

IMPERIAL BARB, DAWKINSIA ROHANI

Chase Klinesteker, www.chasesfishes.net



DESCRIPTION

The Imperial Barb is a rarely seen but beautiful barb found in the hillstreams of Southern India. It has an iridescent green upper body with red or orange in the fins and a large black teardrop shaped marking on the body near the tail. Other names for it are Teardrop Barb or Rohan's Filament Barb. Adult males have long filaments of the rays in the dorsal fin and more color in the fins and body than the females. It is a schooling, active, fast swimming, good sized barb (4 to 5 inches) that can handle itself, yet is quite peaceful. Because it is a stream fish, current and clean, high-oxygen water is appreciated. They will eat some plants, but are perfect for a larger tank with cichlids. They are omnivores that will eat just about anything, including fish pellets. Newly described in 2010, it is rarely available, has a limited range, and is listed as "vulnerable to extinction" on the IUCN Red List.

BREEDING

In 2018 I obtained 3 adult Imperial Barbs from Jeff at Bluefish Aquarium. There was a female and 2 males and I set up a pair to breed in the usual barb manner several times with no results. When searching the Internet, a video was found on Ted's Fishroom that showed spawning this fish. It talked about separating the sexes and conditioning them first, as well as using large nylon mops as a spawning medium on the tank bottom in one end. Although a 20-gallon long tank is small to breed this sized fish, it was all that was available. Males are not overly aggressive, so both males were used to spawn with the female. The temperature was around 78 degrees in dim light, and a box filter containing peat moss was used in addition to the undergravel filter on one end of the tank. 50% water changes were done until spawning occurred. Although the female did not look slimmer after spawning, over 1,000 tiny eggs were laid! This spawning setup might work well for many of the larger barbs.

THE EGGS AND FRY

The mops were placed in a bucket of water and worked around to dislodge the adhesive eggs, then rinsed of debris, and placed in aerated hatching jugs of clean water with some methylene blue added. The eggs are sensitive to light, so the methylene blue helps reduce that. Both tapwater and soft rainwater were used, with a somewhat better fry hatch and survival in rainwater. The eggs are tiny for so large a fish, clear, and difficult to see. Once the eggs hatch, the tiny colorless fry are cleaned by swirling in a pan, picking them up with a

baster in the center, and putting them in a jug of fresh water with light aeration. In 5 days, the fry are free-swimming and can be transferred to a larger tank with some snails to be fed. First food was suspended fine Liquifry or Golden Pearls, and after a couple of days, newly hatched brine shrimp. In two months the fry will be $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch and have 4 vertical dark markings on their body in typical barb fashion. This is a quite different pattern from the adults.



2 month old Imperial Barb fry, about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch

The Imperial Barb is a beautiful and challenging fish to breed, but well worth the effort. Check out my new website on breeding tropical fish at: www.chasesfishes.net.

Chase