

NEON TETRA, *Paracheirodon innesi*

By Chase Klinesteker SWAM, March-April 1984



Group of neon tetras

The Neon Tetra is a beautiful and challenging fish to breed. This method is somewhat unorthodox, but the following points have helped me get fairly decent results:

WATER

---I use water from a water softener which is alkaline, about 7.6 pH. Since it originates from the Grand Rapids water supply, it is aerated for 24 hours to remove the chlorine. I use this water for conditioning, breeding, and raising the fry.

---The adults are kept separated in aquariums with active undergravel filters in which I change one-fourth to one third of the water one to two times per week. I feed the breeders heavily twice per day with a variety of foods, especially dry flakes and frozen brine shrimp.

TANK

---The breeding tank is 10 gallon with a bare bottom placed in a low light area, temperature about 76 degrees. A sponge filter is placed in a one quart plastic pan and gravel placed on top for the filter. Let the filter run for 24-48 hours in the fresh water, then add numerous plastic plants, especially covering the bottom (neons are avid egg-eaters). Then place one well-conditioned pair of Neon Tetras in the tank (more breeders seem to decrease the hatching percentage). Spawning usually occurs at night in 24 to 48 hours.

EGGS

----After spawning, remove the breeders and shake the plastic plants well in the tank so the eggs fall to the bottom. A flashlight shined on the bottom will allow you to see the eggs and pick them up with an airline hose "siphon on a stick". Rinse the eggs off with clean, aged, and filtered water and put them in a quart or gallon container of it, adding one drop of 5% methylene blue per quart. Change the water again in about 24 hours after the eggs hatch. Cleaning eggs and changing water on the eggs and fry can best be done in a round, translucent container (e.g. one quart sherbet) by swirling the water around in one direction. The eggs or fry will collect in the center and can be picked up in an eyedropper. This does not harm them at all.

FRY

----When the fry begin to swim, change the water again, but don't add methylene blue. Place them in a one to two gallon container with some live plants (e.g. java moss) and small snails for some infusoria. Aerate very lightly.

----After a few days, you can begin feeding newly hatched brine shrimp (only about one drop), watching for tiny orange bellies.

----I usually get from 30 to 100 fry per spawning, although they are touchy to raise, even to the brine shrimp stage, and the resulting number of fish raised is considerably less than that. The key seems to be clean water.