



FISH CARE SHEETS

Designed around upon the FBAS comprehensive list of commonly-kept species, these Care Sheets are categorised as those found in FBAS Show Classes.

Details of all species referred to in these Fish Care Sheets can be found in the FBAS Booklet No 6 - National Show Fish Sizes. Click [HERE](#) for information.

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Genera: *Barbus*, *Puntius* including; *Barbus cumingi*,
B. oligolepis, *B. nigrofasciatus*, *B. tetrazona*, etc.

Family: Cyprinidae.

Geographic origin: South-East Asia including India.

Common Name: Generally Barb. Most of the fishes in this group have a common name. e.g. *Barbus oligolepis* - Checkered Barb, *Barbus tetrazonus* - Tiger Barb etc.



Compatibility: Normally peaceful. Best kept in a small groups (6+). Has had a reputation for fin nipping (through boredom?) when kept as a solitary specimen or in very small numbers. These are active and colourful fish well suited for a community collection.

Minimum Aquarium Size: 600mm x 380mm x 300mm (24" x 15" x 12"). With lighting hood and cover-glass fitted. As with the all fish the bigger the aquarium the better .

Temperature: 18°-28°C (65°-80°F). Best around 24°C (75°F), some fluctuation is normal in nature.

Habitat: Best kept in a well planted community aquarium with a coarse sand or gravel substrate, gentle water movement by internal or preferably an external filter is most beneficial.

Health: Isolate at once any fish that appears sick and treat it in a separate container. Do not dispose of dead fish by flushing them down the toilet. Incinerate or wrap in paper and put in the dustbin.

Water: Tolerant of most types but soft, acidic water better when breeding. Keep the water clean and sweet smelling. Change about 25% once a week, do not just keep topping up evaporation losses as this will only concentrate the waste materials in the aquarium.

Diet: Omnivorous: Any proprietary brand of Tropical Fish Food. However a rounded diet of alternative food should always be given, with a form of live food at least twice a week. *Daphnia*, Bloodworms, Gnat Lava, chopped Earthworm, etc. **Do not over feed** - almost all aquarium problems start with this as the cause.

Plants: All types of Tropical Plants acceptable. Not known as a plant eater.

Breeding Notes: Egglayer, using the egg-scattering method, the males chasing the females. Eggs are slightly adhesive, Use dense, bushy plants or several nylon mops as egg receptacles. Deter egg-eating by parents by removing them immediately after spawning. Newly-hatched Brine Shrimp ideal as a first food for fry.

Availability: Widely available. Only select alert free-swimming fish with all fins being held erect, with no signs of damage on body and fins and clean bright body colours. Reject any lethargic, damaged or hollow-bellied specimens.

Show Class: FBAS Class B



Genera: *Barbus*, *Cyclocheilichthys* and *Leptobarbus*.

Family: Cyprinidae.

Geographic Origin: Asia and Africa.

Common Names: Lemon Fin Barb, Red Cheeked Barb, Tinfoil Barb

Compatibility: These will grow into fish at least 130mm/5" in length and some up to 450mm/18". They are boisterous and so small fish may be at a disadvantage.

Minimum Aquarium Size: A 900mm x 380mm x 380mm 36" x 15" x 12" aquarium should be considered as the minimum. For large fish, then a tank of 1500mm x 450mm x 450mm (60" x 18" x 18") at least, will be necessary.

Temperature: Between 20°-28°C (70°- 80°F) is generally considered to be satisfactory. Some variation is acceptable.

Habitat: Can be found equally in slow moving streams and fast running rivers.

Water: These fish from soft water areas readily adapt to hard water with no deleterious effects.

Health: Not particularly prone to health problems. Accidental damage due to knocking into rockwork may cause fungus problems. Treat in a separate container.

Diet : Omnivorous: Some species are plant eaters so research the species before you buy.

Plants: See above. Others will enjoy a well-planted tank. Broad-leaved plants, such as Amazon Swords are ideal.

Breeding Notes: See [Breeding Notes, Small Asian Barbs](#)

Availability: Usually some available. Research before purchase to ensure that the small fish you buy is not going to grow into an 450mm/18" monster.

Show Class: F.B.A.S. Show Class. Ba, or B.

Genera: *Hemigrammus*, *Hyphessobrycon*, *Paracheirodon*, *Pristella*.

Family: Characidae.

Geographic Origin: Widespread throughout South America.

Common Names: Cardinal Tetra, Neon Tetra, Serpae Tetra, Lemon Tetra etc.



Compatibility: Generally speaking, these fish are very compatible with one another. One exception is possibly the Yellow Tetra, *Hyphessobrycon bifasciatus* that can be a fin-nipper.

Minimum Aquarium Size: As they are mainly less than 50mm (2"), they can be safely kept in a 600mm x 300mm x 300mm (24" x 12" x 12") aquarium. Larger aquariums however, are always preferable.

Temperature: Generally between 24^o-28^oC (75^o-82^oF), although many will be quite happy at lower temperatures.

Habitat: These fish really show their best colours in a well-planted aquarium. Water movement provided by an internal or external power filter is ideal.

Water: These fish come water is soft and acid and will always do best under these conditions. Most Tetras however will readily adapt to hard alkaline water though not for breeding. Water should be clean and clear. Fish will benefit from a 25% water change weekly.

Health: Not generally noted for having health problems.

Diet: Will readily accept all forms of dried, frozen and live foods.

Plants: Not plant eaters. All species of tropical plant are acceptable in the aquarium.

Availability: Probably the most available of all tropical fish. Only select fish that are alert and swimming with fins erect. Inspect closely for signs of disease. Reject lethargic, damaged or hollow bellied specimens.

Show Class: FBAS Show Class Ca or C.



Genera: *Nannostomus*

Family: Characidae

Geographic Origin: South America

Common Names: Beckfordi Pencilfish, Eques Pencilfish, Espe's Pencilfish etc.

Compatibility: Prefer small slow-moving tank mates. Not happy when boisterous fish are around. As they are small fish, they need to be with other small species.

Minimum Aquarium Size: 600mm x 300mm x 300mm (24" x 12" x 12") is preferable.

Temperature: Most are happy with temperatures between 20°-26° C (68° - 80°F).

