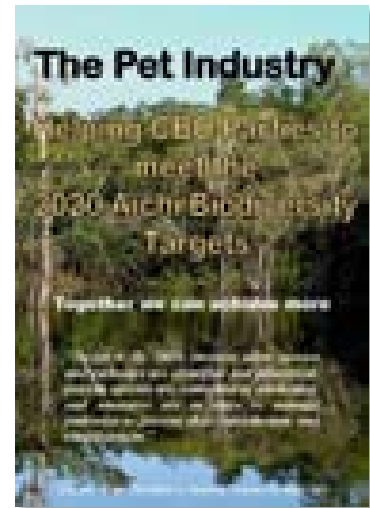


Scanning this QR code results in the text "This is a QR code and it has the ability to hold a wide variety of data!"

OATA PRESENCE AT THE CBD MEETING IN MONTREAL, CANADA

Early in November OATA together with PIJAC (USA) and PIJAC (Canada) presented the work that the pet industry globally was already doing to raise public awareness of the invasive species issue. This will ensure the message given to up to 192 governments is “the pet industry is part of the solution.”

Maybe some of you will wonder why OATA should bother as we already have the issue covered at UK and European levels. While this is certainly true, protecting the industry at the end of the supply chain is only a partial answer. If any government covering any part of the chain decides differently, then the whole chain collapses.

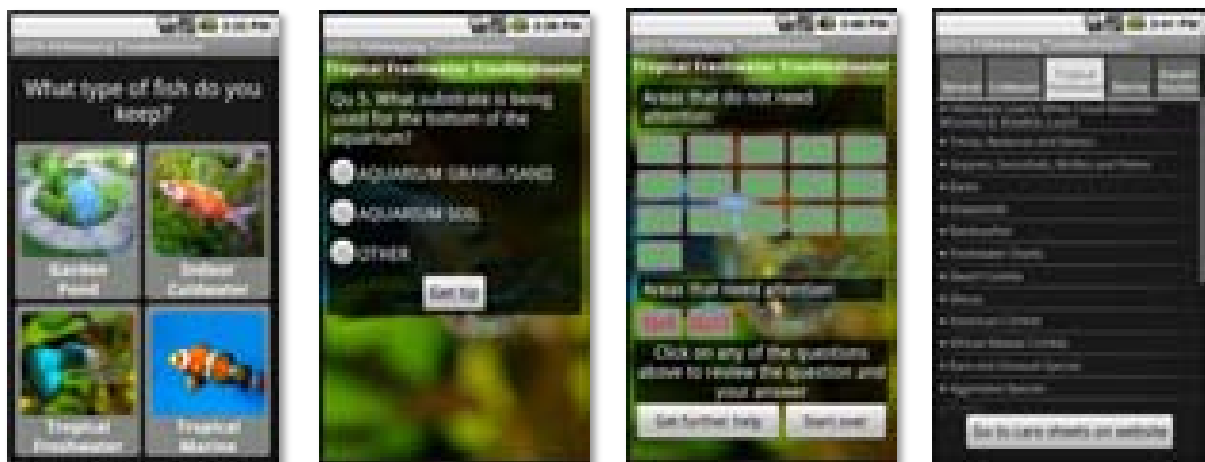


The cover of the booklet prepared by OATA for distribution at the CBD meeting.

FISHKEEPING TROUBLESHOOTER MOBILE PHONE APP

Twenty years ago, mobile phones were in their infancy and certainly lacked the sophistication that today's modern smartphones possess. At OATA's inception, the thought of providing fishkeeping advice through a mobile app was non-existent - yet in recent months and embracing this new technology, OATA has produced its first free fishkeeping app for Android-based phones.

The OATA Fishkeeping Troubleshooter is a small program that presents the beginner fishkeeper with a series of questions with simple answers that aims to identify common problems that the new fishkeeper may experience. After completing each question, the user is presented with a helpful tip to either prevent the problem occurring or advice on how to remedy any potential problem. The app can be found searching for “OATA” in Android Market. If members would like to help promote this app to their customers, a promotional poster is available from the OATA office. As this app was produced “in-house”, the ability to produce further apps in the future is now possible. Keep an eye out for other OATA apps in the future.



Screen shot of the app: Easy to use, eye-catching and informative.

OATA AND FISH KEEPING ON TV

Back in April, OATA took part in a TV programme examining pet fish as part of a series called “Pets for Life”, produced by PMGTV. This 30 minute long TV programme starred OATA CEO, Keith Davenport, providing an interview and discussing various aspects of fish keeping such as why fish make good pets, how to keep them successfully, along with raising awareness on the impacts of invasive species. This programme was aired on Sky Showcase channel in July and is also available on YouTube and the PMGTVG website for those who missed it. In conjunction with this TV programme, OATA also prepared a TV commercial to promote fish keeping. This was aired during the TV programme and is also available on YouTube.



Keith Davenport “on set” for the TV interview.

FACEBOOK & TWITTER

Now it’s even easier to stay up to date with the work the OATA does. OATA have opened up further lines of communication by utilising both Facebook and Twitter. These pages can be easily found by searching for “OATA” in Facebook and Twitter (if you’re viewing the electronic copy, click on the logos to take you there).



CITES

Last year we said that we could expect a report commissioned by DEFRA to look at the system of import permits and other “harsher domestic measures” required by the EU for trade in species list in the EU legislation implementing CITES controls. At least in part this resulted from over 10 years of OATA pressure. We pointed out that as £10 million were being consumed by these “harsher domestic measures” across the EU each year specific on the ground conservation benefits should be identified as justification for the expense.

The report concluded that in some cases a benefit could be found while in others it could not. The report has been sent to the European Commission for further consideration. We will continue to press for a clear justification for “harsher domestic measures” not in terms of administrative boxes ticked but in real proportionate conservation gains. If these cannot be demonstrated after decades of use then urge the EC to remove the cost burden. After all CITES should be about conservation not creating administrative jobs in the developed world.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2012

<p>Invasive species</p>	<p>Increased national to global concern and scrutiny of the industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A final outcome after years of deliberation of which plants might be banned from sale • A review of the species controlled under the Import of Live fish Act • The development of a new EU Directive on invasives • More scrutiny of the pet industry by governments around the world as the issue is debated in the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Trade Organisation.
<p>Diseases</p>	<p>A conclusion as to whether ornamental fish imports pose a risk of importing Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS). If it is decided they can, then full health certification might be required for tropical fish species for the first time. Could impact trade in important groups such as gouramis.</p> <p>Progress to a similar decision on White Spot (WSSD) a disease which seems to affect ALL crustaceans.</p>
<p>Charges</p>	<p>As government seeks to implement ever broader “full cost recovery” provisions increases might be seen almost anywhere including plant and fish import costs (the latter could rise to a minimum equivalent to €55).</p>
<p>Malaysia</p>	<p>Will the Malaysian authorities convince the EU that they should be able to export cold water species to the UK again.</p>
<p>Pet shop licensing</p>	<p>New guidelines agreed, circulated and used(?) by local authorities</p>
<p>Review of breeding of animals</p>	<p>Companion Animal Welfare Council progresses with review of problems associated with breeding of all pets.</p>