

# **SPLASH TETRA, *Copella arnoldi***

By Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Jan/Feb 1985



Male Splash Tetra Photo by Darrell Ullisch

## **DESCRIPTION**

The Splash Tetra is a real individual. No normal, self-respecting fish would be caught dead laying its eggs out of the water, let alone upside down! And then to have to go to the trouble of keeping them wet for about 2 days by splashing water on them every 15 minutes. I guess that's why I like *Copella arnoldi* so much. Nobody is going to tell him how to do things! They come from the lower Amazon region and prefer soft, slightly acid water. Although my water is soft at 6 DH (water softner), it is alkaline (Ph 7.6) and doesn't seem to bother them at all. Their maximum size is about three inches for the male and two and a half inches for the female. The fish I spawned were about one and a half inches. They are not a striking fish in color, but the Splash Tetra is pretty and very alert. The male has yellow flowing fins with a red tip on the lower lobe of the tail. Both sexes have a white spot at the base of the dorsal fin, with a black area above it. The female has shorter, fairly clear fins and a fuller body. They eat all foods and are very peaceful.

When I first obtained a pair, I placed them both in a community tank with catfish, bettas, and croaking gouramis. I first realized their spunky nature as I was getting ready to feed the tank one evening. The male and female shot out of the water together and banged against the light, about a foot away. Even though I don't understand fish talk, I got their message. I set up a 2 gallon drum bowl with undergravel filter and live plants (*Cryptocoryne* and Java Moss) fairly thick. *Daphnia* and white worms were fed to the breeders in this tank. A long piece of slate was leaned against the rim of the bowl and the top was covered. They are excellent jumpers!

## **BREEDING**

I noticed eggs on the slate after about a week, and removed the parents as soon as the eggs were gone from the slate. I saw nothing for about 4 or 5 days, then saw some very tiny fry swimming around. They made most other tetra fry look like monsters! After almost going blind, I counted 12 fry. They grew very slowly for the first week and a half until they were large enough to take newly hatched bring shrimp. Because of this, they are more difficult to raise, and only 3 fry made it. Later, I was surprised when I noticed eggs stuck on the

underside of the glass in the darker end of their community tank. I picked up the glass and rinsed them off, putting them into a pan of rainwater with Java Moss. After the fry became free-swimming, I put them in a larger container with Java Moss and snails and fed them small amounts of Liquifry Egglayer Formula, ½ drop at a time. No aeration seemed to work best until they could take baby brine shrimp. In the next 11 days, the pair of Splash Tetras laid 10-30 eggs every other day! Some references state that they lay 50-200 eggs all at once, although the community tank may have been a factor in this case. Breeding temperature is best around 80-82 degrees. The eggs hatch in 36 hours and the fry fall into the water from the males' splashing.

### **LEAP OF LOVE**

The most interesting part of breeding this fish was when I observed the pair leap up about 2 inches and stick to the underside of the glass cover for 5 seconds, laying some eggs right under my nose! They must have suction cups in their fins to do this on the smooth glass. I also observed the male splashing the eggs. He can be in another part of the tank, but every 15 minutes or so he goes under the eggs and splashes several drops up on the glass. This continues every 15-30 seconds for 10 or so times. He also will drive other fish away from the area when he is there, although not real aggressively.

I hope you will try this interesting fish sometime. It is easy to keep, pretty, and a real delight to spawn.