

Identification Features of Fresh Water Fishes- Ornamental Fishes

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Identification of Freshwater Fishes

The fresh water ornamental fishes come under different families of fin fishes and the fin fish taxonomy comes under the class *Osteichthyes*. The class *Osteichthyes* contains several subclasses, including the *Paleopterygii*, the *Crossopterygii* and the *Neopterygii*. The first two of these subclasses are again of little interest to aquarists: virtually all tropical aquarium fish are found in the subclass *Neopterygii*.

Class:	OSTEICHTHYES	Family
Subclass:	NEOPTERGII	
Order:	Suborder	
ISOSPONDYLI	-	<i>Mormyridae</i>
	-	<i>Notopteridae</i>
OSTARIOPHYSI	-	<i>Pantodontidae</i>
	CYPRINOIDEA	<i>A nostomidae</i>
		<i>Characidae</i>
		<i>Cobiidae</i>
		<i>Curimatidae</i>
		<i>Cyprinidae</i>

		<i>Gasteropelecidae</i>
		<i>Gyrinocheilidae</i>
		<i>Hemiodontidae</i>
	SILUROIDEA	<i>Bagridae</i>
MICROCYPRIINI		<i>Bunocephalidae</i> <i>Callichthyidae</i> <i>Claridae</i> <i>Loricariidae</i> <i>Mochokidae</i> <i>Siluridae</i> <i>Cyprinodontidae</i> <i>Poeciliidae</i> <i>Goodeidae</i>
SYNENTHOGNATI-		<i>Hemirhamphidae</i>
PERCOMORPHI	PERCOIDEA	<i>Centrarchidae</i> <i>Centropomidae</i>

		<i>Cichlidae</i>
		<i>Monodactylidae</i>
		<i>Nandidae</i>
		<i>Scatophagidae</i>
		<i>Toxotidae</i>
	GOBIOIDEA	<i>Gobiidae</i>
		<i>Eleotridae</i>
	OPHICEPHAL OIDEA	<i>Ophicephalidae</i>
	ANABANTOIDEA	<i>Anabantidae</i>
	MUGILOIDEA	<i>Atherinidae</i>
PLECTOGNATHI	-	<i>Tetraodontidae</i>
OPHISTHOMI	-	<i>Mastocembelidae</i>
Barbus conchoni		

Family: *Cyprinidae*

Genus: *Barbus*

English name: Rosy Barb

Origin: North India, Bengal, Assam

Size: Maximum 14 cm in the wild: the fishes are sexually mature when they reach 6 cm

Habitat: Found in still and running waters, where it is common.

Shape, coloring and marking:

The body is fairly deep and somewhat laterally compressed. The coloring shows up best under bright lighting. The back is a beautiful shiny olive green: the rest of the body, including the belly, is mainly silvery, shiny and tinged with a soft red. During the mating season this red color predominates. There is a round deep black mark edged with gold on the flanks below the last dorsal fin rays. The fins are a soft red and transparent: the dorsal and anal fins have a dark pigmentation on their tips. Females are fuller in the body and have almost colorless fins. Males are more slender and have more coloring on the fins.

Barbus pentazona tetrazona

Family: *Cyprinidae*

Genus: Barbus

English name: none

Origin: Borneo, especially the basins of the Kahajan and Kapoeas rivers

Size: Approximately 6 cm

Habitat: Found in nearly all still and running waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is deep and laterally very compressed: it differs from closely related species in having a body slightly less deep, but a snout more pointed. The basic color is a silvery white with a beautiful red iridescent sheen on the flanks: the back is a reddish-brown tinged with a shiny green sheen. There are five bluish-black transverse bands across the body. The first runs across the head, through the eye and finishes just below it: the second is cone shaped, running from the dorsal fins to the base of other pectoral fins: the third is keyhole-shaped and, starting in the front dorsal fin rays, reaches almost to the belly: the fourth band lies behind the dorsal fin and stretches from the upper side of the caudal

peduncle to the anal fin where it ends in a round mark: the fifth transverse band lies just in front of the base of the caudal fin. The scales lying within these bands have green iridescent edges. The dorsal and anal fins are brick red at the base and become lighter towards their edges which are become lighter towards their edged which are themselves almost colorless. All the other fins are reddish and more or less transparent.

