

BANDED ALLOTOCA, *Allotoca goslinei*

by Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Jan-Feb 2008

DESCRIPTION

The Banded Allotoca, *A. goslinei*, is a seriously endangered new species of goodeid livebearer from the Ameca River Basin of Mexico. It is a shy fish that hides in plants most of the time and darts out to grab food. It has a brownish color with several thin vertical bars along the body. There is a black spot in the middle of the body. The males have the usual goodeid anal fin andropodium and their dorsal fin begins closer to the front of the body than the females'. Males get around 2 inches and females up to twice that size. Broods have been reported at over 50, and they are fairly small for goodeid fry. In nature they are found in shallow water pools hiding under plants. The water temperature in their native mountain streams rarely gets above 20 degrees Centigrade (68 degrees F.), so they must be kept cool. They eat a variety of foods but need time to adjust to an aquarium due to their shyness. Live foods and some vegetable matter are said to be needed to get them to breed. This fish inhabits the bottom layers of the tank and is reluctant to feed at the surface on dry food, so I wet some spirulina flakes to let them sink to the bottom, and later they are gone.

SETUP

I obtained 6 young *A. goslinei* in March of '07. They were placed in a 20 gallon long tank located near the floor in my fishroom for cooler temperatures. This is a large tank for 6 small fish, but their habitat indicates they need clean and well oxygenated water. The tank had a glass bottom and a pan filter (large gravel over a sponge filter in a quart pan). This filter collects much of the detritus and can be easily removed and cleaned. Plants in pots and weighted anubias were used for cover. It took these fish about 2 weeks to adjust to the new surroundings and begin eating well. Blackworms, daphnia, frozen brine shrimp, and flake foods were eventually eaten with gusto. There were 2 males and 4 females, a good ratio. At slightly over 1 inch long, the females began looking gravid, so I placed more cover plants in the tank and waited.

BREEDING

I only managed to save 2 fry from the first batch. They were brownish colored, very quick, and fairly small for goodeid fry. The adults would pursue them vigorously! I was going to leave town for a several days and was concerned the other 3 females would have and eat their fry. Because these fish were bottom dwellers, I needed more cover for the fry on the bottom. I have some mats of artificial turf (green plastic) with blades about ½ inch long that I use to protect eggs of egg scattering fishes. This seemed ideal to use, so I placed one, covering about 1/3 of the bottom area. There was plenty of floating hornwort and other plants for the fry to hide in also. When I returned, the 3 females had given birth, and I collected 10 fry from the tank, not bad considering. If I had been present and observing them daily, I would likely have collected many more fry. The fry were put in another aquarium, fed newly hatched brine shrimp, and growth was constant, if not rapid.

The Banded Goodeid, *Allotoca goslinei*, is a fairly attractive and unusual livebearer that offers a challenge to breed. Because it is new, hopefully, more aquarists will attempt to breed and distribute this species more widely.