

THE CHECKERBOARD BARB, *Capoeta oligolepis*

“FRUSTRATION IN MINATURE”

By Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Nov-Dec 1984



Female Checkerboard Barb

It is easy to write an article about a fish you have successfully bred and raised. It is much harder to write about a fish that constantly thwarts your every attempt to raise 10 fry for Breeders Award Points (BAP). For me, the Checkerboard Barb (*Capoeta oligolepis*) is one of those fish.

TRYING TO BREED

I began the year with 3 males and 7 females. Several of the females appeared to be filling with eggs---sounds like a cinch, right? Wrong! Some books say the Checkerboard Barb like soft, slightly acid water. So I put a pair in my usual tetra breeding setup of a 10 gallon tank, thick plastic plants at one end, and clean 2 day-old softened water. They seemed to hide and remained motionless in the plants, but I figured they were just getting used to their surroundings. 2 days later when the female turned belly up, I realized that it was a little more involved than that! It seemed that the water was too fresh, so I figured that it would be better to let the water set with filtration for a week and a half. That was slightly better, as on my next attempt it took a male 4 days to turn belly up!

TRY NO-FUSS

Next was a series of breeding attempts to find out what they really wanted for breeding. Peat water, live plants, bright light, smaller tank, gravel bottom, and used soft water from my community tank were all tried. After several more attempts (and another belly up), I finally got some eggs. I promptly siphoned out the eggs, rinsed them off, and placed them in rain water with methylene blue added to make sure they wouldn't fungus. Wrong again---no hatch. By this time it dawned on me that they don't like to be fussed over. So I threw a pair in a 2 gallon tank with used soft water, some Java Moss, and a small box filter with gravel in it. Presto: eggs in less than a day! I removed the parents and let Nature take its' course.

FRY FRUSTRATION

It was an uneventful fryhood for the 40 tiny fry until 4 weeks later I moved them to a 20 gallon tank with other similar sized fry. I was making $\frac{1}{4}$ partial water changes one to two times weekly and figured things were pretty well in hand---until one day I noticed dead fry in the tank. Sure enough, almost all of the Checkerboard Barb fry were belly up! There was no sign of disease on them or the other fry in the tank. I salvaged 2 fry and sheepishly turned them in for BAP points, vowing that the next batch would get the oldest, dirtiest water I could find! The next spawning of these little devils (that's my frustration surfacing) was not uneventful but did result in 20 fry. With constant attention to uncleanliness, they managed to survive for about 6 weeks until I felt they were overcrowded in their 2 gallon drum bowl (sound familiar?). I moved them to a 20 gallon tank with some other fry, making sure water changes were minimized. I was feeding them heavily to get more size on these slow growing miniature barbs. You guessed it! I noticed Checkerboard Barb fry belly up with no sign of disease on them or the other fish in the tank. All they really need is dirty, old water with no pollution!

I managed to save only 7 fry to turn in for BAP. For those who are not math majors, that leaves me one-fry-shy! And that is my "Frustration in Miniature".