

# **"TOOTHY TEDDY", *Neoheterandria tridentiger***

by Chase Klinesteker SWAM, May-June 2005

## **DESCRIPTION**

The "Toothy Teddy", *Neoheterandria tridentiger*, is a wild-type livebearer species that appears somewhat guppy-like with an elongated body, large eyes and a small head. They have an olive gray background color with a silver belly. In good condition they have from 9 to 12 dark brown vertical stripes on their sides, mostly in males in their posterior 2/3. A mid-lateral spot is sometimes present and is thought to be a sign of stress or weakness of subordinate fish. Juveniles have a reflective blue eye that is very attractive. They are found on the Pacific slope of Central and Eastern Panama in small shallow freshwater streams to brackish marshes. They can tolerate quite warm temperatures (up to 33 degrees C.). This indicates that they do well in hard water and warm temperatures. A good range would be 24-28 degrees C. Males get up to 2.5 cm. (1 inch) and females reach 5 cm. (2 inches). Male-female quarrels occur often and dominant males show their colors and vertical bars the best. These fish can be a bit nippy of other species fins.

## **BREEDING**

Breeding is fairly easy but these fish are quite cannibalistic toward their tiny fry. Low density populations and lots of plants, especially floating, will insure fry survival. Even with lots of cover, no fry will survive in a crowded tank. These fish drop a few fry every 10 days or so, similar to *Heterandria formosa*, which is called "superfetation". Females appear eternally gravid. The "Toothy Teddy" is a surface dwelling fish that likely eats mostly insects in the wild. In captivity they eat most all foods, including frozen, dry, and live foods. I like to include some *Spirulina* flake food for vegetable matter. A varied diet and regular water changes keeps them in top condition. They are best maintained and reproduced in a species tank of 10-20 gallons. These fish seem to do better if some seashells or lime based gravel is placed in their tank.

In summary, *Neoheterandria tridentiger* is an interesting and attractive wild livebearer that is easy to keep and reproduce, a great BAP candidate!