

# Memo

**To:** Dr. Nancy Barta-Smith, Professor of English  
**From:** Lindsey D. Kelley  
**Date:** November 30, 2005  
**Re:** Science article submission, "Consorting Convict Cichlids: Does Size Really Matter?"

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As discussed, I am submitting the attached article titled "Consorting Convict Cichlids: Does Size Really Matter?" for your review. The article is an adaptation of "*Female convict cichlids (Archocentrus nigrofasciatus) prefer to consort with same-sized males,*" as published in the 16<sup>th</sup> issue of *Ethology Ecology & Evolution* in 2004 (Beeching et al, 2004). It is my intention, pending further recommendations from you, to submit the final article to Aquarticles, which is an online, international forum for fish hobbyists. Below, I have described the intended audience and the editorial decisions that I have made while adapting the article for that audience.

Dan Jones writes in Technical Writing Style that while scientific writing is primarily expert-to-expert writing, science writing is often written by a scientist or science journalist to inform a lay audience of science news and discoveries. The attached article is an example of science writing, as it is an adaptation of a scientific article written by an expert, for experts. The venue that I have chosen – Aquarticles.com - serves as a free online resource of articles for use in aquarium club newsletters and non-commercial websites. Articles are submitted by aquarists and fish hobbyists from around the world and cover a variety of topics from breeding and keeping species of fish, to anecdotes and stories about fish. With such a variety of topics and submitting authors at Aquarticles, I found that there are equally a variety of styles present within the collection. Some of the articles are strictly informational, some are humorous, and some are a mixture of both.

The audience for Aquarticles is probably as varied as its content. Although most visitors to Aquarticles.com could be considered experts in their own niche of aquarium keeping, I have considered the audience to be a lay audience regarding the topic that I will be presenting to them. I am not expecting a large population of readers to be experts in researching fish behavior; therefore I have chosen to approach the subject as though I were addressing the general population.

The purpose of the article adaptation is to inform the audience of research that has been performed in the way of fish mate-selection behavior. Specifically, the article is meant to explain the findings of Dr. Simon Beeching during his research on the female convict cichlid (*Archocentrus nigrofasciatus*) and her choice of male breeding partners. Typically, convict cichlids form breeding pairs where the male is, on average, 30% larger than the female; however, his previous research allowed the male subject to choose his female partner, and consistently showed that the male would choose the largest available female; even if that meant that she was larger than he. Dr. Beeching's most recent research, which the article adaptation discusses, explores what happened when the female was allowed to choose the male partner.

The stylistic approach to the article adaptation is casual and light-hearted; using colloquial terms such as "window-shopping" to describe the experimental apparatus, and comparing the experiment to "The

Dating Game” for fish. At the same time, the article is informative, and discusses the results of the experiment in comparison to similar and differing results of other experiments. The use of both conversational and scientific terms is meant to attract readers of all experience levels, without intentionally catering to one audience over another. The content of the article was outcome-oriented; focusing mostly on explaining the results of the experiment, with little mention of the data collection and interpretation process.

The venue itself provides little in the way of formatting guidelines, however all of the articles posted in the forum share the same, general layout. The article adaptation that I intend to submit has been formatted to emulate the standard form shared by the online articles. All articles have centered headlines in Times New Roman, 18 pt font. Below the header is one vertical space, followed by a centered author’s by-line in Times New Roman, 14 pt font. Centered directly beneath the by-line is a credit to the contributing author’s organization in Times New Roman, 12 pt font, which on some occasions is italicized. In most articles, the line beneath the organization contained the text “Aqarticles.com” in Arial Narrow, 12 pt font. One vertical line space separates the header text from the body of the article, which is Times New Roman, 12 pt font. The body text is flush left/ragged-right, with one vertical line space between paragraphs.

I have enjoyed adapting Dr. Beeching’s research as appropriate for the Aqarticles audience, and look forward to your feedback. Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have regarding my article adaptation and submission to Aqarticles. I am best reached via email at the following address: [lcd4467@sru.edu](mailto:lcd4467@sru.edu).