

# BLACK PRINCE GOODEID, CHARACODON AUDAX



Male *Characodon audax*, "El Toboso" location

## CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

The Black Prince Goodeid is a critically endangered live-bearing fish from the mountainous area of Durango, Mexico. *Characodon audax* encompasses several populations having attractive colors including black, red, and yellow. The "El Toboso" location is one of the most striking, with jet black fins and silvery reflective scales. I obtained my current stock of "El Toboso" from Jim Langhammer in 2013. Its current conservation status is critically endangered, declining, and on the verge of going extinct. I encourage hobbyists that are interested to look into the C.A.R.E.S. program and the Goodeid Working Group to save many of these rare fishes.

## A DIFFICULT FISH TO KEEP

The word "audax" means bold or daring. Males can be downright nasty to each other with the females not much better. Starting with fish of approximately the same size helps, and avoid shipping pairs together in the same bag. They are easy to catch in a net, as they rarely spook. They do not tolerate many other species or crowding well. A larger species tank with many plants and hiding places is recommended. Do not mix fish from different populations in order to keep the wild strains pure. With good filtration and regular water changes, they should do well. Cooler temperatures are needed, and I found that 72 to 74 worked best for optimal growth and reproduction. Higher temperatures are not to their liking, and when I kept them at 65 degrees, growth was very slow and they seemed susceptible to air bladder problems. Some would float up to the surface and constantly struggle to swim down. This sometimes can be corrected by placing the fish in a very shallow container with some soft plants for a few days so they don't have to struggle. Feeding the Black Prince Goodeid can be a challenge also. They are constantly picking and searching for food, and seem to prefer more frequent feedings. Their favorite foods are frozen brine shrimp and daphnia, and I include spirulina flake for vegetable matter. They can be glutinous, so be careful to not overfeed. Plecos are good tankmates and will help clean up excess food.

## BREEDING

Goodeids require a separate fertilization for every batch of fry. Sexing is simple, as males have black fins and females' fins are clear. Gestation is around 60 days. Adults can reach 2 inches in length and live 5-7 years, but a females' first brood may be only 2 or 3 large fry when she is less than an inch long. As she gets older, the number of fry increases but they may be slightly smaller. I prefer to isolate the females for delivering the fry, as there likely is some predation. A small tank with filtration and many plants will suffice for the delivery. A fully pregnant female is quite large and could be damaged if picked up in a net, so I catch her and then use a small cup to pick her out of the net in water for transfer. The fry will eat fine dry food and baby brine shrimp right away but grow fairly slowly, having their first brood in 4 or 5 months.



Female *Characodon audax*, "El Toboso"