

SPAWNING AND REARING CORYDORAS BARBATUS

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This *Corydoras* catfish is the largest of all *corydoras*, growing to a length of twelve centimetres and can be found from Sao Paulo to Rio de Janeiro in South America. It is a striking fish with the males displaying a gold stripe down the nape of the head when in spawning condition, as well as a series of gold spots in its flanks. The 10 fish I obtained were fry from wild caught stock supplied to Australia by Heiko Eleher of Germany. Five of the then small fish (3.5 centimetres long) died within two weeks, but the others seemed to prosper. The fish are now approximately seven centimetres long and it appears that I have two males and three females. They are maintained in a three foot aquarium divided with four partitions. Inside the partition there is a box filter and a few crypts for the fish to spawn on.

They have spawned a few times for me but the first few spawnings were lost due to wrong water conditions. The spawning is in typical *corydoras* pattern, but a lot faster and more vigorous. Approximately three to six eggs are released into the females ventral pouch and she then hurries looking for a place to deposit them. At no time were eggs placed on any of the plants. The eggs are all placed within 50 millimetres of the surface for some strange reason.

They are roughly 2 millimetres in diameter and most were fertile. The eggs were removed and placed into a container containing some methylene blue to prevent further eggs from fungus. The fry hatch in roughly three days and a further two days to become free swimming. The first batch of eggs were placed in neutral water and all were fungicidal. The second batch were placed in acid water, Ph of six and only two hatched. The third batch were placed in very acid water, Ph of 4.8, and the success rate was almost 100 per cent.

The first food offered was microworms, which the fry loved, then soon fed brine shrimp, grindaal worms and *corydoras* tablets. The fry which number approximately sixty per spawning, are then slowly transferred to neutral water and at the present time are roughly three centimetres long.

This fish is pretty scarce in the shops and when it is available, it usually sells for around fifteen to sixteen dollars each.

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Editor's note: By 2014, *Corydoras barbatus* had been reclassified as *Scleromystax barbatus* but is still widely referred to and traded as a *Corydoras*.