Habitat: These fish are found in slow moving 'back waters' that are full of plants. A well-planted aquarium is beneficial. One species (*Nannostomus trifasciatus*) has males that tend to be territorial, so plenty of cover is needed.

Water: These fish are found in soft acid waters but most will readily adapt to hard alkaline water, usually acclimatising at the local shop. *Nannostomus espei* should only be kept in soft acid water.

Health: Not generally noted for having health problems.

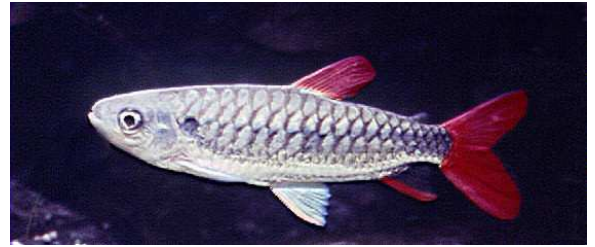
Diet: Their favourite food is newly-hatched Brine Shrimp but due to their size and the amount they require, this is not an option. They will readily accept all manner of live, frozen and dried flake foods.

Plants: Not plant eaters. All species of tropical plant are acceptable.

Breeding Notes : In order to breed these fish, they need soft slightly acid water. They are Egg-scatterers and will avidly eat any eggs they can see, so parents must be removed as soon as they have spawned.. The use of Java Moss (*Vesicularia dubyana*) as a spawning medium is beneficial. Eggs hatch in 24 hours or so and the fry become free swimming a day or so later. Fine foods are required.

Availability: Very popular group of fishes, you may have to search out the more uncommon species. Only select fish that are alert and swimming with fins erect. Inspect closely for signs of disease. Reject lethargic, damaged or hollow-bellied specimens.

Show Class: FBAS Show Class Cb.



Genera: Very many different genera.

Family: Characidae

Geographic Origin: South America, Africa.

Common Names: Piranha, Pacu, Penguin Fish, Headstanders etc.

Compatibility: Many of the characins cannot be kept with other species (Piscivores). Others present no problems. Always thoroughly research the fish you intend to buy or you may find that the other inhabitants of the tank are no longer present!

Minimum Aquarium Size: The smaller species can be kept in a 600mm x 300mm x 300mm (24" x 12" x 12") aquarium. Other species such as the Pacu can grow very large and require a tank of at least 1800mm X 600mm x 600mm (72" x 24" x 24") to accommodate properly.

Temperature: Most fish are happy with temperatures between 20°-28° C (70° - 82° F).

Habitat: Some Characins are also herbivores so a planted tank will be rapidly stripped bare. Habitat requirements should form part of your prior research.

Water: Generally these fish come from soft, acid waters. However it is not generally a problem to change them over to hard alkaline water. This is usually accomplished in the shop prior to purchase.

Health: Apart from White Spot, they do not have any particular problems provided the aquarium water is kept clean and clear. They benefit from a water change of approx 25% weekly.

Diet: The piscivores can usually be persuaded to accept beef heart, prawns or strips of fish. The feeding of live fish is not acceptable. Others readily consume Lettuce, Spinach etc. Others will eat all forms of dried, frozen or live food such as *Daphnia*.

Plants: See **Habitat**, above. Those fish that are not herbivores will enjoy a well-planted aquarium.

Availability: Many Characins are readily available. Remember to check - prior to purchase - eating habits and eventual adult size! Inspect carefully for signs of disease. Reject fish that are lethargic, damaged or hollow-bellied.

Show Class: FBAS Show Class C.



Species: *Aequidens*, *Astronotus*, *Cichlasoma*, *Crenicichla*, *Geophagus*, *Vieja* etc.

Family: Cichlidae.

Geographic Origin: South America, Central & North America.

Common Names: Oscars, Peacock Cichlid, Jack Dempsey, Green Terror etc.

Compatibility: Generally large and aggressive. Some can grow to 600mm (24").

Minimum Aquarium Size: A tank of 900mm x 380mm x 300mm (36" x 15" x 12") is suitable for the smaller species of these fish. Larger tanks are even better!

Temperature: 23°-28°C (73°-82° F), some fluctuation is normal in nature.

Habitat: Gravel substrate with plenty of rocks.

Water: Medium to hard, neutral water is deal. Should be well filtered and remain 'sweet'.

Health: Not generally a problem. Damage caused by territorial disputes should be carefully monitored and treated as necessary.

Diet: Most of these fishes should be considered as carnivores. Some fish can be persuaded to accept special pelletised dried foods.

Plants: These fish will re arrange gravel and rocks to suit themselves, often on a daily basis. Any plants will be uprooted continuously.

Breeding Notes: Egg-depositors which may lay many hundreds of eggs.

Availability: Generally a good selection available of young fish. This should be taken into account when stocking the tank - remember that they will grow! Overcrowding will lead to territorial fighting.

Show Class: FBAS Show Class D.

Genus: *Pterophyllum*. Typically, *Pterophyllum scalare*, *P. altum* and *P.leopoldi*.

Family: Cichlidae

Geographic Origin: South America. Mainly from Brazil but most cultivated aquarium stock comes from breeders in the Far East!

Common Names: Angelfish

Compatibility: Generally peaceful enough for a community collection. Adults may become territorial when spawning and small fish (Neon Tetra size) may not be safe.

Minimum Aquarium Size: One pair of *Pterophyllum* will be fine in a 600 x 380 x 300mm (24" x 15" x 12") tank, providing it is glazed so that it is 24" tall rather than long so as to give this 'tall' species enough depth of water. A 1200 x 380 x 450mm (48" x 15" x 18"height) tank will hold pairs.

Temperature : 23°-28°C (75°-82°F), whilst a rise of a couple of degrees is better for breeding.

Habitat : Fine gravel /coarse sand. Several clumps of 'grassy' plants (*Vallisneria*, *Sagittaria*) will provide resting places. Large pieces of inclined slate or thick 'bamboo/cane' sticks will make ideal spawning surfaces for these egg-depositing fish.

Water: Ideally, these fish prefer soft acid water but most specimens adapt to whatever comes out of the tap. Water should be filtered. Regular partial water changes advised especially in the fry-raising aquarium to where fertilised eggs (removed from the parents) are transferred for separate hatching. Any accumulated dirt will result in fry deaths.