Females when spawning have heavier bellies.

Males are slightly more slender.

Brachydanio rerio

Family: *Cyprinidae*

Genus: Brachydanio

English name: Zebra Danio

Origin: Eastern India

Size: Approximately 4.5 cm

Habitat: Found in sluggish and stationary waters and in rice paddies.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is very slender and laterally only moderately compressed. The back is a brown olive: the belly yellowish-white: the flanks are an attractive blue with four gleaming gold longitudinal stripes running from the edge of the gill covers to the caudal fin. The anal fin has a blue-gold pattern. The dorsal fin is yellow-green at the base, becoming blue, with a milky-white border. The remaining fins are colorless and transparent. The iris is red-gold.

Females are more robust: the longitudinal stripes are more yellow or silver.

Male are as described above and noticeably slimmer than females.

Labeo erythrurus

Family: *Cyprinidae*

Genus: Labeo

English name: none

Origin: Thailand, Mekong, Kemarat

Size: Approximately 12 cm

Habitat: Found in a variety of flowing waters

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is elongated and laterally only slightly compressed: the belly is remarkably flat. The basic coloration varies according to the mood of the fish and according to the place of origin: it can be light brown, a darker brown or even blue-black, with a paler area round the belly, and generally rather spotty. A darker patch stretches from the snout to the eyes. There may be one or two dark patches above the pectoral fin, but these are sometimes indistinct. The ventral fins are transparent and colorless or grayish: the remaining fins have dark membranes.

There are no known external sexual characteristics: the females can probably be recognized by a black edge along the anal fin.

Rasbora heteromorpha

Family: *Cyprinidae*

Genus: Rasbora

English name: Harlequin Fish, Red Rasbora

Origin: Indonesia, Sumatra, Thailand

Size: Approximately 4.5 cm

Habitat: Found in schools in marshy pools, mountain rivulets and densely shaded overgrown streams.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is deep, elongated and laterally very compressed. The lateral line is incomplete. The basic coloration is silvery-grey with pale red to iridescent violet overtones. A prominent blue-black cone-shaped patch lies on the rear half of the body: the area in front has an attractive golden glint. The fins are yellowish: the dorsal and anal fins have a red gleam at the base and the anterior rays are brown-red to black. See under *R. hengeli* for differences in the patterning.

Females have more rounded bellies and are more robust.

Males are much slimmer. The lowest point of the cone-shaped patch lies over the base of the ventral fin.

Hyphessobrycon erythrostigma

Family: *Characidae*

Genus: Hyphessobrycon

English name: Bleeding Heart Tetra

Origin: Colombia

Size: Maximum 8 cm

Habitat: No further details are available of its natural habitat.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is rather deep and laterally very compressed. The basic coloration is a light yellow: the back is olive - green to brown, with pale red overtones. The lower part of the

body is red with a silvery gleam: the throat and belly have a more orangey or yellowish tint. Above the ventral fin, level with the eye, there is a very prominent red spot, bordered by an iridescent area of white. The dorsal fin is well developed, with a black patch behind a white ray. The base of the anal fin is white, becoming dark grey or black towards the front, and more reddish towards the tail. The other fins are colorless and transparent.

Females are smaller with less vivid colors.

Males are as described above and have a crescent-shaped elongation of the dorsal and anal fins.

Cheirodon Innesi

Family: *Characidae*

Genus: *Cheirodon*

English name: Neon Tetra

Origin: The Amazon and the basin of the Negro river.

