

# AFRICAN BLACKSTRIPE BARB, BARBUS MACROPS

By Chase Klinesteker



Female *Barbus macrops*

The African Blackstripe Barb is rarely seen in the aquarium hobby, and little information or pictures of it can be found on the Internet. I obtained 6 fry at the GVAC Christmas party in December of 2012. It was labeled as *Barbus martorelli* but later found to be *B. macrops*. It is quite attractive with large reflective silver scales and a prominent black stripe from the nose, through the eye, and into the tail. Reflected light can also show iridescent blue and green. It is the perfect barb: peaceful, active, robust appetite, schooling, tolerant of water chemistry changes, will not eat plants, but tough enough to take care of itself. It is ideal for a larger community tank, as it gets 4-5 inches in size. It hails from West Africa and the Chad basin. They are migratory and can swim very fast, so current in their tank might help. Cover their tank well, as they can jump.

## BREEDING

There were no known breeding reports for the African Blackstripe Barb on the Internet or other references that I checked. Yet I found them to be breedable and very prolific. Hopefully, my experience with them will encourage others to breed them and make them more available to hobbyists. They grow fairly slowly, but once they reach 3-3 ½ inches, females begin to plump out a bit, and males are slimmer and smaller. A few attempts to breed a single pair did not produce eggs, and I noticed that the female seemed to bully the male. This likely indicated that they spawn better in groups. When a female became full of eggs, I placed her in a 20 gallon long tank with 2 males and lots of plastic plants at a temperature around 78 degrees. Undergravel filtration was used along with Grand Rapids tapwater. A box filter of peat moss was added to darken the water, as they seem to prefer subdued lighting. The reverse trio spawned within 2 days, laying hundreds of tiny, whitish, non-adhesive eggs. I removed and rinsed some eggs to see if a better hatch would occur in rain water, but found it to be the same (70%) in both. In a couple of days, the eggs hatched, but it was around 4 days more before they were free-swimming. They will take newly hatched brine shrimp right away, making them easy to raise.

## THE CHALLENGE

There are numerous fish species out there that have little or no information on keeping or breeding them. Many species are threatened by environmental degradation, yet could be valuable to Mankind in the future. Biological diversity on this Earth of ours is the key to understanding life. The more we strive to maintain and understand that diversity, the better off we are.



African Blackstripe Barb fry, a portion of one spawn