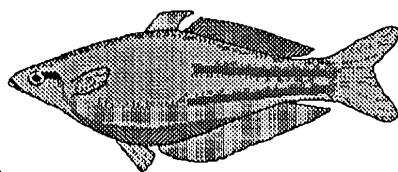


MELANOTAENIA AFFINIS (PAGWI VARIETY)

by Alan Ford



(*Melanotaenia affinis* (var. Pagwi) as drawn by Matthew Ford)

I first came across this fish via Milton Lewis, and to tell the truth I was unimpressed. You see, the fish I purchased were juveniles and not showing their full colour and I being a newcomer to the hobby knew no different. The fish grew nicely and coloured up and I soon found myself in Ron Bowman's fishroom buying another bloodline (possibly - I am still not sure whether the animals are related or not but I suspect so due to import regulations which I am sorry to say are still in force.

HABITAT

Found in a tributary of the Sepik River, North West Papua New Guinea near the village of Pagwi (I always wondered what the name "Pagwi" referred to).

DESCRIPTION

Body colour is a mixture of silver and light green with a broad blue/black mid-lateral bar flanked by two red lines: one above and one below. Immediately below the blue/black bar is another band of golden yellow - this also shows a thin red line. The flanks are a definite dark blue and the underbelly fades from green to silver. Fins are almost clear and the gill plate is decidedly orange. This has to be one of the most colourful and beautiful Rainbows available to date.

It is my experience that males are generally larger than females and the first dorsal overlaps the second when held down. This is a characteristic they share with most Rainbows. Due to inbreeding of some species the anal and dorsal fins of the males are slowly becoming rounded thus making the sexes all the harder to tell apart. Females also tend to appear sleeker.

FEEDING

These fish are always hungry and will readily accept frozen and flake foods **BUT** it is essential to their well-being to give them an adequate diet. Live food such as Daphnia, Cyclops and other aquatic life are eagerly taken along with Mosquito wigglers, Brine Shrimp and small black ants. Vegetable matter such as Duckweed or Wolffia should be supplied (cooked, crushed green peas may be used as an alternative). Fry are a little more difficult to cater for. Their first food should consist of green water (fry starter will do), infusoria, Vinegar Eels and Microworms followed up with Brine Shrimp nauplii. Always expect substantial fry losses, especially when learning the hobby.

AQUARIUM MANAGEMENT

Rainbowfish require plenty of growing room therefore allow them at least a 30 gallon (3ft 'standard') tank, which should be thickly planted at the back. Then add a piece of Mallee root and some dark gravel, and your fish will reward you by showing off their best colours. Temperature around 24°C and pH of 7.0 (neutral) is considered best. **DO** remember your water changes - 20% or thereabouts is what mine get. Filtration need not be too heavy - box corner filters are both efficient and economical.

BREEDING

Spawning these fish is not difficult if you maintain separate species tanks. It is then a simple matter of introducing a nylon spawning mop (better to move the mop than the fish). Once sufficient eggs have been laid place the mop in a hygienically clean tank where the temperature is maintained at 26°C and aeration is provided by a gently bubbling airstone. A teaspoon of salt and some shellgrit will provide good hatching conditions.

REFERENCE