Size: Approximately 4.5 cm

Habitat: Found in small jungle rivulets and pools, with soft water

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is fairly deep and laterally slightly compressed. *C.innesi* at first sight closely resembles *C.axelrodi*. The back is brownish-yellow: the belly yellow–white. An attractive blue-green iridescent stripe runs back from the top of the eye up to or beyond the adipose fin: below this stripe lies an attractive area of red, starting at the level of the middle rays of the dorsal fin. The fins are colorless and transparent. The anterior rays of the dorsal and anal fins are milk white. The iris has an iridescent blue-green shade, with a number of glistening spots in the upper half.

Females are rather more robust than males with more rounded bellies.

Males are slimmer with flattened bellies.

Cheirodon axelrodi

Family: *Characidae*

Genus: *Cheirodon*

English name: Cardinal Tetra

Origin: The Amazon, the basin of the Negro river.

Size: Approximately 5 cm

Habitat: Found in small rivulets and pools in the jungle, most of which are characterized by soft water.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is fairly deep the laterally slightly compressed. At first sight this species closely resembles *Cheirodon innesi*, but *C.axelrodi* is less robust and has a more striking color pattern. The back is brownish or red: the lower part of the body is a deep red, except for a small area round the belly. There is an attractive blue-green iridescent stripe running from the eye as far back as, or beyond the adipose fin. The fins are colorless and transparent: the dorsal and anal fins have a narrow white border along the front. The iris has an impressive blue iridescence.

Females, when adult, are rather more robust.

Males are slimmer and usually smaller.

Rooseveltiella nattereri

Family: *Characidae*

Genus: *Rooseveltiella*

English name: Red Piranha

Origin: The Amazon: this species is very widely distributed.

Size: Approximately 30 cm in the wild but remains considerably smaller in captivity

Habitat: Found in a very wide variety of waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is deep, stocky and laterally very compressed. The keel of the belly is serrated from the pectoral fins. The caudal fin is slightly forked: the anal fin is long and sickle-shaped in adults. The colors and markings, as well as the depth of the body vary according to the age of the fish. Half-grown well-cared for specimens have a bluish or brownish-grey back: the flanks are paler or a greenish-brown with a strong silvery sheen and innumerable iridescent metallic specks and small dots. The belly and the area to the throat are vermilion or dark blood red. The dorsal and caudal fins are blackish, the latter with a lighter patch in the middle. The anal fin is red with a broad black edge. The pectoral and ventral fins are a dark vermilion.

There are no known external sexual characteristics.

Thayeria obliqua

Family: *Characidae*

Genus: *Thayeria*

English name: Penguin Fish

Origin: The lower reaches of the Amazon basin

Size: Maximum 8 cm

Habitat: Found in jungle streams with dense vegetation on the banks and water rich in humus.

Shape, Coloring And Markings:

The body is slender and laterally somewhat compressed. The basic coloration is a light yellow or silvery-white. The back is dark green or brown, with an attractive golden sheen: the belly is white or a muddy yellow. A zone of dark pigmentation bordered below by gold, begins at the back of the dorsal fin, grows much darker at the level of the adipose fin and extends back to the lower lobe of the caudal fin, where it meets a green or gold spot. The base of the dorsal fin is yellow to brown: otherwise the fins are colorless and transparent. There are no known external sexual characteristics.

Gasteropellecus levis

Family: *Gasteropelecidae*

Genus: *Gasteropelecus*

English name: Silver Hatchet fish

Origin: The lower reaches of the Amazon

Size: Maximum 6 cm

Habitat: Found in sluggish streams, the still waters of lakes and pools and marshes.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is hatchet-shaped and laterally very compressed. The basic coloration is yellowish to a dull silver, which gleams when illuminated. A dark longitudinal stripe runs from the gill covers to the root of the caudal peduncle and is bordered above and below by

a lighter zone. A dark transverse band lies on the caudal peduncle: there is a prominent patch on the dorsal fin. The fins are colorless and transparent. There are no known external sexual characteristics although males are often slightly smaller than females.

Astronotus ocellatus

Family: *Chchilidae*

Genus: *Astronotus*

English name: Oscar, Velvet Cichlid and Peacock-Eye Cichlid

Origin: Northern South America

Size: Maximum 33 cm

Habitat: Found in a wide variety of waters.

