

BLACK PHANTOM TETRA *Hyphessobrycon megalopterus*

by Chase Klinesteker *SWAM*, May/June 1984



Male Black Phantom Tetra. Black coloration usually is more intense in fins

DESCRIPTION

The Black Phantom Tetra, *Hyphessobrycon megalopterus*, is an attractive, peaceful, and active fish from Brazil. It prefers soft water and does not get much larger than one and a half inches, females being slightly smaller. It is a pretty fish with markings and fins somewhere between the Serpae Tetra and the Bleeding Heart Tetra. They are easy to sex, as the male has larger and longer anal and dorsal fins, and females have a red adipose fin.

BREEDING

These fish are commonly available in pet stores. To breed, I prefer to purchase fish where the female is already starting to fill with eggs, as I found that many females will not fill with spawn. Separate the breeders and feed well with both live and frozen foods for about a week to condition them. Prepare a 10 gallon tank with fresh soft water, clean bottom, small filter, and plastic plants for them to lay the eggs in. Age the water

for one or two days and put the tank in a low-light area. Keep the temperature in the high seventies. Then introduce one breeding pair. The female may lay 200 to 400 tiny eggs. You may either remove and clean the eggs or leave them in the spawning tank. If you choose the latter, run the filter heavily for 2 days to help reduce pollution from the spawning. The fry seem to be very sensitive to light, which presents a problem when they begin feeding. After 2 days, slow the filter air down to encourage some natural infusoria growth. The fry are very tiny and when they become free-swimming, they will need to be fed Liquifry-One or infusoria for a few days.

A CHALLENGE TO BREED

The fertility rate and the fry survival rate seem to be fairly low for the number of eggs laid. Most seem to be lost due to their sensitivity to light and my inability to get them sufficient food. These fry seem to grow much more slowly than most tetras. That and the fairly delicate nature of this fish seems to justify the slightly higher price of Black Phantom Tetras in the shops. This is a truly delightful fish and a challenge to breed!



Female Black Phantom Tetra