

BREEDING CYNOLEBIAS WHITEI

by Andrew Boyd

I thought that I should practise what I preach (for once) and write a spawning article.

I have had an interest in Killifish for many years now, but this has always been stifled by a lack of access to the fish themselves. Peter Thomas changed this situation when he joined CDAS a while back. "Killies?" he said, "I can get you Killies." Through an old contact in Brisbane, we soon had a price list. Ian McGuinness ended up with a lot of the non-annuals, and myself the annuals. Amongst the annuals were a pair of Cynolebias whitei, which according to Axelrod have a common name of "White's Pearlfish". Not very exciting, I'll stick to calling them whitei.

C. whitei are a South American Annual Killifish. To make generalisations about annuals, they spawn in mud/peat, grow rapidly, eat a lot of live food, breed like crazy for a couple of months and then die when their pond/stream dries up. This process takes a year or less, hence the term Annual. Implications (these also hold for African Annuals) for keeping are:

- They can be kept in small tanks, one to three gallons are fine.
- They like their live food, at all life cycle stages. The whitei get fed flake (high protein, either starter or Brine Shrimp) once a day and live food, Daphnia, Mosquito Larvae, Whiteworms etc. at the other end of the day (depends on which shift I am on).
- They spawn readily if fed enough live food in a margarine container with peat in the bottom with a hole cut in the top. Eggs and peat are gathered out once a week, stuck in a plastic kitchen strainer, squeezed as hard as possible, and then left to further dry out overnight. They are then placed in a plastic fish bag, left in a warmish, dark spot for a minimum of a couple of months, and then hatched.

Hatching is easy, after the above. Crumble the peat containing the eggs into a container, add water, and with a bit of luck you have some fry! What I like about annuals, especially whitei, is that their fry are a decent size, and can take newly hatched Brine Shrimp straight away, preferably in the first six hours after hatching. You feed them in the hatching tank, and when they are a bit stronger, after a day or so, move them into a raising tank. The peat is re-dried and stored away, you should have some more fry after a month or so (they don't all hatch at once). The fry grow rapidly, and may well be spawning themselves at the tender age of two months.

The really good thing about whitei is that they fit into the household well. If kept inside an insulated house in Canberra they don't need a heater! They don't need a very big tank, and I enjoy the exercise of getting out to obtain their live food once a week.

As a beginner to Killi-culture I can heartily recommend the whitei, because if I can breed them, anyone can!