Health: Generally hardy.

Diet : Omnivorous. Relish live or frozen foods. *Daphnia*, Mosquito larvae excellent for getting fish into optimum condition for Showing or breeding.

Plants : Will not destroy plants, although some broad-leaved specimens may be 'over-cleaned' and left a bit battered if not regarded as an acceptable spawning site.

Breeding Notes : Eggs may be removed from the spawning tank and raised artificially using an airstone to create water currents and simulate parent fish action in keeping eggs well-oxygenated and clean of debris.

Availability : A large number of colour variants, together with 'Lace' and 'Veil' long-finned specimens, are readily available. Whilst fish with split, or branched, pelvic fins may well be healthy, they will not make good exhibition fish.

Show Class : FBAS Show Class Da.





Species: *Symphysodon*. It is imperative that aquarists intending to keep these 'specialist' fish, do adequate research into the necessary parameters needed for their comfort and health.

Family: Cichlidae

Geographic Origin: Brazil.

Common Names: Discus, Pompadour or Emperor fish

Compatibility: Generally kept on their own but can be kept in a specialist community tank. Prefer slow-moving tank mates.

Minimum Aquarium Size: These fish can grow to 200mm or more so a large tank is necessary. A 1200mm x 380mm x 380mm (48" x 15" x 15") tank is the minimum.

Temperature: Should be kept at high temperatures. 28°-32°C (82°-86°F) is usual; there is some variation in nature.

Habitat: Gravel substrate with a well-planted tank. Amazon Swordplants are often a featured plant. Bogwood with attached plant is also decorative.

Water: The best water conditions are soft and acid. Low hardness with a pH of less than 7 is ideal. Good filtration without too much water disturbance.

Health: Not always the easiest fish to keep in good health. Careful inspection for 'Hole-in-the-Head' disease should be made. This must be treated with a proprietary medicine.

Diet: Special Discus foods both dried and frozen are on the market.

Plants: Gravel substrate (preferably lime free) with large plants. Breeding tanks are usually devoid of gravel and plants.

Breeding Notes: Eggs are deposited on terracotta spawning cones. Fry initially feed from mucus on parents' skin before moving on to the more traditional fry foods, such as Brine Shrimp etc.

Availability: There are many different colour varieties on the market. Some shops specialise in Discus and have a wide range.

Show Class: FBAS Show Class D.



Species: Too numerous to list.
Approximately, 60 genera containing 650 species.

Family: Cichlidae.

Geographic Origin: Lakes Malawi, Tanganyika and Victoria.

Common Names: Mbuna (Malawi) Rift Lake Cichlids.

Compatibility: Not generally kept with small fish e.g. Tetras. In some cases, they cannot be kept with one another. If considering purchasing these cichlids, you should consult specialist books.

Minimum Aquarium Size: The small Tanganyika cichlids e.g. *Julidochromis* and *Neolamprologus* species, can be kept in 600mm x 380mm x 300mm (24" x 15" x 12") aquaria as a single species. If considering setting up a 'community' tank of Malawi or Tanganyika cichlids, then considerably larger tanks are required.

Temperature: 23°-27°C (73°-81°F) is considered to be ideal, some fluctuation is normal in nature.

Habitat: Gravel substrate with plenty of rockwork. These fish need plenty of places to hide and to establish their own territories.

Water: Prefer a hard water environment in most cases. Excessive water changes should be avoided.

Health: Generally do not have too many health problems. Physical damage to fish due to territorial disputes may have to be treated.

Diet: Most cichlids will accept the whole range of foods. Some are algae-grazers so will require algae tablets as part of their diet. Do not over feed - problems of pollution can occur when food enters cracks in rockwork and remains uneaten.

Plants: Only plants that are firmly attached to rockwork will survive (e.g. *Anubias nana*). Only plants that are large and firmly rooted will not be vulnerable to the digging actions of the tank inhabitants.

Breeding Notes: Variety of methods practised. Mbuna are mouthbrooders, *Neolamprologus* and *Julidochromis* are cave breeders. Some *Lamprologus* are shell-spawners.

Availability: Very wide range of specimens available. Research into the species desired and their compatibility with other fish is highly recommended.

Show Class. FBAS show Class Dc.



Species: *Paratilapia, Tilapia, Hemichromis, Sarotherodon, Steatocranus, Oreochromis* etc.

Family: Cichlidae.

Geographic Origin: West, Central and Eastern Africa.

Common Names: Jewel Cichlid, Egyptian Mouthbrooder

Compatibility: Generally large and aggressive. Some can grow to 24 inches (600mm).

Minimum Aquarium Size: A tank of 900mm x 380mm x 300mm (36" x 15" x 12") is suitable for the smaller species of these fish. Larger tanks are even better!

Temperature: 23°-28°C (73°-82°F) is considered to be ideal, some fluctuation is normal in nature.

Habitat: Gravel substrate with plenty of rocks.

Water: Medium to hard, neutral water is considered ideal for the fish.
Should be well-filtered and remain 'sweet.'

Health: Not generally a problem. Physical damage caused by territorial disputes should be carefully monitored and treated as necessary.

Diet: Most of these fishes should be considered as carnivores. Some fish can be persuaded to accept special pelletised dried foods.

Plants: These fish will rearrange gravel and rocks to suit themselves, often on a daily basis.
Any plants will be uprooted continually

Breeding Notes: Substrate nests, or depressions, may be built into which eggs are laid prior to being incubated by mouthbrooding species. Some species will spawn on open surfaces such as rocks. Strong parental care and vigorous defence of the young

Availability: Not quite so easily spotted as their Rift Valley relatives. Sometimes young fish are available and this should be taken into account when stocking the tank - remember that they will grow! Overcrowding will lead to territorial fighting.

Show Class: FBAS show Class D.



Species: *Apistogramma*, *Mikrogeophagus*, *Nannacara*,
Nanochromis, *Pelvicachromis*.

Family: Cichlidae.

Geographic Origin: South America. Many from Brazil.

Common Names: Cockatoo Cichlid, Rams, Bolivian Rams, etc.

Compatibility: Providing they have enough tank space to set up their own territory, they will live quite happily with one another.

