

BLACK STRIPE DWARF CICHLID, *Taeniacara candidi*

By Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Jan-Feb 2017



Male Black Stripe Dwarf Cichlid

DESCRIPTION

The Black Stripe Dwarf Cichlid is rarely seen in shops, but is one of the most beautiful of the South American dwarf cichlids. It is not an Apistogramma, although it has much in common with them. It was previously known as *Apisto weisei* and hails from the Rio Negro in Brazil. Another common name for it is “Torpedo Cichlid”, likely due to its’ long, narrow body shape and unique pintail. They were described by Myers in 1935. It is quite difficult to keep and spawn as it requires very clean, soft, acid water and higher temperatures. Males can reach 2 ½ inches with extensions on ventral, dorsal, anal, and tail fins. An array of blues, reds, orange, and sparkling scales adds to its’ beauty and gracefulness. Females are quite a bit smaller, have less color, and no fin extensions. Both sexes have a broad, dark band on the body from the large eye to base of the tail. Males are noted to be very aggressive toward each other and they are best kept in harems with one dominant male or in single pairs. As with some other Apistos, “hiding” males will appear after the dominant male is removed from the tank. This fish appears slow-moving, but it is a jumper and can move extremely fast when you try to catch it!

CONDITIONS

Taeniacara candidi likes low light and lots of caves, dense plants, and cover. Anubias and plastic plants work well in low light. They are shy and a couple small dither tetras might help them to eat and disperse

aggressions. It is believed that pure RO or rainwater of PH 4.5-5.8 is necessary for keeping and breeding them. Although it will tolerate temperatures in the mid 70s, 80-86 degrees would be best. They are quite sensitive to nitrate and other pollution, and water changes must be regular and not massive. They are found in Nature along shallow riverbanks in very soft, acidic water with dense rocks, wood, roots, leaves, and vegetation. Their normal lifespan is about 5 years. This is definitely a fish for the more experienced aquarist.

FOODS

They will eat a variety of live and frozen foods, although they are shy and slow eaters. Frozen foods must be fed judiciously, as they are sensitive to any pollution resulting from its' decay. I like to add a few snails and/or Corydoras catfish to help clean up. Live baby brine shrimp, daphnia, and black worms seemed to work the best to keep them happy. They can be trained to take a small amount of flake food.

BREEDING

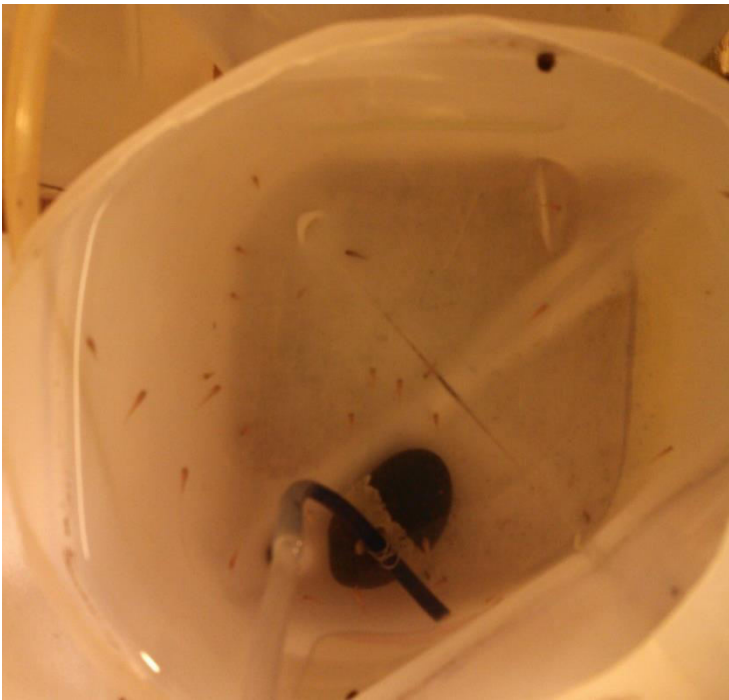
By paying attention to detail of the needs and habits for the Black Stripe Dwarf Cichlid, they can be bred. A single pair in a dimly lit tank with soft, acid water and lots of cover and plants is a good start. Feed live foods and keep up high tank cleanliness, then wait and watch. This can be a challenge in a low-light location with lots of cover in the tank. A small turned over flowerpot with the hole on top was used by my breeding pair to lay eggs inside. It was placed near the front partially concealed, but so I could observe if the female was guarding the hole in the pot. When I noticed her poking her nose out of the hole, I picked up the pot and found about 50 bright orange eggs stuck to the inside. For the greatest chance of success, remove the pot and place it in a gallon jug of rainwater with aeration and 3 drops of methylene blue for hatching, which takes around 3 days.

RAISING FRY

Once fry become free-swimming, they can start on microworms and baby brine shrimp. Feed very sparingly but 2-3 times per day. I added snails and did water changes every day or 2 at this stage to minimize pollution. Later they were transferred to larger quarters with plain tapwater and plenty of plant cover where growth sped up and they reached maturity in 4-5 months at less than an inch. This generation of fry seemed infertile, and 3 pairs produced no fry. As this fish has a reputation of being very difficult to breed, possibly the harder tapwater used to raise them caused the infertility.



Female Black Stripe Dwarf Cichlid



Taeniocara candidi fry in gallon jug