

KIRKCALDY AQUARIST SOCIETY INFORMATION SHEET

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Name: - Priapella Olmeca.

Family: - Poeciliidae.

Origin: - Mexico.

Size: - Male 5cms. Female 6cms.



The common name for this species is the Olmeca Blue Eye.

This fish was first collected in 1987 by Manfred Meyer in the Rio De La Palma River Veracruz, Mexico.

In its native habitat it is limited to small areas of the Rio De La Palma, Rio Aqua Fria & the Rio De Basura.

The body is deep and stocky, with a pointed head. Often fully adult males develop a keel from the gonopodium to the peduncle.

Both sexes possess bodies coloured grey to bluish hue depending on health & temperament. The unpaired fins are an orange colour & the most striking feature is the intense blue of the eyes. The paired fins are clear & the gonopodium is orange.

In 1993, I obtained four fry from the Rio De La Palma colony and although one developed swim bladder disease, the remaining 3 fish sexed out to one Male & 2 Females. I have kept this strain now for 10 years. In the last 3 years I have also obtained & kept the Rio De Basura strain. During this time I have bred several hundred fish & although both collections are similar, I have found "Palmas" to be the more colourful if slightly smaller.

In the wild this species inhabits both slow & fast flowing waters, with varying depths. The water is generally clear & gravelly, with little vegetation except at the edges. The general temperatures vary from 20c to 26c. Other species that inhabit the same waters are Xiphophorus Maculatus & Helleri, plus Pseudoxiphophorus species.

In the aquarium they are not fussy feeders, but appreciate live & frozen food & good quality flake. Good water quality is paramount to keeping this species successfully, with regular large water changes essential.

Having studied this species I find that the males are susceptible to swim bladder problems but I have never seen the females affected in this way.

Breeding Priapella Olmeca successfully can be something of a problem, for two reasons. Firstly the females show no gravid spot, only increasing in girth as the young develop & just prior to spawning they become very square below the chin.

I have found the best way to estimate imminent birth is to calculate 8 weeks from the previous brood.

Gently move the female to a large breeding trap about 2 to 3 days before the brood is due, breeding traps are best as the adult fish will avidly consume the fry, which can vary from 5 to 32 depending on the maturity of the adult. The second problem with this species is the eating of their own fry.

The fry fed on a good diet will be large enough & can be returned to the adult tank in 6 to 8 weeks. One important note, when feeding these fish, they are mid water to top water swimmers & will rarely feed of the bottom, so the introduction of catfish can help keep the tank base clear, or regular clearing of excess food by hand is recommended.

To produce the best specimens for both breeding & showing a 36" or 48" tank is best, also transporting them in plastic bags to the show & then changing them to show tanks is best.

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Photo: -. Mike Dewar.