

HONEY GOURAMI, *Trichogaster chuna*

By Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Jan-Feb 1985



Sunset Honey Gouramis

DESCRIPTION

I have only kept the Honey Gourami about 4 months, but it is already become one of my favorite fish. At first I felt sorry for this diminutive, shy, and fragile appearing fish. My experience is that the Honey Gourami is quick and elusive, and is always one of the first to the food, even with more aggressive fish in the tank. Why this fish is often described as shy and retiring in the literature escapes me. I feel that their peaceful yet spunky disposition and brilliant coloration far outweigh any disadvantages they might have. They are from India and prefer soft, slightly acid water. They prefer temperatures between 75 and 82 degrees. Although it is supposed to reach 2 ½ inches in length, the largest I have seen is about 1 ¾.

BREEDING

I placed a pair a little over ¾ inch long in a 20 gallon community tank with peaceful but somewhat larger fish to grow them up a bit. They seemed to eat all types of foods. Getting the female to fill with eggs seems to be less difficult than with some other anabantoids. When the male tried to build a bubble nest several times despite the heavy undergravel filtration and presence of many other fish, I knew I had a tough little hombre on my hands. So I moved them to a separate 20 gallon tank with clean water, daphnia, and hiding areas for the female, and left them for a week while on vacation. Sure enough, when I returned, the female was resting unharmed in the corner, and the male was in the other end tending to a nest of fry just starting to free-swim. Any fish that can take care of itself like that is a favorite of mine! In addition, this little gem is a real beauty.

RAISING FRY

The most difficult part is raising the fry. They are very tiny and require over a week of infusoria before they can take baby brine shrimp. Even after that they grow very slowly. My fry were less than half an inch at 2 months. The slow growth and their smaller size are probably why we don't see the Honey Gourami more often in the dealers tanks, but it is well worth the wait!