

KIRKCALDY AQUARIST SOCIETY INFORMATION SHEET

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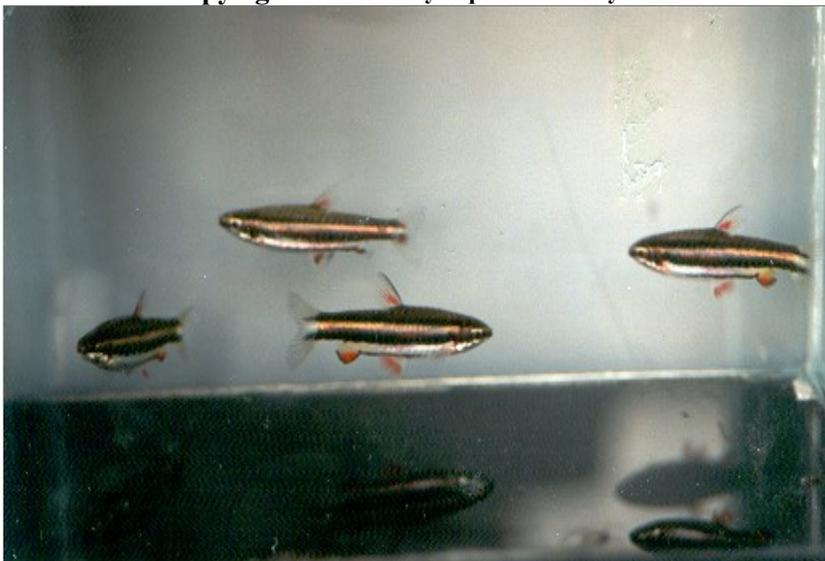


Name:- *Nannostomus Marginatus*

Family:- Characidae

Origin:- Guyana

Size:- 3cms (u.s.a show size)



Nannostomus pencilfish have always been a big favourite on the show scene. I have always rated them very highly for both showing and breeding. They are a naturally shoaling fish so it is best to keep them in large numbers. This enables you to pick the high standard needed for showing and the quality required for breeding.

As with most of the family, *Marginatus* like to be kept in well-planted tanks with low lighting as they prefer the shade.

The body pattern and colour can be outstanding in such a small fish, with black horizontal lines along their flanks, a gold/yellow colour between and a small dash of red along their sides. All the fins are blood red apart from the caudal and pectorals which are clear.

Sexing is quite easy, the male is slimmer and his colour is more intense.

It is so important to feed small fish well before attempting to breed them. They will put on body and the better the quality of the fish the higher the possibility of a successful breeding.

I like to feed them twice a day on newly hatched brine shrimp and good quality flake food. This brings them into good condition for spawning.

The breeding tank was a 15x10x10 filtered with a biofoam sponge filter and just enough air to break the water surface. A temperature of 78f and a neutral pH. of 7.0.

Floating and sunken plants were added to give shade and a spawning medium, this also made it harder for the parents to find the eggs as *Marginatus* are avid egg eaters.

The tank was set up for a week. The pair were selected and the male was put into the breeding tank. The female was put in a smaller tank to keep them separated for a couple of days.

The female was transferred to the breeding tank in the early morning, within minutes of the introduction the male starts to colour up. He then proceeds with his spawning dance, nudging against the female and generally harassing her, I have seen this going on for up to an hour.

When they are ready to spawn the female will dart away in-front of the male in search of a leaf to lean on, the male will nudge her in the stomach and they will then swim tight along side each other and deposit their spawn throughout the leaves.

They then take a short break and then go hunting for the eggs. After a small feed they then proceed with their spawning, I have seen this go on for 2 hours.

After this time I remove both the parent fish to a suitable tank.

I add a few drops of Meth blue to stop the eggs from fungasing.

If the breeding has been successful then hatching should take place in 3-4 days.

The fry cling to the glass and plants. After 3 days they became free swimming and so I started feeding them on liquifry and infusoria, after 10 days they were taking newly hatched brine shrimp.

They tend to be slow growers and take about 7 months to reach full size.

Text by: - Robert Paterson

Photo: - Kirkcaldy Aquarist Society.