Shape, coloring and, markings:

The body is fairly slender and laterally compressed. The head is blunt: the mouth large with a protruding lower jaw. The basic coloration is variable, but usually a dark olive green to chocolate: on the flanks lie irregular, generally black bordered, ivory or reddish stripes. S large round dark mark, ringed with red, lies at the base of the caudal fin. The fins are olive green, flecked with black and gold.

Females are as described above.

Males often have two or three dark patches at the base of the dorsal fin.

Cichlasoma meeki

Family: *Cichlidae*

Genus: *Chichlasoma*

English name: Fire-mouth Cichlid

Origin: Central America, Guatemala, Yucatan.

Size: Maximum 15 cm in the wild but remains considerably smaller in captivity.

Habitat: Found in shaded waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is elongated, fairly deep and laterally compressed. The basic coloration is a violet grey: the back is darker: the belly lighter: the throat and front of the belly are deep red. A number of dark vertical bands lie on the body and vary in intensity according to the mood of the fish. A prominent irregular deep black mark edged with gold lies on the gill covers and a smaller black mark lies just behind them. A black stripe runs from the gill covers to the caudal peduncle where it ends in a dark patch surrounded by a zone of gold. The fins are wine red with light green edges.

Females are usually smaller and less vividly colored, with less pointed dorsal and anal fins. During the spawning season the belly may become off-white.

Males are as described above.

Pterophyllum scalare

Family: *Cichlidae*

Genus: *Pterphyllum*

English name: Angelfish

Origin: The Amazon basin

Size: Maximum 15 cm

Habitat: Found in sluggish and still overgrown waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is slightly longer than it is deep, but still gives the impression of being very deep and almost disc-shaped: the snout is slightly protuberant and the forehead rises much more

sharply than in *P.altum*. The basic coloration is grayish green with a silvery sheen: the back is olive green: the belly lighter. Four prominent and three less prominent dark bands lie on the flanks: the most prominent of all runs from the rip of the elongated dorsal fin to the tip of the elongated and fin. The dorsal fin is bluish gray and white: the anal fin is darker: the ventral fins are yellowish green, tipped with orange. The caudal fin is bluish gray and is wider at the edge than in related species.

There are no known external sexual characteristics.

Symphysodon discus

Family: *Cichlidae*

Genus: *Symphysodon*

English name: Discus

Origin: The Amazon region

Size: Maximum 15 cm

Habitat: Found in still waters with overhanging vegetation

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body shape is virtually identical to that of *S. laequifasciata lawqyufascuata*, but slightly longer. The basic coloration is reddish-brown. Nine dark. Vertical transverse bands lie across the body and all are usually clearly visible. A pattern of bluish-green, iridescent horizontal lines is red-edged dorsal fin and the anal fin are reddish-brown. The red ventral fins are elongated and taper to a point.

There are no known external sexual characteristics.

Hemichromis bimaculatus

Family: *Cichlidae*

Genus: *Hemichromis*

English Name: Jewel Fish, Red Cichlid and Jewel Cichlid

Origin: Throughout tropical Africa

Size: Maximum 15 cm

Habitat: Found in still and flowing waters.

Shaping, coloring and markings:

The body is elongated, fairly deep and laterally slightly compressed. The basic coloration is olive brown: the throat and belly are red. One black patch lies on the middle of the body, and another, edged with gold, on the gill covers. The body is flecked with glistening, bluish green spots. During the spawning season the body and all the fins (except the pectoral) in both sexes become a beautiful red and the iridescent spots turn into larger vivid bluish green marks.

There are no external sexual characteristics.

