

They sound like outcasts from Society, but these 'other' livebearers not only exist in a great number of genera but also offer a challenge to do something for Conservancy. Thanks to dedicated aquarists, at least one species now only exists in captivity having been lost to Nature.



**Genera:** *Alfaro*, *Ameca*, *Belonesox*, *Carlhubbsia*, *Limia*, *Xenotoca*.

**Family:** Poeciliidae, Goodeidae

**Geographic Origin:** Central America, South East Asia.

**Common Names:** The Bishop, Knife Livebearer, Hump-backed Limia, Pike Top-Minnow

**Compatibility:** With similar sized fish, mostly they are not a problem although some can be very aggressive with smaller tankmates. Many better kept in species tanks.

**Minimum Aquarium Size:** As for 'cultivated' livebearers, a 600mm x 300mm x 300mm (24" x 12" x 12") is the minimum. All benefit from having a larger aquarium.

**Temperature:** Depends on the species' area of natural distribution; highland waters are cooler than those on the plains. A range of between 18°-27°C (65°-80°F) typical for the whole group.

**Habitat:** Found in rivers, lakes and ponds. Best kept in a well-planted aquarium with water movement provided by either external or internal filter.

**Water:** Prefer hard alkaline water. Some species may inhabit brackish water in nature. It should be well filtered with a partial water change each week of around 25%.

**Health:** Not especially prone to diseases, but White Spot, Mouth Fungus and Finrot (particularly if water conditions are poor) can be found in these fishes. Treat sick fish in a separate container. Do not dispose of dead fish down the toilet. Place in dustbin or incinerate.

**Diet:** Omnivorous with the accent on 'animal' foods for the more predatory species. Will eat all dried, frozen and live foods.

**Plants:** All tropical plants are suitable for the aquarium.

**Breeding Notes:** Sexing, not difficult, but not so easy as with cultivated livebearers. The male's anal is not always fully developed into the familiar gonopodium, sometimes there is just a visible 'notch' in the leading few rays. Unlike cultivated livebearers, some females cannot store sperm and must be mated to produce more young. Treat gravid females as for Cultivated Livebearers (above).

**Availability:** Available at good aquatic shops, although more are accessible through specialist livebearer groups, such as British Livebearer Association.

**Show Classes:** FBAS Class R - Swordtails (not *X.helleri*) Class S - Mollies (*Poecilia*, *Limia*)  
Class T Other Species