Minimum Aquarium Size: One pair of *Apistogramma* will be fine in a 450mm x 250mm x 250mm (18" x 10" x 10") aquarium, particularly if you are attempting to breed them. A 900mm x 380mm x 300mm (36" x 15" x 12") tank will hold several pairs.

Temperature: 23°-28°C (73°-82°F), there is some fluctuation in nature.

Habitat: Fine gravel /coarse sand. Rockwork to provide hiding places. Terracotta flower pots are ideal (ensure that the drainage hole is enlarged).

Water: Ideally, these fish prefer soft acid water but over a period of time, can be changed over to neutral hard water. Water should be filtered. Small water changes only on a weekly basis.

Health: May have problems with White Spot. This can be treated with a proprietary compound.

Diet: Prefer live or frozen foods. *Daphnia*, Mosquito larvae are readily accepted. May accept dried foods.

Plants: May re arrange the tank to suit themselves in which case, the plants will be uprooted. Use plants attached to rockwork.

Breeding Notes: Egg-depositors, often somewhat secretive - inside a flower-pot is often a favourite spawning site.

Availability: A number of species are readily available.

Show Class: FBAS Show Class Db.



Genera: *Betta*, *Ctenopoma*, *Trigonostigma*, *Trichogaster*, *Trichopsis* etc.

Family: Anabantidae, Belontiidae.

Geographic Origin: Africa and Asia.

Common Names: Siamese Fighting Fish, Leeri or Pearl, Three-spot, Croaking and Sparkling Gouramies, Climbing Perches.

Compatibility: Many of the 'Gouramies' are compatible with one another and with other species e.g. Tetras. Siamese Fighters can only be kept on their own. Predatory Climbing Perches (*Ctenopoma*) are best kept in a separate species aquarium.

Minimum aquarium size: Small Gouramies can be kept in a 600mm x 380mm x 300mm (24" x 15" x 12") aquarium although a larger aquarium is always preferred. A well-fitting hood is needed if keeping Climbing Perches - they do!

Temperature: These fish are from regions where the water temperature can be over 30°C (86°F) and as low as 15°C (60°F). Set aquarium water around 25°C (78°F).

Habitat: Many are found in rice paddies and in small ponds in wooded areas. They are air-breathing, which is fortunate as their natural water conditions are often very poor but this does not mean water conditions in the aquarium should be neglected!

Water: They benefit from having a good clean environment. Most are quite happy in hard water. Benefit from a weekly water change of 25%.

Health: No particular problems.

Diet: Will readily accept all dried, frozen and live foods such as *Daphnia*.

Plants: All species of tropical plant are acceptable in the aquarium.

Breeding Notes : The breeding tank should have plenty of plant refuges into which the female can safely retreat. Although the Chocolate Gourami is a mouthbrooder, the majority are bubbler-builders with eggs and fry being guarded by the male after spawning. Remove the female at this time.

Availability : Many are readily available. Others are less so.

Show Class : *Betta splendens* (Fighting Fish) Class Ea, the other Labyrinths Class E.



Genera : *Aphyosemion*, *Aplocheilus*, *Cynolebias*, *Epiplatys*, *Nothobranchius*, *Simpsonichthys*.

Family : Aplocheilidae, Cyprinodontidae.

Geographic Origin: North & South America, Africa, Asia and Southern Europe.

Common Names: Very few have common names. *Aplocheilus lineatus* (gold form) is known as the 'Golden Wonder'.

Compatibility: Few Killifish are kept in community tanks, but in separate species tanks. This is often because the females of one species are not readily distinguished from a closely-related species. Research prior to purchase is recommended.

Minimum Aquarium Size : Pairs easily kept in small 250mm x 200mm x 200mm (10" x 8" x 8") aquaria. Very few Killifish require large tanks.

Temperature : Mostly undemanding. Temperatures may range from 20°-30°C (68°-86°F), although some have very specific requirements that need careful research.

Habitat: May be found in very small ponds (even puddles), rivers and lakes. Community tank fish will benefit from a well planted aquarium.

Water: Most fish require soft acid water and do not easily accept hard alkaline water conditions. Small water changes on a weekly basis are beneficial.

Health: Several genera suffer from *Oodinium* - Velvet Disease which must be treated promptly. Small fry seem to be particularly vulnerable.

Diet: Generally prefer live foods such as *Daphnia*, Mosquito larvae, Bloodworm and *Tubifex* worms. Also accept frozen varieties of the live foods. May, given time, accept dried foods.

Plants: Most Killifish, are kept in tanks with just a layer of floating plants.

Breeding Notes: Fertilised eggs, laid in plants, spawning mops or in the substrate may, depending on species, need a period of semi-dehydration before hatching is triggered by re-immersion.

Availability: Very few species are stocked by fish shops. Mainly available through a specialist organisation such as the British Killifish Association.

Show Class. FBAS Show Class F.

FISH CARE SHEET No: 14 **Catfish Fish - South American**

Genera: *Agamyxis*, *Ancistrus*, *Panaque*, *Platydoras*, *Otocinclus* etc .

Family: Doradidae, Loricaridae. etc

Geographic Origin: South America.

Common Names: Whiptail, Algae Eater, Royal Panaque



Compatibility: Many of these catfishes grow very large. Adequate research is recommended before keeping some of these catfish. Others can be cannibalistic to its tankmates. Consult specialist books on the subject.

Minimum Aquarium Size: Depends on species. The small *Otocinclus*, are fine in a 450mm x 260mm x 260mm (18" x 10" x 10") community aquarium but others may require much more spacious accommodation.

Temperature: Generally will tolerate a wide temperature range from 18°-26°C (65° - 80°F).

Habitat: Many of these catfish, can only be kept in tanks with a rockwork decor and again, others are fine in a planted community tank. See also under **Diet**.

Water: Although many of these catfish are found in soft water, they readily adapt to hard water.

Health: Not particularly prone to health problems.

Diet: Some are algae eaters, others will happily dine on frozen foods or as in the case of some of the larger catfish, frozen fish. Some of the Loricaridae need wood as an essential part of their diet. Therefore the tank should contain large pieces of bogwood for them to graze on.

Plants: Some of the larger catfish, will cause havoc in a planted tank. Research necessary!

Breeding Notes: Bristlenose Catfish (*Ancistrus* sp) and some other members of the Loricaridae Family readily breed in captivity. All are egg-depositors.

