

PetFish.Net Guide – Gobies

Part Of The PetFish.Net Guide Series

Rhinogobius wui - The White Cheeked Goby



A male Rhinogobius wui in spawning dress



A female Rhinogobius wui

Rhinogobius wui hails from Hong Kong, it is normally a brackish water goby but has been kept by many people in salt densities of completely fresh all the way to almost marine.

They are not outstandingly colored but their comical behavior makes them a winner in my fishroom. Wui's obtain a maximum length of around 2 inches (5cm) and can live comfortably in a tank as small as 5 gallon.

They are very hardy and are happy in temperatures between 68F and 80F (20-26.5C). One male will take the dominant role and any other males in the tank will assume female coloration. There are plenty of small skirmishes, and they like to sneak up on their tankmates and nip them on the tail, but there is no damage done, it is mostly just for show.

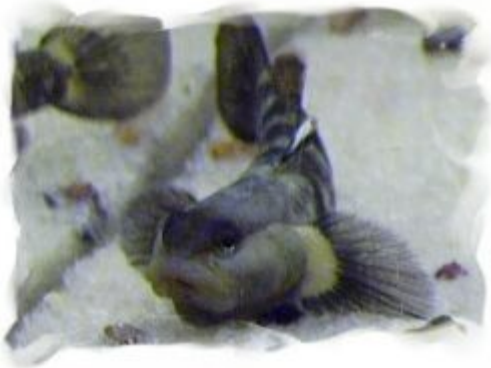
Females are a mottled brown or tan close to the same coloration as non-spawning males. But the dominant male will be wearing his spawning and/or excited dress most of the time.

If you really want a show just place a small mirror up against the side of the tank and the

male will spend an afternoon trying to outdo the fish in the mirror. This trick is one of my favorites and it also works wonderfully well for Bettas, Killifish and some Cichlids also.

Wui's spawn in typical goby fashion, they lay eggs in a small cave and the male guards the eggs.

Here are some more pictures of my wuis, they are excellent photography subjects and seem to enjoy the camera.



A male is checking out his own reflection in a mirror



The same male, now "mad" at his reflection.
This is a typical pose for the dominant male, it reminds me of a wolf howling.
He's showing that he is the baddest fish in town and not to be trifled with.

Spawning *Tateurndina ocellicauda*

Spawning the Peacock Gudgeon turned out to be a very small challenge.

I received 4 pairs from an auction win at aquabid.com and placed them in an empty but cycled 10 gallon tank.

The tank had fine "play" sand from a home building supply type store, was well planted with najas and duckweed and shared a light with the *Heterandria formosa* in the 10 gallon next door. I added several 3 inch long pieces of 3/4 PVC tubing for spawning "caves". Once the fish got settled in well the males took up residence in the caves, coming out only to eat and attempting to mate with the females. After a week or so of plentiful feeding of blackworms, daphnia, baby brine shrimp and grindal worms the Gudgeons were ready to begin spawning. Once it started it almost never stopped, at least one male would be brooding eggs all the time.

I don't believe water parameters are all that important in spawning these fish. But for those who want to know the tank had a pH of around 8, about medium hardness and was maintained without a heater, so the the temperature fluctuated between 74 to 80F (22-26.5C) It was early Summer. Since then I have maintained them through-out the seasons without any problems, with temps from 70 to 84F.

The males will guard the eggs until they hatch in about 4 days or so. I never raised any fry in the main tank of gudgeons, but I had very good luck moving the male and eggs into another tank by themselves. This is easily accomplished by placing your thumb on one side of the tube, and forefinger on the other, then just lift it out and move it. I removed the males after the fry became free swimming. The last spawn I had I left the male with the fry and surprisingly the fry are doing fine now at about 3 months of age, the papa is still in there with them.

The fry are very easy to raise, they will eat baby brine shrimp and microworms, they can be weaned over to frozen and flake foods eventually but it is not easy. They really prefer live foods. The trick I used was to put several always hungry heterandria (little piglets) in the tank with the fry and let them "teach" the gudgeons to eat flakes. As long as the fry get plenty to eat and lots of partial water changes they are very easy to raise. They are slow growing, but the mortality rate is almost zero. I have 3 different broods going now and I would estimate the average brood size at about 50.

