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Spawning the Chinese Algae-Eater

By William Berg

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Gyrinocheilus aymonieri

Common name: Chinese algae-eater

Family: Gyrinocheilidae (Algae eaters)

Order: Cypriniformes (carps)

Class: Actinopterygii (ray-finned fishes)

Max size: 30 cm/ 12 inches

Water conditions: pH range: 6.0 – 8.0, temperature 25 – 28°C/ 77–82°F

I would like to say a few words about one of the bigger surprises I've had as an aquarist. A few years ago I was cleaning out a 50 gallon holding tank in which I kept fishes that were going to a new aquarium when the new aquarium was ready. I also used it for keeping fish I didn't know what else to do with. At this time this aquarium was home to twelve blue discus of about 10 cm, and four albino Chinese algae-eaters that were about 20 cm. The aquarium was overgrown with lots of C. Demersum since it had been neglected a little during the previous months. Now the time had come to clean this aquarium and try to weed out the jungle that had formed. To my big surprise I found a small (1.5 – 2cm) Chinese algae-eater fry. After looking around a little more I found a total of seven fry. I stopped the cleaning and left the aquarium as it was, since the water quality was good and I didn't want to change too much. I didn't see any reason to move the fry since they seemed big enough to !

be safe from the discus which I was moving to a 120 gallon Amazon tank in a few days anyway.

Spawning the Chinese Algae-Eater

The fry survived and grew relatively fast on a diet of what they could find in the well-planted aquarium, and boiled lettuce. But I never got the parents to spawn again, and the fry themselves never spawned either. However I would like to say a few words about how the Chinese algae-eaters had been kept before the spawning, and which waters they spawned in, to see if I can help anyone else have success where I failed – to breed Chinese algae-eaters and figure out what triggers them to breed.

When I found the fry their parents had been in the holding tank for about 2–3 months. Before that I had kept them in a 50 gallon tank which was heavily circulated and contained very few plants. Temperature was 25°C/ 77°F. They were kept with clown loaches and various barbs. I've been wondering if the fact that they were kept in a heavily circulated aquarium and then moved to an aquarium with close to no circulation and warmer water (28°C/ 82°F) may have simulated a natural change in conditions that precedes spawning.

The breeding tank was as I said before, heavily planted, and had little or no circulation at all, due to the vegetation. The water was old and clean. Dh about 4. I can't say the exact water conditions as I don't know exactly when the spawning took place. However the water conditions had been relatively stable and it is reasonably safe to assume that the stated water conditions are correct.

The Chinese algae-eaters had been fed a varied diet which consisted mainly of boiled lettuce and broccoli, Hikari sinking algae wafers, and shrimps. They also ate the leftovers from the food I gave the barbs and loaches, which consisted mainly of different frozen foods.

Sexing the fishes I assume is simple. I believe it's done in the same way as Corydoras catfishes. Some fish have much broader bodies and I assume them to be females; males are more slender especially if well fed.

Getting the fish into spawning condition seems to be quite simple if they are fed a good diet. However the problem seems to be triggering them to spawn. As I said, I never got them to spawn again. Maybe you will have better luck!

By William Berg of Sweden, for

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Simple And Effective Solutions For Aquarium Algae

By Nathan Miller

Eradication of encrusting algae could be done simply by periodically scraping the sides of the aquarium or scrubbing the rocks.

For those with plastic plants and a completely white gravel bed, the situation could be more tasking as it would be necessary to bleach the rocks to remove all traces of algae.

However, if you do this, do make sure that you rinse the gravel thoroughly afterwards. Bleach is highly toxic, and even small amounts can have a drastic effect on the aquarium fish.

Since the primary cause of green algae is too much light. The first step in the treatment schedule should be light reduction then partial water changes and an adequate stocking with natural aquarium plants. A final treatment with an algae remedy should ensure that the problem is eradicated and is at least kept at bay for some time.

One of the factors mentioned above is the use of natural aquatic plants as a means of algae control. This is really more effective than many people think.

For a start, luxuriant plant growth will filter out some of the light keeping algae in check. In addition plants absorb a large variety of chemicals from the water, thereby starving algae of some of their essential nutrients e.g. nitrates (not nitrites).

Surprising as though it may seem, an adequate plant stocking level is approximately 50 small plants per square foot of available space.

The treatment I mentioned is the use of an algacide. I must stress the word "use:" it is very different to "abuse"!

Yet despite this difference, I know that some people will still persist in pouring the chemical remedy into their aquarium and expect the problem to disappear overnight, even though they have done absolutely nothing to alter the conditions in the tank that brought about the problem in the first place.

The conditions I stated above have to be adhering to for any lasting effect to occur! Now that we know how to curb the menace of the green algae, in another article I shall discuss it's ugly "sister" brown algae (the brown encrusting algae whose case is the reverse of green algae).

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