

# RED STRIPE BARB, *Puntius bimaculatus*

By Chase Klinesteker



**Red Stripe Barb, dominant male in front**

## DESCRIPTION

The Red Stripe Barb, *Puntius bimaculatus*, is sometimes called the 2-Spot Barb and was first described by Bleeker in 1844. They come from India and Sri Lanka in Southeast Asia. It is a surprisingly beautiful fish, and not just during breeding. In 2009, I obtained 6 young fish from Charlie Grimes. Most pictures and writings on this fish describe a fairly plain barb with 2 spots on its' body, but some populations have more color than others. It is not often seen in pet stores. In a school, the dominant male can show brilliant red on its' side. Usually males have brighter coloration, are slimmer, and slightly smaller than the females. The "two spots" refer to a black spot at the base of the dorsal fin and one at the base of the tail. It has a torpedo-shaped body with maximum size about 2 ½ inches. These fish are very peaceful and will eat most all foods, but some vegetable matter is best in their diet. Live foods and soft water seem to enhance their colors. They are found mostly in flowing waters up to 4500 feet in elevation and are fast, active swimmers, indicating a need for high oxygen content of their water and slightly cooler temperatures. It is one of only a few barb species found in mountain streams. They are somewhat shy, and more comfortable in a dimly lit planted tank containing a school of them. A good temperature range for this fish is 72-76 degrees with pH 6 to 7.5. Soft, acid water is best, although they will tolerate harder. For the average hobbyist, I would recommend a 10 gallon tank minimum for maintaining a small group of these beautiful fish, and a 5 gallon tank best to breed a pair.

## **BREEDING**

I bred these fish by putting a pair in a 3 gallon aquarium of aged rainwater with ½ inch gravel on the bottom to hide the eggs from the parents, who are avid egg eaters. A box filter of peat moss, some spawning mops, and plastic plants were added. Lighting was subdued as the eggs and fry are light sensitive. A pair may lay from 200 to 400 adhesive eggs. After spawning the pair was removed, and the eggs hatched in about 36 hours. The fry were free swimming in another 2 days. Infusoria should be the first food, although in one or two days they will take baby brine shrimp or microworms. As with many barbs, growth is slow but steady.



Female Red Stripe Barb