

FEDERATION OF BRITISH AQUATIC SOCIETIES

FISH CARE SHEET No: 20 Other Livebearers

01/02/2002

Welcome to these information Sheets that will not only help you make the best fish choices for your aquarium but also provides details on their best care.

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: Like the 'cultivated' livebearers, an aquarium of 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°C/65°F and 27°C /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 Parameters: 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.

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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: in the Goodeidae, for instance, 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 young. Having said that, the Goodeidae group is rather advanced in the development of the young which are connected to the mother fish by means of the trophotaenia, a primitive placenta.

A well planted aquarium is needed when breeding so that the young can find immediate refuge once born. The use of breeding traps and confinement of the gravid female is not encouraged as this often stresses the fish and produces premature births.

Availability: Available at good aquatic shops, although more are accessible through specialist livebearer groups, such as Viviparous and the American Livebearer Association.

Show Classes: FBAS Class R - Swordtails (not *X.helleri*)
Class S Poecilia (Mollies, Limias)
Class T (other species)