

FEDERATION OF BRITISH AQUATIC SOCIETIES

FISH CARE SHEET No: 19

Characins (1)

01/02/2002

Genera: Very many different genera.

See those fishes listed in the current Federation Size Book under Class C.

See also **Care Sheet No 14**

Family: Characidae

Geographic Origin: South America, Africa.

Common Names: Piranha, Pacu, Penguin fish, Headstanders etc.

Compatibility: Many of the characins cannot be kept with other species (Carnivores). Others present no problems. Always thoroughly research the fish you intend to buy or you may find that the other inhabitants of the tank are no longer swimming in the aquarium!

Minimum Aquarium Size: The smaller characins can be kept in a (24" x 12" x 12") aquarium.
The larger fish such as the Pacu can grow very large and will require a tank of at least (72" x 24" x 24") to accommodate it properly.

Temperature: Most fish are happy with temperatures between 20°/28°C 70°/82°F.

Habitat: Some of the characins are also herbivores so a planted tank will be rapidly stripped bare.
Habitat should form part of your prior research.

Water Parameters: Generally these fish come from waters that are soft and acid. However it is not generally a problem to change them over to hard alkaline water. This is usually accomplished in the shop prior to purchase.

Health: Apart from White Spot, they do not have any particular problems provided the aquarium water is kept clean and clear. They benefit from a water change of approx 25% weekly.

Diet: The carnivores can usually be persuaded to accept beef heart, prawns or strips of fish.
The feeding of live fish is not acceptable. Others readily consume lettuce, spinach etc.
Others will eat all forms of dried, frozen or live food such as *Daphnia*.

Plants: See above – **Habitat**. Those fish that are not herbivores will enjoy a well planted aquarium.

Breeding Notes: All are egg-scatterers and some means of trapping the eggs and preventing the adults from eating them should be used. Fertilised eggs may be adversely affected by wrong water conditions and/or exposure to light. Larger Characins may not have spawned in aquariums.

Availability: Many Characins are readily available. Remember to check prior to purchase its eating habits and how big it may grow! Inspect carefully for signs of disease. Reject fish that are lethargic, damaged or hollow bellied.

Show Class. FBAS Show Class C.