Availability: Some, like *Otocinclus*, are readily available. Others such as the Royal Panaque may be less so. There is generally a large selection of catfish available. Do not buy 'on spec' unless you know what you are buying.

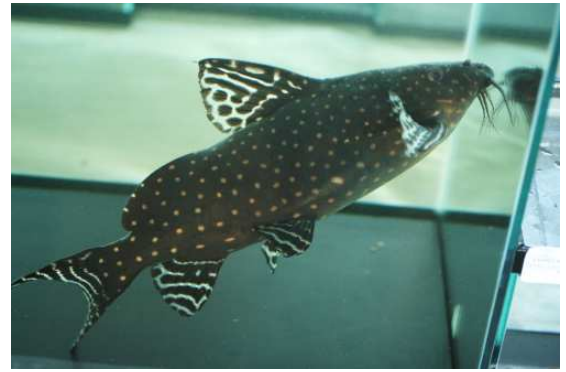
Show Class: F.B.A.S. Show Class. G or Ga.

Genera : *Synodontis*, *Microsynodontis*

Family : Mochokidae.

Geographic Origin : Africa. Nile, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Sudan, Zaire.

Common Names : Cuckoo Syno, Upside-down Catfish, Angel Syno.



Compatibility: Some larger species may cause problems but generally OK with most species.

Minimum aquarium size : The smaller species can be accommodated in a 600 x 380 x 300mm (24" x 15" x 12") tank. Larger species need a 1200 X 380 x 300mm (48" x 15" x 12") tank.

Temperature : In the range of 20°-26°C (68°-80°F).

Habitat : Well planted tanks with plenty of rockwork for hiding places.

Water: Some of these species come from soft water areas others from very hard water areas. It is recommended that you research the locality of the species and provide the appropriate conditions before purchasing them.

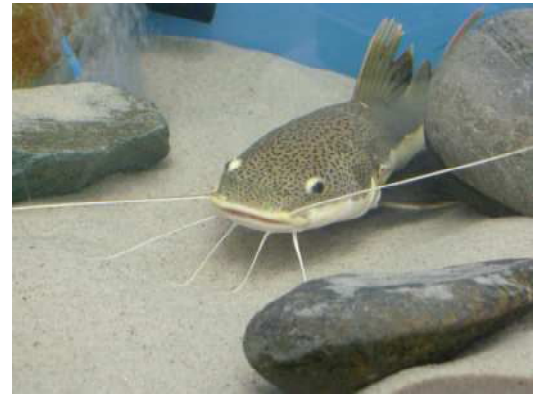
Health : Some species are susceptible to Velvet Disease (*Oodinium*) generally brought on by stress. Medication may be necessary. It is sometimes possible to treat the affected fish whilst in the aquarium and not use an isolation tank.

Diet : These fish are generally nocturnal so special provision should be made for feeding them. Most are omnivorous.

Plants : All tropical plants are generally suitable although some small specimens may be uprooted by the fishes' constant foraging..

Availability : A fairly wide selection of species available, though more often in specialist shops.

Show Class : F.B.A.S. Show Class G



Genera : *Brachyrhamdia*, *Phractocephalus*, *Leirius*, etc

Family : Pimelodidae

Geographic Origin : From Mexico to Argentina.

Common Names : False Cory, Red-tail Cat,
Marbled Antennae Catfish.

Compatibility : The small species, like *Brachyrhamdia*, are fine with other community fish providing they are too large to consume. Most species grow very large and are total predators. In the wild, they are primarily food fish. Before considering keeping the larger species (which grow rapidly) thorough research is essential.

Minimum aquarium size : As large species can grow to two metres, very large tanks are necessary!

Temperature : In the range 20°-26°C (68°-80°F).

Habitat : The large species are usually kept in tanks with few furnishings. Large diameter plastic or earthenware pipes make suitable 'hiding' places.

Water : Are found in soft water but will adapt to hard. Many are very 'fussy' regarding water changes and pre-conditioned water is often necessary. As they can be large fish, consequently having large appetites, an efficient filtration system using external units (often several) is essential.

Health : Generally not unhealthy but chlorine 'burn' on some species can be a problem.

Diet : Many of the Pimelodidae are carnivores so choice of tank mates are important. Most will eat frozen prawns when they are small but as they grow, more substantial food is required. The feeding of live fish is unacceptable and most can be trained to eat frozen fish, Mussel meat, 'crab sticks' etc.

Plants : Unless they are very firmly attached to rockwork, they will be uprooted.

Availability : Often available, usually in specialist fish shops.

Show Class : F.B.A.S. Show Class G or Ga



Genera : *Corydoras*, *Aspidoras*, *Brochis*

Family : Callichthyidae

Geographic Origin : South America.

Common Names : Bronze, Peppered, Panda *Corydoras*; Hog-nosed *Brochis*

Compatibility : These non-aggressive, shoaling fish may be kept with most other species of fish..

Minimum aquarium size : The small species of *Aspidoras* and *Corydoras* can be kept in tanks as small as 450mm x 250mm x 250mm (18" x 10" x 10") but will generally thrive better in larger tanks.

Temperature : Ideal is around 24°C (75°F) but will tolerate both higher and lower temperatures. Water temperature is often lowered quite drastically to promote the onset of breeding

Habitat : Likes a well-planted community tank with a gravel substrate. Some aquarists use a fairly coarse gravel or fine sand believing that it lessens 'wear and tear' on the fishes' barbels.

Water : Although these fish are generally found in soft water, they very readily adapt to hard water to such an extent, that they will happily breed in hard water.

Health : Generally do not suffer with health problems. The nose of the fish is sometimes accidentally damaged and may need treatment in a separate aquarium. If the tank needs to be treated for White Spot (on other fish), ideally, the catfish should be removed before treatment as they may be allergic to the particular chosen treatment.

Diet : Catfish, should not only be used for cleaning up uneaten food, but should also be fed separately. This is best achieved by adding food for them just before the lights are turned off at night. They are omnivorous in their diet and particularly enjoy frozen Bloodworm.

Plants : All species of tropical plants are acceptable. They are not plant eaters.

Breeding Notes : *Corydoras* are egg-depositors, the female carrying the eggs between her pelvic fins to the chosen spawning site. See **Temperature**.

