METEOR MINNOW—LONGFIN WHITE CLOUD,

TANICHTHYS ALBONEUBES

By Chase Klinesteker, www.chasesfishes.net

Pair of Longfinned White Clouds, male below

The White Cloud is generally known as an easy to care for and breed fish, especially for beginners. They eat just about any food, are hardy, and quite attractive. The Meteor Minnow is a longfin variety of the White Cloud and is not seen as often. It comes in a standard color as well as a golden variety. It can tolerate temperatures from 40-90 degrees Fahrenheit but is best kept on the cool side at 72 degrees or below. It is a very attractive fish with red in the fins and yellow, white, and steel blue on the body. Active, peaceful, and rarely exceeding 1 ½ inches, it is ideal for a nano aquarium of small fishes. They eat a wide variety of foods, but have quite small mouths. Feed them sparingly, as they are sensitive to pollution and susceptible to becoming obese. They are considered endangered in their native habitat in China, and for a period of 20 years were thought to be extinct until another population was found. All available White Clouds are commercially bred, and the inbreeding has resulted in some genetic weakness in the stock. They easily tolerate a PH range between 6 and 8 and have a lifespan of 3-5 years. Males have slimmer bodies, more vibrant colors, and wider and more fan-shaped dorsal and anal fins. Females not full of eggs can be harder to distinguish from males. They show off best in a school of 5 or more fish with frequent water changes and plenty of plants.

BREEDING

Because the White Cloud is a coldwater fish from mountain streams, it is ideal to put out in a pond for summertime, often yielding bumper crops of fry. Yet breeding results for me had been dismal in my indoor fishroom. Natural breeding aquariums with lots of plants would produce a few fry over time, but not in enough numbers to satisfy me. When I kept and tried to breed them in my fishroom at 75-80 degrees, I rarely got any eggs. Eventually I decided to keep and condition them outside the fishroom at 65 degrees, then move their breeding tank into the warmer fishroom. After a water change or 2, I managed to get some decent spawns. They scatter eggs in plants, sometimes laying one egg at a time and other times many eggs. The eggs

are very tiny, clear, and semi-adhesive. Only by siphoning them from the breeding tank and putting a light behind them were they visible. They were rinsed off and put in a gallon jug to hatch with methylene blue and light aeration. Both tap and rain water seemed to work well. They hatched in 48 hours and were free-swimming in another 4 days. Difficult to see, the fry require infusoria for over a week before they can take baby brine shrimp. After several weeks, the fry take on a brilliant neon blue color that makes them look more like baby neons than baby neons! Growth is slow but steady, and full maturity and finnage could take about a year. Breeding can be hit or miss, as females can become eggbound.