

# SHRI LANKAN TWO SPOT BARB, *Puntius narayani*

by Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Nov-Dec 2008



3 rare Narayana Barbs

## DESCRIPTION

In October of 2006 I obtained 6 wild caught young adult Shri Lankan Two Spot Barb, or *Puntius narayani*. It was described by Hora in 1937, so it is not a newly discovered fish. Its' dark markings are similar to *Puntius phutunio*, but it is a much deeper bodied fish and is considerably more colorful. I had heard that only 3 other people in the U.S. had this species at that time. I had never seen them before and noticed that they were quite attractive. They are a deep bodied barb with a large scale pattern, yellow chest area, and 2 large dark blue vertical spots, one in the shoulder area and the other near the base of the tail. There is a reddish coloration in the dorsal, anal, and caudal fins, especially with the males. Although they can be difficult to sex unless fully mature, females have mostly a golden color on their sides. There is a pinkish cast on the posterior portion of the body and white edging on the ventral fins. Color is quite dependent on how "happy" the fish are with their environment. Their maximum size seems to be about 2 inches, with males slightly larger. They are found in India's western Ghat mountain streams. I could find no report of breeding them nor much about their care on the internet. Out of the 6 original fish I had 5 males and 1 female. According to the Internet, this fish now could be classified as *Pethia setnai*

## CONDITIONS

The Naryayan Barb is rarely imported and seldom seen. They are shy and prefer subdued lighting and plant cover but with plenty of swimming space, since in the wild they exist in open water. Once they are settled in, they swim more out in the open, especially if dither fish are present. They eat most all foods, including dry foods, although some vegetable matter is recommended. They are especially fond of frozen foods and black worms. With their heavy appetite, much waste can build up in the tank, to which they are sensitive. This may

be one reason they are difficult to keep. Water changes are quite important, and they seem to do better in cooler temperatures (70-75 degrees F.). They prefer to swim in schools, so at least 5 or 6 specimens are recommended.

### **BREEDING**

Breeding this barb was quite a challenge. Finally after several attempts I obtained about 30 eggs by putting a pair in a 10 gallon tank with large gravel on the bottom to protect the eggs. Some artificial plants were used for cover and after a couple of days the eggs were collected by using a siphon down in the gravel and pulling them out. The hatch rate was poor and the fry were sensitive to pollution and water changes, but I managed to raise about 15 fry for BAP. The fry are very slow growing but have reached near maturity in about a year. I hope to breed these fish more in the future to keep them around. This may be one of the first breedings of this fish, as I have not heard of any reports of them being bred before.

*Puntius narayani* has many disadvantages with its' difficulty to care for and breed, but I highly recommend others to try this fish if they can obtain them. It is one of the most beautiful barbs I have ever kept!