Availability : A very wide selection available. Research your selection and then check with shops.

Show Class : F.B.A.S. Show Class H *Corydoras* Class Ha *Aspidoras*, *Brochis*



Species: *Rasbora*, *Microrasbora*, *Trigonostigma* and *Rasboroides*.

Family: Cyprinidae.

Geographic Origin: S/East Asia, India.

Common Names: Harlequin, Scissortail, Elegant Rasbora, Red-tail Rasbora.

Compatibility: Generally active fish that are best kept in a shoal of at least six fish. Not aggressive towards one another or to tank mates. Good fish for beginners.

Minimum Aquarium Size: The smaller species can be kept in a 450mm x 250mm x 250mm (18" x 10" x 10") aquarium. A tank of 900mm x 380mm x 300mm (36" x 15" x 12") is more suitable for the larger species such as the Scissor tail and Sumatrana. Aquariums should have well fitting lids and cover glasses. These fish can jump extremely well.

Temperature: Ideal temperature is around 20°C (68°F) but quite happy at higher or lower temperatures.

Habitat: Prefers a well-planted community tank, with a gravel substrate and water movement, particularly from the outlet of an internal filter.

Water Parameters: Tolerant to soft and hard water. Will generally only breed in soft acid water. Water change of approximately 25% each week is beneficial.

Health: Generally not over susceptible to White Spot or fungus. As with all new fish, quarantine for at least one week in a separate tank. Any fish that appears sick, isolate immediately in a separate tank. Do not flush dead fish down the toilet. Incinerate or wrap in paper and put it in the dustbin.

Diet: Omnivorous: These fish will accept dried, frozen and all types of live food (e.g. *Daphnia*, Mosquito larvae). Do not overfeed. Many problems can be caused by overfeeding (pollution of water by decaying food).

Plants: All species of tropical plants are acceptable. Not known as plant eaters.

Breeding Notes: *Trigonostigma heteromorpha* (the Harlequin) is an egg-depositor; others are egg-scatters.

Availability: Widely available. Only select fish that are alert and swimming with fins erect. Inspect carefully for signs of disease. Reject lethargic, damaged or hollow bellied specimens.

Special Note: *Rasbora kalachroma* and *Rasboroides vaterifloris* are regarded as difficult to keep for the inexperienced aquarist - generally only thrive in soft acid water. Unless you can provide these conditions, they are best avoided.

Show Class: FBAS Class J.

Species: *Danio*, *Devario*, *Tanichthys*.

Family: Cyprinidae

Geographic Origin: S/East Asia, India and South China.

Common Names: Zebra, Spotted, Leopard and Giant Danios, White Cloud Mountain Minnows.



Compatibility: Generally active fish that are best kept in a shoal of at least six fish. Not aggressive towards one another or to tank mates. Good fish for beginners.

Minimum Aquarium Size. The smaller specimens of *Danio* and WCMMs can be kept in a 450mm x 250mm x 250mm (18" x 10" x 10") aquarium. The aquarium should have a well-fitting lid and cover glass as these fish can jump extremely well. An aquarium of 600mm x 380mm x 300mm (24" x 15" x 12") is suitable for the larger species such as the Giant Danio and *Danio dangila*. A larger tank will be even more beneficial.

Temperature: Ideal temperature is around 18°C (65°F). They are quite happy at lower temperatures.

Habitat: Likes a well-planted community tank, with a gravel substrate and water movement, particularly from the outlet of an internal filter.

Water Parameters: Tolerant to soft and hard water. Will breed in both. Water change of approximately 25% each week is beneficial if not essential.

Health: Generally do not seem to be over susceptible to white spot or fungus. As with all new fish, quarantine for at least one week in a separate tank. Any fish that appear to be sick, immediately isolate in a separate tank.

Diet: These omnivorous fish will accept dried, frozen and all types of live food (e.g. *Daphnia*, Mosquito larvae). Do not overfeed. Many problems can be caused by overfeeding (pollution of water by decaying food).

Plants: All species of tropical plants are acceptable. Not known as plant eaters.

Breeding Notes: Egg-scatterers. Protective measures need to be taken to prevent egg-eating by the spawning adults.

Availability: Widely available. Only select fish that are alert and swimming with fins erect. Inspect carefully for signs of white spot or other diseases. Reject lethargic, damaged or hollow-bellied specimens.

Show Class: FBAS Class K mostly but WCMM now shown in Class W.



Genera: *Botia*, *Nemacheilus*, *Pangio*.

Family: Balitoridae, Cobitidae.

Geographic Origin: Virtually worldwide with the exception of South America and Australia.

Common Names: Chain, Clown, Tiger Loaches.

Compatibility: Generally quite peaceful fish, well suited to a community aquarium. Large specimens may become aggressive, as may groups of five or more of the *Botia* species.

Minimum Aquarium Size: Not to be kept in tanks of less than 600mm x300mm x 300mm (24" x 12" x 12"). Bigger aquariums are much better as they tend to move around the tank searching for food.

Temperature: With a few exceptions, all are happy at temperatures between 20°-27°C (70°-80°F).

Habitat: Most are found in rivers or hill streams (these are often considerably cooler and may be fast-flowing). Like a well-planted tank with rockwork or places to hide.

Water Parameters: Undemanding, providing it is clean and clear. A weekly water change of 25% is recommended.

Health: Some - particularly the Clown Loach (*Chromobotia macracanthus*) is often susceptible to White Spot. Treat with proprietary medicines formulated for Loaches.

Diet: Dried, frozen and live foods such as *Daphnia* and *Tubifex* are all readily accepted. Algae wafers are beneficial to their diet.

Plants. All tropical plants are acceptable in the aquarium.

Breeding Notes: Isolated cases of Clown Loach spawnings reported. Details unknown.

Availability. Many different species are available.

Show Class. FBAS Show Class Usually Class L or La. Some are shown in Class M or W.



Genera: *Balantiocheilus*, *Epalzeorhynchus* and *Labeo*.

Family: Cyprinidae.

Geographic Origin: South East Asia, Thailand, Malaysia and South and East Africa.

Common Names: Red-tail Black Shark, Silver Shark, Black Shark, Flying Fox.