Betta splendens

Family: *Anabantidae*

Genus: *Betta*

English name: Siamese Fighting Fish

Origin: The Far East; Malaya and Thailand

Size: Approximate 6 cm

Habitat: Found in many different kinds of waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is elongated and laterally only slightly compressed. The coloring and markings vary according to the locality of origin. Some specimens are a beautiful reddish brown with a bluish green iridescent tinge: all the scales have a decorative, green, or sometimes blue or red, metallic shiny dot. The large dorsal fin is set quite far back, and is a reddish brown with green iridescent stripes and dark marks. The round caudal fin is the same basic color, with similar green stripes and often has an orange edge. The long anal fin is bluish green with brown and red marks: the long ventral fins are orangey red with milky white tips. Females are a yellowish brown, with barely visible transgresses bands. The ventral fins are short. Male are as described above.

Trichogaster leeri

Family: *Anabantidae*

Genus: *Trichogaster*

English name: Pearl Gourami, Mosaic Gourami

Origin: Malaya, Thailand, Borneo

Size: Maximum 10 cm

Habitat: Found in small streams

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is elongated and laterally strongly compressed. The snout is pointed: the mouth small. The rather narrow dorsal fin has long rays which give the leading edge a frilly appearance, and is set back on the body. The ventral fins are very long and thread-like. The anal fin has a very long base, and very extended rays at the back. The basic coloration is an olive brown; the flanks are paler, pearl grey with a greenish-blue overtone. The throat, belly, ventral fins and part of the anal fin are red. A narrow black zig - zag longitudinal stripe

runs from the mouth across the eye to the root of the tail, where it ends in a black spot. The entire body except for the head, throat and belly is covered with tiny mother-of-pearl dots and flecks. The dorsal fin is a yellowish-brown.

Females have no red on the throat and belly and the fins are more rounded than in the males.

Males are as described above. The red on the throat and belly is less intense outside the mating season.

Trichogaster trichopterus

Family: *Anabantidae*

Genus: *Trichogaster*

English name: Three – spot Gourami

Origin: South Vietnam, Thailand, Malaya

Size: Maximum 15 cm in the wild but remains considerably smaller in captivity and is sexually mature at 8-10 cm

Habitat: Found in jungle streams.

Shape,coloring and markings:

The body is deep and laterally only slightly compressed. *T.trichopterus* closely resembles *T.leeri* but it is more powerfully built and has a deeper body. The basic coloration varies according to where the fish is found. The most common variety is a silvery blue, with a darker or bluish green back and an off-white or very shiny silvery belly. Two striking dark marks, sometimes with a light edge, lie on the flanks: the first is directly below the center of the dorsal fin, the second on the caudal peduncle. Some specimens have about 20 irregular transverse bands, but these are uncommon. The fins vary from green to

grey: the anal, dorsal and caudal fins have white, yellowish or even orange patches and stripes.

Females have a short rounded dorsal fin.

Males are as described above. The dorsal fin is more pointed.

Helostoma temmincki

Family: *Anabantidae*

Genus *Helostoma*

English name: Kissing Gourami

Origin: Thailand, Malays

Size: Maximum 30 cm in the wild but remains considerably smaller in captivity

Habitat: Found in many different kinds of waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is deep and oval. The head is somewhat pointed: the lips are thick and protuberant. The basic coloration varies from a yellowish to greenish silver: the upper half of the body is darker, or an olive green: the belly is almost white. A number of dark, horizontal stripes usually lie on the flanks. The fins are a greenish or dull yellow: the dorsal and anal fins have a dark edge. When in good condition *H. temmincki* displays a pattern of dark crescent shaped bands at the back of the dorsal and anal fins, and on the base of the caudal fin. The eyes are yellowish brown. Some specimens offered for sale commercially are almost entirely silvery or flesh colored.

There are no known external sexual characteristics.

Colia lalia

Family: *Anabantidae*

Genus: *Colisa*

English name: Dwarf Gourami

Origin: Eastern areas of the Indian sub-continent

Size: Maximum 5 cm

Habitat: Found in still, shaded waters

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body shape closely resembles that of *C.chuna*. The basic coloration is a gleaming gold to deep red. The throat and belly are an iridescent dark blue. Several red irregular transverse stripes run across the flanks. The ventral fins are orange-red: the dorsal, anal and caudal fins are red with sky blue flecks.

