

ROSY TETRA, *Hyphessobrycon rosaceus*

By Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Mar-Apr 2005



Pair of Rosy Tetras, male below

DESCRIPTION

The Rosy Tetra is a very attractive fish related to the Bleeding Heart tetra (*Hyphessobrycon rubrostigma*), only quite a bit smaller. They come from the Essequibo River in the lower Amazon region of Guiana. There is some uncertainty in identification in this large group of tetras with many similar appearing species. I had originally thought the fish I bred were *H. Bentosi bentosi* as compared with the picture in Baensch Atlas 1, but Dr. Stanley Weitzman indicated that he thought it was *H. rosaceus*. Both sexes have bright red coloring in the caudal, anal, and ventral fins, with white tips on the dorsal, anal, and ventral fins. Males have longer dorsal and anal fins with black in both. Females have a rounded shorter dorsal fin with a large black spot tipped in white. The body is a deep rosy pink, usually more intense in the male. These fish are one of the most attractive of all tetras, and in top demand when they are available.

The Rosy Tetra is full size at 1 1/2 inches and is an ideal community tank fish. It is peaceful, schooling, and eats about any food offered. They appear happier in groups of 6

or more. Water temperatures from 75-82 degrees are best, with 80 being a good breeding temperature. Soft, slightly acid water is preferred, but they do well in a PH range of 5.8 to 7.5. They eat a wide variety of foods, but as all tetras, seem to do best with a higher protein diet including live and frozen foods. Planted tanks with lots of swimming room are ideal. A dark substrate and background will keep them most comfortable and showing off their best colors.

BREEDING

Breeding the Rosy Tetra is a bit more of a challenge than some tetras, but well worth the effort. Vigorous, youthful breeders and soft acid water seemed to be the keys for me. I had purchased a young healthy pair about an inch long from the store and the female seemed full of eggs, so I set them up in a 2 gallon tank of RO water with a small box peat filter to condition the water. I used a layer of ¼ inch gravel on the bottom and some plastic plants for them to spawn in. Keeping the tank protected from direct light seemed to help them adjust better. Within 2 days they laid about 100 eggs. I removed the parents and siphoned off some of the eggs to hatch separately in fresh RO water and methylene blue. I left the remaining eggs in the spawning tank with the filter going. In 24 hours a good hatch was obtained under both conditions. Sometimes the sperm and unfertilized eggs in a tetra spawning tank can pollute the water enough to kill the eggs or fry. Tetra eggs and fry can sometimes be sensitive to light, hence the darker conditions. After 5 days the fry became free swimming. Later I tried to spawn this same pair by using freshly drawn tap water in the tank to stimulate breeding. I have been successful in the past with a number of tetras this way if I remove the eggs and hatch them in soft RO water and methylene blue. In this case, I got eggs, but the hatch was very poor, even in the soft water.

RAISING FRY

The fry are fairly small and need infusoria for about 3 days or so. I use APR and Liquifry in very small amounts to keep pollution down. Adding snails helps considerably. When I begin to feed newly hatched brine shrimp, I only add a drop or less to the tank and then check the fry about 5 minutes later for orange bellies. If they are not eating them, then no more are fed at that time to pollute the tank. The original spawning tank had the best fry survival, probably because I kept them longer in soft water before I began changing to tapwater. These fry are likely more sensitive to early changing of water chemistry than many tetras. As soon as feasible the fry were moved to larger quarters to grow out in tap water. The rosy tetra is a fairly slow growing fish, probably because their adult size is not large. Mine took about 6 months to show sexual maturity.

The Rosy Tetra is a very attractive and desirable fish for the community or single species show tank. Many tetra species are colorful and popular. This is one of the best!