Compatibility: These fish are NOT freshwater Sharks. They have common names of 'Shark' and this refers to the Shark-like dorsal fin. Small specimens are quite compatible in a community tank. Large Black Sharks and the Silver Sharks can be aggressive.

Minimum Aquarium Size: Minimum tank size of 900mm x 380mm x380mm (36" x 15" x 15") is recommended. For the larger species, more tank space is required.

Temperature: 20°-26°C (70°-76°F) is ideal. They will accept fluctuations outside of this range for short periods.

Habitat: Widely differing habitats. Can be found in fast flowing water and in slow moving streams.

Water : Able to cope with most degrees of hardness but seem to prefer alkaline water. Water should be clean and clear, preferably filtered by either an internal or external power filter.

Health: No particular health problems. Select fish that are alert, swimming around and not hollow-bellied.

Diet: Most are omnivorous and will happily graze on algae, eat algae wafers and all manner of frozen foods.

Plants: A well planted aquarium for the smaller species is recommended. The larger fish will tend to uproot plants and in some cases consume them.

Breeding Notes: Not bred in the aquarium and information on breeding very scarce.

Availability: Many are freely available. Caution when buying small Silver Sharks, they will grow!

Show Class: F.B.A.S. Show Class. M or Ma.

Species: *Chilatherina, Glossolepis & Melanotaenia.*

Family: Atheriniformes.

Geographic Origin: Papua New Guinea, Irian Jaya, Australia.

Common Name: Rainbow fish.



Compatibility: Can be aggressive with small fishes. With similar sized fish, they are fine.

Minimum aquarium size: A minimum of 900mm x 380mm x 300mm (36" x 15" x 12") is necessary. If you intending to keep a few species, a larger tank is better.

Temperature: Fairly wide range in their requirements. From 18°-28°C (65°-82°F).

Habitat: Prefers a well-planted tank, with some water movement via air-stone or filtration.

Water: Very undemanding. Providing it is clean and clear, they will accept hard and soft water. A water change of 25% each week is beneficial if not essential.

Health: Generally free from health problems. May get a slight touch of mouth fungus if they damage that area. Treat as necessary in a separate quarantine aquaria. Do not flush dead fish down the toilet. Incinerate or wrap in paper and put in the dustbin.

Diet: Omnivorous. All types of dried, frozen and live foods such as *Daphnia* and *Tubifex* worms. Vary the diet and do not overfeed.

Plants: All species of tropical plants are acceptable in the aquarium. These species do not eat plants.

Breeding Notes: Information scarce.

Availability: Many species are widely available. Select fish that are alert and swimming with fins erect. Inspect carefully for signs of disease. Reject lethargic, damaged or hollow-bellied specimens.

Show Class: FBAS Classes Mc or M.



Species: *Pseudomugil*.

Family: Atheriniformes.

Geographic Origin: Papua New Guinea, Australia.

Common Names: Blue-eyed Rainbowfish.

Compatibility: Generally active fish that are best kept in a shoal of at least six fish. Not aggressive towards one another or to tankmates. As they are small fish, they should not be kept with large boisterous fish. Best kept in a sole species aquarium.

Minimum Aquarium Size: These smaller species can be kept in a 450mm x 250mm x 250mm (18" x 10" x 10") Aquarium. The aquarium must have a lid and a cover glass.

Temperature: Ideal temperature is around 24°C (75°F) but can cope with higher temperatures.

Habitat: Best kept in a well-planted aquarium, with a gravel substrate.

Water: Tolerant of hard water. Will generally only breed in hard water. Water change of approximately 25% each week is most beneficial.

Health: Generally do not seem to be over susceptible to White Spot or Fungus. As with all new fish, quarantine for at least one week in a separate tank. Any fish that appear sick, immediately isolate in a separate tank. Do not dispose of dead fish by flushing them down the toilet. Incinerate or wrap in paper and put in dustbin.

Diet: Will accept dried, frozen and all types of live food (e.g. small *Daphnia*). Favourite food has to be newly hatched Brine Shrimp. Do not overfeed. Many problems are caused by overfeeding (pollution of water by decaying food).

Plants: All species of tropical plants are acceptable. Not known as plant eaters. A clump of Java Moss should be provided. The fish will use this for spawning and hiding.

Breeding Notes: Egg-scatterer. Use fine-leaved plants or spawning mops.

Availability: Not widely available. Only select fish that are alert and swimming with fins erect. Inspect carefully for signs of white spot or other diseases. Reject lethargic, damaged or hollow-bellied specimens.

Show Class: FBAS Class M or Mc.



Genera: *Poecilia*, *Xiphophorus*.

Family: Poeciliidae

Geographic Origin: Central America.

Common Names: Guppy, Swordtail, Platy, Molly.

Compatibility: Not a problem with similar sized fish. Can be aggressive with smaller tank mates.

Minimum Aquarium Size: For these livebearers, an aquarium of 600mm x 300mm x 300mm (24" x 12" x 12") is the minimum. They will benefit from having a larger aquarium.

Temperature: Can be kept at quite low temperatures 18°C (65°F), but are best at 24°-27°C (75°-80°F).

Habitat: Found in rivers, lakes and ponds. Best kept in a well-planted aquarium with water movement provided by either external or internal filter.

Water Parameters: Prefer hard alkaline water. It should be well filtered and a partial water change each week of around 25% should be undertaken.

Health: Not especially prone to diseases, but White Spot, Mouth Fungus and Finrot (particularly if water conditions are poor) can be found in these fishes. Treat sick fish in a separate container. Do not dispose of dead fish down the toilet. Place in dustbin or incinerate.

Diet: Omnivorous. Benefit from the addition of green stuff to their diet e.g. Peas, Lettuce etc. Will eat all dried, frozen and live foods.

Plants: All tropical plants are suitable for the aquarium.

Breeding Notes: Very prolific. Females can store sperm and produce further batches of young without remating. Use densely-planted aquarium as a delivery room for gravid females; late moving of such females may result in early births. Difficult to keep colour strains pure, if several varieties are kept in together.

Availability: Swordtails, Mollies, Guppies and Platies are all very readily available.

Show Classes: Male Guppy Class O a-q, Female Guppy Class O s-y
Cultivated Swordtail (*X.helleri*), Platies (*X.maculatus*, *X.variatus*,) and Molly (*Poecilia sphenops*) Class P.