Females are more golden with fewer blue flecks. The dorsal and anal fins are rounded.

Males have tapered dorsal and anal fins.

Colisa fasciata

Family: *Anabantidae*

Genus: *Colisa*

English name: Giant Gourami, Striped Gourami, Banded Gourami

Origin: The Indian sub-continent, Burma, Thailand, Malaya

Size: Maximum 10 cm

Habitat: Found in still, shaded waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body shape and fin formation are identical to those of *C.chuna* but the caudal fin is more forked. The basic coloration is red brown. Transverse blue-green iridescent bands lie on the body. The iris is red. The ventral fins are reddish orange: the tapering dorsal fin has a fine blue-green patterning and re-brown transverse bands. The anal fin is blue with an orange border: the caudal fin is transparent, red-brown with a pattern of dark spots.

Females are less vividly colored: the dorsal and anal fins are more rounded.
Males are as described above.

Trichopsis pumilis

Family: *Anabantidae*

Genus: *Trichopsis*

English name: Dwarf Gourami

Origin: South Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia

Size: Approximately 3.5 cm

Habitat: Found in densely vegetated jungle streams.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is slender and laterally very compressed. The basic coloration is ochre: the back is a dark olive green: the flanks are lighter: the belly and caudal peduncle are greenish or white. A number of irregular, bluish-black marks run from the snout to the base of the caudal fin, forming a broken horizontal line bordered above and below by luminescent turquoise or light blue flecks. The dorsal fin is pennant-shaped and pointed, green or yellowish, flecked with blue and red and edged with dark red. The caudal fin is rounded, the

anal fin is long: in coloring and markings both are similar to the dorsal fin. The ventral fins are between a yellow and white, and the pectoral fins are colorless and transparent.

Females are duller, with a more rounded, shorter dorsal fin.
Males are as described above.

Pocilia reticulata

Family: *Poeciliidae*

Genus: *Poecilia*

English name: Guppy and Millions Fish

Origin: South America, north of the Amazon, now also found elsewhere, having been introduced by man to control mosquitoes

Size: Males to 3.5 cm: females to 6 cm

Habitat: Found in both fresh and brackish waters, slow running streams and pools.

Shape, coloring markings:

P. retucykata has been for so long one of the favorite aquarium fish and has received so much attention from breeders that it now appears in a bewildering variety of shapes and color patterns. The original basic body color is a brownish olive but with a wide variation in the color of the iridescent lateral scales. The crossbreeding of various strains has now produced guppies of almost every conceivable color pattern.

Xiphophorus helleri helleri

Family: *poecillidae*

Genus: *xiphophorus*

English name: Swordtail

Origin: Central America

Size: Males to 10 cm: females to 12 cm

Habitat: Found in a wide variety of waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is lender and laterally somewhat compressed. The monopodium has well developed hooks and the sword is long. The dorsal and caudal fins are relatively large. The basic coloration of the common wild fish is a pale olive brown: the back is often a bright green: the belly is silver. Along the body runs a red stripe which turns black on the caudal peduncle and becomes the black edge to the sword which in the center may be green, yellow, orange or red. There is no significant difference between the color patterns of the males and the females. These natural colors are however quite different from those of many varieties found in the aquarium and briefly noted below.

Xiphophorus maculatus

Family: *poecillidae*

Genus: *xiphoporus*

English name: Platy, Moonfish, Southern Platyfish

Origin: The Atlantic slopes of Central America

Size: Males to 3.5 cm: females to 6 cm

Habitat: Found mainly in ponds, swamps and pools but also in some sluggish waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is fairly deep and broad. There is no hook on the genopodium. There is no sword and the dorsal fin is rounded. The basic coloration is yellowish to olive brown, with one or two small spots on the caudal peduncle which, when developed form the basis for the various patterns discussed below. There are usually two to five indistinct transverse and caudal fins are colorless. The caudal fin has a blue or greenish border

Females have no transverse bars across the body
Females have no transverse bars across the body
Males are as described above.

