WHITEFIN ROSY TETRA, HY-511

Pair of Whitefin Rosy Tetras, Male on right

DESCRIPTION

The Whitefin Rosy Tetra is a very attractive and peaceful fish that is in good demand, but not seen too often in fish shops. It is also called the Candycane, Whitetip Ornate, HY-511, and Peppermint Tetra. It is a pink to salmon color with red in the fins and striking white tips on the dorsal, anal, and ventral fins. This fish can really stand out, especially with a darker background. Many believe the species is Hyphessobrycon bentosi, but it is a fairly recent arrival, and due to the complexity of the Rosy Tetra group of fishes, has not been fully identified. They are peaceful and active fish that like to school in midtank, so it is best to have 6 or more in a group. They can reach just over 2 inches in length and live 3-5 years.

CONDITIONS

Whitefin Rosy Tetras are slow-growing, somewhat difficult to breed, and do best in softer, slightly acid water, which may be why they are not seen as often. They are omnivores who have good appetites and are easy to feed. A higher protein diet helps, but they are somewhat sensitive to water pollution. 72 to 82 degrees F. is a good temperature range for them. Plants suit them well, although they need adequate swimming room also. They can be a little shy, so aggressive tankmates are not recommended. More subdued lighting and soft peat-stained water is preferred.

BREEDING

Male Whitefin Rosy Tetras are usually larger and have longer dorsal and anal fins. Females have a rounder and more plump body. A young pair were placed in a 2 ½ gallon tank in soft rainwater of about 75 degrees, a peat moss box filter, and subdued lighting. After about a week a number of eggs were laid. More than 50% were infertile, so the eggs were siphoned out, rinsed off, and the viable eggs were separated out by swirling and picking up with an eyedropper. These were put in a gallon jug of rainwater with 2 drops of 5% methylene blue to reduce fungus and block out light. In 24 hours the eggs hatched and were rinsed and swirled again to remove the polluting eggshells, then placed in fresh rainwater with methylene blue to develop. Most

references list this fish as difficult to breed. I suspect that is because keeping the fry alive is a challenge. They are very tiny clear-glass slivers when first hatched and very difficult to see because they hide so well in the plants and gravel. In fact, it was nearly a month after spawning that I could locate many fry and see them swimming around (I think my eyesight is pretty good!), and almost gave up on them. I did see a few fry, but was surprised when around 100 fry appeared. The eggs and fry are sensitive to light and the fry require infusoria for nearly a week. To top it off, the fry are sensitive to pollution. It helped that I transferred the fry to a dimly lit 20-gallon tank as soon as they were free-swimming. Only a few hours were needed to adjust the fry from rainwater into a tank of Grand Rapids tapwater (medium hardness) with an undergravel filter. The fry were fed a suspension of 5-50 micron Golden Pearls fry food 2-3 times per day for about a week before adding baby brine shrimp. Once on baby brine, they grew slowly but surely.

2 month old Whitefin Rosy Tetra fry