

THE MELON BARB—*Haludaria fasciatus*

by Chase Klinesteker



Male Mellon (Panda) Barb

DESCRIPTION

The Melon Barb has also been called the Ember Barb, Panda Barb, *Puntius fasciatus*, and *Capoeta Melanampyx*. They have vertical bands on their bodies. The name *Barbus Fasciatus* also was used for the Striped Barb, which has horizontal bands. That fish is now named *B. Eugrammus*. The Melon Barb is one of the most beautiful of all the barbs. Males in breeding condition have brilliant purple and pink color contrasted with jet black fins and markings on their body. Melon Barbs come from Southeast Asia and are slightly aggressive toward other fish. The males can fight among themselves and be very hard on the females. They can handle themselves well, even in a tank of similar sized african cichlids. Probably they would be more peaceful toward each other if they were in a school of 6 or more fish. It is not seen very often in the pet shops, likely due to the difficulty in breeding them and their slow growth. Males are more slender, more colorful, and their dorsal fins are larger. This fish is active and a good jumper, so keep it covered well. 74 to 79 degrees Fahrenheit suits it well. They get to about 3 inches in length. Mine did well in Grand Rapids tapwater although they are somewhat sensitive to pollution. All foods are eaten.

BREEDING

For breeding, I put a pair in a 20 gallon tank with lots of cover and plants. Watch them closely, as the male can severely damage or even kill the female in a short period of time. I lost one female this way even though the female was larger than the male. I believe that they lay only a few eggs a day over a long period of time and are probably super egg eaters. Every day or two I would siphon off the bottom glass and search for

the tiny eggs, usually finding just a few. The eggs were rinsed off and placed in rain water with methylene blue and hatched in two days at 75 degrees. The fry grew slowly and would not tolerate crowded conditions.

If you come across these fish, I would recommend you try them. There are few freshwater fish more brilliant and colorful than a male Mellon Barb in breeding color!