Poecilia latipinna

Family: *Poeciliidae*

Genus: *Poecilia*

English name: Sailfin Molly

Origin: South and southeast USA, Mexico

Size: Males to 7 cm females to 9 cm

Habitat: Common in both fresh and brackish waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is elongated and broad, laterally somewhat compressed. The dorsal fin is large and in males, may be very high indeed. The basic coloration is brownish: the back is a dark olive green to brown: the flanks are light blue to salmon with a vivid pearly sheen and five or six horizontal lines of blue, green and red dots. The throat and belly are white: the latter may have dark transverse bands. The powerful

dorsal fin is light blue with light and dark marks between the rays and a yellow border. The upper half of the caudal fin is orange, blue, with elongated sword shaped rays and a pattern of dots and marks.

Females are less vividly colored and have a smaller dorsal fin

Males are as described above

Poecilia sphenops

Family: *Poeciliidae*

Genus: *Poecilia*

English name: Pointed mouth Molly and Short-finned Molly

Origin: North and South America from Texas to Colombia

Size: Males to 8 cm females to 12 cm

Habitat: Found in fresh and brackish water

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body closely resembles that of related species but the dorsal fin is significantly smaller and the mouth slightly more pointed. There are many varieties of this fish known to aquarists including both a black spotted variety and the completely black variety called the Black Molly. Many of these varieties have a color pattern that is very different from that of the fish in the wild, where the upper half of the body is a grayish blue, the flanks are a vivid bluish green with rows of blue or green iridescent spots and the whole body has a violet sheen, The lower half of the body is a light pale blue to salmon. The dorsal fin is colorless but carries a profusion of dark dots: the caudal fin has a blue base, an orange band in the center and a black border.

Females are dull blue, with rows of brownish red dots: the fins are colorless.
Males are as described above.

Gambusia affinis

Family: *Poeciliidae*

Genus: *Gambusia*

English name: Silver Gambusia, Spotted Gambusia and Western mosquitofish

Origin: Texas, the basins of the rivers San Antonio and Guadalupe

Size: Males to 4 cm females to 6.5 cm

Habitat: Found in many different quiet waters.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is elongated and laterally only very slightly compressed. The head is large and flat on top. The females are almost cylindrical in the body.

The basic coloration is yellowish, becoming silvery white towards the belly. Irregular dark or black dots lie on the back and upper half of the body: a pattern of dark stripes appears below the eyes. The fins are predominantly colorless and transparent but the dorsal and caudal fins have dark marks.

Females are a light olive green with a few scattered dark marks. The fins are colorless.
Males are as described above.

Corydoras aeneus

Family: *Callichthyidae*

Genus: Corydoras

English name: Bornze Catfish

Origin: Venezuela the Guoamas, Brazo; to the basin of the river plate.

Size: Maximum 7 cm

Habitat: Found in sluggish creeks with clear water.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is stocky with a soluble row of bony plates with a double row of bony plates which overlap. The mouth is small upper-positioned and with three pairs of barbells. The basic coloration is yellowish or a soft reddish brown with, on the head and flanks, a stroking metallic sheen which depending on how the light catches it green or a shiny iridescent gold. A dark wedge shaped patch lies on the shoulders. The fins are unmarked.

Females are sturdier and larger, with a more rounded dorsal fin.

Males are smaller with a more pointed dorsal fin.

Kryptopterus bicirrhus

Family: *Siluridae*

Genus: Kryptopterus

English name: Ghost fish

Origin: Indonesia, Borneo, Sumatra, Thailand

Size: Maximum 15 cm in the wild, no more than 12 cm in captivity

Habitat: Found in shady spots in running waters.