They sound like outcasts from Society, but these 'other' livebearers not only exist in a great number of genera but also offer a challenge to do something for Conservancy. Thanks to dedicated aquarists, at least one species now only exists in captivity having been lost to Nature.



Genera: *Alfaro*, *Ameca*, *Belonesox*, *Carlhubbsia*, *Limia*, *Xenotoca*.

Family: Poeciliidae, Goodeidae

Geographic Origin: Central America, South East Asia.

Common Names: The Bishop, Knife Livebearer, Hump-backed Limia, Pike Top-Minnow

Compatibility: With similar sized fish, mostly they are not a problem although some can be very aggressive with smaller tankmates. Many better kept in species tanks.

Minimum Aquarium Size: As for 'cultivated' livebearers, a 600mm x 300mm x 300mm (24" x 12" x 12") is the minimum. All benefit from having a larger aquarium.

Temperature: Depends on the species' area of natural distribution; highland waters are cooler than those on the plains. A range of between 18°-27°C (65°-80°F) typical for the whole group.

Habitat: Found in rivers, lakes and ponds. Best kept in a well-planted aquarium with water movement provided by either external or internal filter.

Water: Prefer hard alkaline water. Some species may inhabit brackish water in nature. It should be well filtered with a partial water change each week of around 25%.

Health: Not especially prone to diseases, but White Spot, Mouth Fungus and Finrot (particularly if water conditions are poor) can be found in these fishes. Treat sick fish in a separate container. Do not dispose of dead fish down the toilet. Place in dustbin or incinerate.

Diet: Omnivorous with the accent on 'animal' foods for the more predatory species. Will eat all dried, frozen and live foods.

Plants: All tropical plants are suitable for the aquarium.

Breeding Notes: Sexing, not difficult, but not so easy as with cultivated livebearers. The male's anal is not always fully developed into the familiar gonopodium, sometimes there is just a visible 'notch' in the leading few rays. Unlike cultivated livebearers, some females cannot store sperm and must be mated to produce more young. Treat gravid females as for Cultivated Livebearers (above).

Availability: Available at good aquatic shops, although more are accessible through specialist livebearer groups, such as British Livebearer Association.

Show Classes: FBAS Class R - Swordtails (not *X.helleri*) Class S - Mollies (*Poecilia*, *Limia*)
Class T Other Species



Genera: *Carassius auratus*

Family: Cyprinidae.

Geographic Origin: Asia. Originally Central China. Many varieties are selectively bred worldwide.

Common Names: Common Goldfish, Comets, Bristol & London Shubunkins.

Compatibility: These fish will grow to 350mm but rarely so, as most are kept in aquariums or garden ponds. They are quite compatible with any other fish of a similar size.

Minimum Aquarium Size: A 600mm x 380mm x 380mm (24" x 15" x 15") aquarium should be considered as the minimum. For fish over 80mm, then a tank of at least 1500mm x 450mm x 450mm (60" x 18" x 18") will be necessary.

Temperature: 0°-28°C (32°-80°F). In general, our ambient temperatures are satisfactory. In ponds, oxygen deficiency at summer temperatures will cause problems.

Habitat: All singletail goldfish are suitable for stocking garden ponds. Many are also kept satisfactorily in aquariums. To successfully over-winter, the pond must have an area 900mm deep and be cleared of mulm and rotting leaves in late Autumn.

Water: These fish are not fussy when it comes to water as long as it is low in nitrate and devoid of chlorine; one should avoid changing more than a third of their water at any one time unless absolutely necessary.

Health: Not particularly prone to health problems. Physical damage, perhaps due to vigorous spawning, may cause fungus problems. Always treat in a separate container.

Diet : Omnivorous. Will basically consume anything. Many commercial foods available. It is important to vary the diet and feed a live food at least twice a week if possible.

Plants: Will enjoy a well-planted tank.

Breeding Notes: Will spawn spontaneously in an outside pond when water temperatures rise in Spring. Inter-variety breeding prevalent unless steps are taken to separate varieties and control spawning as required.

Availability: Commercially-bred fish widely available. Line-bred specimens only available from specialist breeder. Before you buy, check that the fish appears healthy and alert; avoid listless fish with folded fins.

Show Class: F.B.A.S. Show Class U.

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Twintailed Goldfish



Genera: *Carassius auratus*

Family: Cyprinidae.

Geographic Origin: Asia, originally Central China.
Selectively bred to produce many varieties.

Common Names: Bubble-eye, Celestial, Fantail, Moor, Panda, Jikin, Veiltail, Ranchu, Ryukin etc.

Compatibility: Can grow to 280mm but very rarely so, as they are mostly kept in aquariums.
Compatible with any similar sized fish, although often the ones at a disadvantage.

Minimum Aquarium Size: A 600mm x 380mm x 380mm (24" x 15" x 15") aquarium should be considered as the minimum. For fish over 60mm, then tank of at least 1500mm x 450mm x 450mm (60" x 18" x 18") will be necessary.

Temperature: Between 0°-28°C (32°-80°F). In general, our ambient temperatures are considered to be satisfactory.

Habitat: As a rule of thumb Twintail Goldfish are not suitable for stocking garden ponds; losses will occur over the winter. They are best kept in aquariums.

Water: Not fussy, as long as water is low in nitrate and devoid of chlorine. Avoid changing more than a third of their water at any one time unless absolutely necessary.

Health: Not particularly prone to health problems. Physical damage due to knocking into rockwork may cause fungus problems. Always treat in a separate container away from other fish.

Diet: Omnivorous. Will basically consume anything. Many commercial foods available.
Twintail Goldfish are prone to swim-bladder problems if fed solely on dry food. Vary the diet and feed a type of live food at least twice a week. A day without food once a fortnight can also be of benefit, as most people overfeed fish.

Plants: Will enjoy a well-planted tank.

Breeding Notes: Breeding demands strict discipline on the part of the fishkeeper if a true colour strain or particular variety is to be maintained. Concentrate on breeding one variety rather to attempt several. Seek information from Specialist Societies or from the national body.

Availability: Commercially-bred fish widely available. Line-bred specimens only available from Specialist breeders and are expensive. When selecting fish for exhibiting, always check that caudal and anal fins are divided as required by the Show Standard.

Show Class: F.B.A.S. Show Class V.