

THE ONE-SPOT BETTA, *Betta ocellata*

By Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Mar-Apr 2008



One Spot Betta, *Betta ocellata*

DESCRIPTION

Betta ocellata, commonly known as the One-Spot Betta or Eyespot Mouthbrooder, is a slow moving anabantoid that is quite peaceful and does well in a community aquarium with other peaceful fish. The “one spot” refers to a black spot near the lower base of the tail. They get quite large for bettas, up to 5 inches, with a long and slender body. Because of their size, larger tanks are best. Males can scrap with each other, so it is recommended to keep only one mature male to an aquarium. They are jumpers, so keep them well covered. They are found in the murky, slow flowing headwaters of Malaysia and Indonesia. Quite tolerant of water parameters, they can be somewhat sensitive in very soft water. Temperature preference is 70-77 degrees, which is cooler than what *Betta splendens* prefers. Their aquarium should have plenty of plants, both surface and on the bottom. They inhabit mostly the upper layers of the aquarium, but will spawn near the bottom, near plants or in a cave. Males have more color, and a fully mature and healthy male will have iridescent blue scales on the face, gills, and body, as well as blue on the fins. Females have clear fins except ventrals and little, if any, blue on the body. They may take a year or more to reach full size and color. One Spot Bettas eat just about anything, including flake, frozen, and live foods. A variety of foods is recommended. They especially relish live redworms, attacking some as long as their body, and fighting amongst themselves for a bite of it. If you want to see how fast these fish can really move, put a worm or two in their tank!

BREEDING

Betta ocellata is a mouth brooder where the male holds the eggs in his mouth after spawning. I observed a young pair embracing a few times, but then they stopped without producing eggs. The embrace is very similar to *Betta splendens*. They likely need to be about 3 inches before they are mature enough to successfully spawn.

I found a male in the community tank that was not eating, yet did not seem to have a full jaw. They do not have the throat expansion like African cichlids, but there is a slightly fuller face and gill area. I moved him to a planted 20 gallon tank by himself to see what would happen. In about 10 days, he released about thirty ¼ inch fry, which I had difficulty finding at first. They are slender and slow moving and will take baby brine shrimp right away. I found them scattered all about the tank, top to bottom, and hiding in the plants. The fry grew well, but remained reclusive and scattered. At about ¾ inch the fry would slowly challenge each other, but no damage was done, and there was plenty of space for the loser to retreat. At an inch the fry would venture out more to feed in open areas.

I highly recommend that hobbyists try to keep *Betta ocellata*. It is a very peaceful and interesting fish that is easy to breed.



Male *Betta ocellata* holding eggs