Shape, coloring and marking:

The body is very elongated and laterally very compressed. The head and body cavity are no more than a fifth of the total length. There are two long hair-like barbells on the upper jaw which serve as a tactile organ as well as an organ of taste. The anal fin is very long and runs from the anal opening to the base of the caudal fin, although the two fins are clearly separated. The dorsal fin consists of a single hard ray. The caudal fin is deeply forked and the upper lobe is noticeably larger and *K. bicirrhus* is completely translucent except for the stomach cavity. Depending on the way the light catches it the fish becomes iridescent and any color from a bright yellow to a dark purplish-violet without losing its translucence. In semi darkness the fish seems to be a fluorescent blue.

No external sexual characteristics have been identified with certainty but some authorities claim that the males are always smaller and more slender than the females.

Acanthopthalmus kuhli kuhli

Family: *Cobitidae*

Genus: *Acanthopthalmus*

English Name: Coolie Loach

Origin: Indonesia, Sumatra and Java

Size: Maximum 8 cm

Habitat: Found shallow waters with sandy beds such as mountain stream and medium rivers

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is elongated, worm-like and laterally compressed towards the tail. The mouth is under positioned, with three pairs of barbells. The basic coloration is pale yellow to salmon: the belly is off-white or pale yellow. Three deep black unbroken transverse bands run across the head. A large number of dark brown or black bands, often broken halfway along by thin light stripes or marks run across the body but do not quite reach the underside. The fins are colorless.

There are no known external sexual characteristics.

Botia macracantha

Family: *Cobitidae*

Genus : Botia

English name: Clown loach

Origin: Indonesia, Sumatra, Borneo

Size: Approximately 30 cm in the wild but remains considerably smaller in captivity, up to about 12 cm.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is stocky laterally compressed, with a rounded back and straight belly. The basic coloration is a splendid orangey-red. There are three deep black, cone-shaped transverse bands across the body. The first runs across the head over the eyes, the second lies in front of the dorsal fin and the third round below the dorsal fin and on the caudal peduncle. The dark pigmentation of this third transverse band is carried through into the dorsal and anal fins. All the other fins are reddish or a dark red, and the ventral fins also often have some black pigmentation.

There are no known external sexual characteristics.

Chanda ranga

Family: *Centropomidae*

Genus : *Chanda*

English name: Indian Glassfish

Origin Eastern India, Pakistan, Burma, Western Thailand

Size: Maximum 6 cm

Habitat: Found mainly in coastal areas, in both fresh and brackish water

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is rather stocky, relatively deep and laterally very compressed. The dorsal anal and ventral fins are divided into two parts: the front part has only hard but the others are soft. The caudal fin is fairly deeply forked. The entire body is glassy and transparent, with irregular black flecks and under bright light and iridescent bluish green, golden sheen. The fins are yellowish: the dorsal and anal fins have sky blue borders.

Females are less vividly colored

Males are as described above.

Gnathonemus tetersi

Name: *Mormyridae*

Genus: *Gnathonemus*

English name: none

Origin: Cameroun the Congo, Zaire

Size: approximately 23 cm

Habitat: Found in very shady marshes and fresh waters with muddy bottoms

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is elongated and laterally very compressed. the tail is slender. The mouth is small and cylindrical: The basic coloration is an anthracite blue-black or brownish violet. The belly is lighter. A deep black and front is to be found between the dorsal and anal fins, which lie opposite each other. The fleshy base of the caudal fin is dark: otherwise all the fins are grey or black. The pectoral fin is well developed.

There are no known external sexual characteristics.

Nannobrycon unifasciatus

Family: *Hemiodotidae*

Genus: *Nannobrycon*

English name: One-line Pencil fish

Origin: Guiana

Size: 6.5 cm **Habitat:** Found along the banks of shallow waters overgrown with reeds and grasses.

Shape, coloring and markings:

The body is slim and torpedo shaped. The basic coloration is yellow to golden brown. A brown to black longitudinal line runs back from the snout across the eye into the caudal peduncle. Above this line there is a zone of yellow or gold. The scales on the upper half of the body have dark edges. The belly is a light yellow to silver white. The caudal fin is red at the base, and darker on the lower lobe. The dorsal fin a red patch flecked with ice blue spots.

There is a red gold patch on the head.
Females have anal fins and are a more brilliant red.