**MEASLES TETA, PSEUDOCHALCEUS KYBURZI**



Male Measles Tetra

The Measles Tetra is a very unusual and interesting fish that is rarely seen in the hobby. It has many names, including Kyburz Tetra, Giant Spotted Emperor Tetra, Pink Spot Choco Tetra and Measles Tetra. It is a colorful fish that has various shades of greens, blues and yellows, and is sprinkled over its’ body with red dots, hence the measles name. They were first described by Schultz in 1966, but have been seldom imported since. They come from the Choco region of Columbia and coastal blackwater drainages of Guyana and are closely related to the Emperor Tetra, Nematobrycon palmeri. 73 to 79 degrees F. is a comfortable temperature range for it. It is a fast-swimming, schooling fish that can reach 3 ½ inches and requires a good-sized tank, as it can be territorial and be somewhat nippy toward smaller fish. They seem to do better in groups of 6 or more fish. Males are slightly larger, have more color and have a longer dorsal fin in adults. They will vigorously eat a variety of foods, including pellets, flakes, and meats, and are fun to watch feeding on floating foods because they move so fast.

BREEDING

I could not find much in the literature on their breeding habits, only hints that they might be egg scatterers or cave spawners. In February of 2019, I purchased 2 young fish that I thought might be a pair from Water Colors Aquarium in Grand Rapids. I placed them in a 70-gallon tank with a flowerpot on its’ side and some other tetras, and waited for them to grow out. When they got to 3 inches, I noticed some unusual behavior. The male had been quite aggressive toward the female, and she would hide in the plants most of the time. One evening in January of 2022, I noticed that the female had become the aggressor. The male had established a territory about 6 inches in diameter in the gravel bordered by some plants, and the female invaded it and started pushing him around! She got beside him and started quivering for about 10 seconds. They did that several times and I figured they were laying some eggs in the gravel territory “nest”. Because any fry would not survive in a community tank, after things settled down, I put a “siphon on a stick” in the nest to gather the eggs. Even with backlighting, only 1 egg was found, so I figured that the eggs were very adhesive, and siphoned out more gravel, vigorously agitating it to dislodge the eggs. I managed to collect about 30 eggs, which were clear, tiny, and difficult to see. The eggs were rinsed off and placed in clean tap water to hatch. The fry became free-swimming in 7 days. They accepted newly hatched brine shrimp right away, had voracious appetites, and were easy to raise. They were turned in for Breeders Award Program (BAP) points and some were distributed to local club members. I am not sure many people realized what an unusual and interesting fish this is. Unfortunately, a few months later the female turned tables and killed the male!

I don’t know if this is one of the first recorded breedings of Pseudochalceus kyburzi or not, but I believe this fish is only available to the hobby when wild-caught. It is a beautiful, interesting, and unusual species which challenges breeders to reproduce them and help save wild fish populations. I will plan to post this article on my website: chasesfishes.com, which stresses the breeding of fish.

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