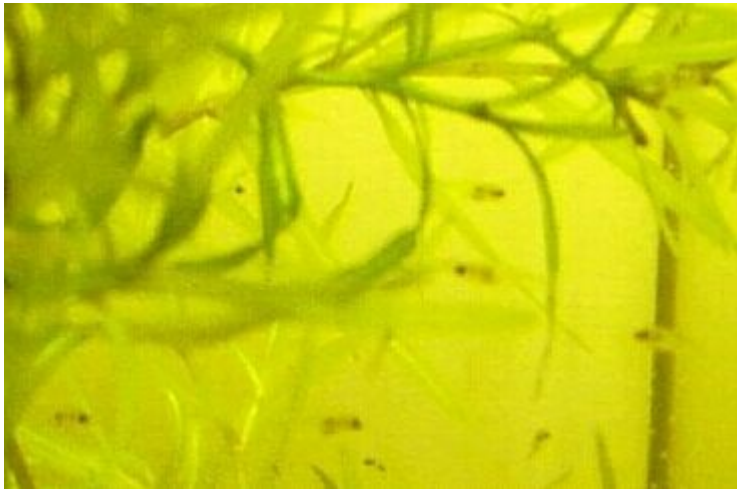
Here are some spawning pictures:



The female follows the male into the cave. Notice the female is heavy with eggs.



The spawning begins, male facing forward.



A few days later, hungry fry.

The Peacock Gudgeon - *Tateurndina ocellicauda*



Also known as "The Peacock Goby", and "The Rainbow Gudgeon"
Latin Name - *Tateurndina ocellicauda*

Origin - New Guinea

Size - Up to 2.5 inches [6.25cm] Usually smaller.

Water Parameters - Not Critical

Temperature - 72 to 82F (22 to 28C)

Spawning - Cave Spawner, males will guard the 30 or more eggs which will hatch in 5 to 6 days.

Fry Care - Fry need to be separated from the adults, they can be started on baby brine shrimp and/or microworms.

Basic Care - An extremely colorful species. The pictures don't begin to show the true coloration. Males and females are colorful, males have a distinguishing hump on their head and most females have a black line across the bottom of their lower fin. Not too picky about food, and not overly aggressive, although they do a lot of fin flaring and mock fighting. This is a very beautiful and attention getting fish. They stay mainly around the bottom of the tank.



A playful pair



The males humphead can be seen clearly here.



The male, trying hard to impress the female, who is trying hard to ignore him. For now, anyway.



My Peacock Gudgeon Tank. they love the PVC "caves", but mostly ignore the coconut cave. Volcanic rocks are added here for decoration and as a very beneficial aide to filtration. The volcanic rock acts as a nitrate removal system like the more widely used "Live Rock" in saltwater tanks.



A male Peacock Gudgeon. This picture was taken over a dark substrate, notice the difference in coloration with the female pictured at the top of the page, taken over a light colored sand substrate.

The peacocks have proven to be easy to spawn with the PVC "caves" and the fry are extremely hardy and easy to raise with the one exception that they refuse all non-live food.

Keeping Mudskippers



Mudskippers, © Tristan Bullington



Mudskippers, © Tristan Bullington

Common Name: Mudskipper

Latin Name: *Periophthalmus barbarus*

Origin: India, West Africa, Australia, and other areas with mangrove swamps

Temperature: 80 °F (27°C)

Ease Of Keeping: If needs are met quite hardy

Aggressiveness: Aggressive, best kept in a species tank

Adult Size: 4.5 inches (11cm) to nearly 12 inches (30cm)

Minimum Tank Size: 30 gallons

Feeding: Frozen food, or live crickets.

Spawning Method: Mudskippers have yet to be bred in captivity

Comments:

Mudskippers are brackish fish that originate from Mangrove swamps. They are unique fish because they have the ability to come out of the water onto land where they can "sun-

bathe" for about 90% of their time, breathing through lung-like gills that retain water for a period of time. Not only are mudskippers able to come out of water, they need to come out of water or they will drown.

The best set up for these fish is an aquarium where one-third to one-half of the tank is filled with water while the rest of the tank has a beach-like area, or other structure that emerge from the water. In all land areas make sure that they don't contain any sharp objects which could easily pierce the 'skippers fleshy belly.

Mudskippers are odd looking fish. They're bug-eyed with a pair of pectoral fins that serve as legs out of water. On their back they have a beautiful fin that they raise when warning others about territory.

In my experience with these guys, I was never able to get them to eat from within the water. They always came out of water to eat, and I'd place defrosted bloodworms, krill, and a variety of other food material including crickets, which they avidly consumed. The one time I tried to feed them guppies, the mudskipper grabbed them (killed them) and spit them right back out. If you decide to feed them mealworms, caution must be taken to make sure that the mealworm are dead before being served. From what I've heard live mealworms, when eaten whole, are able to eat through the stomach of the fish, killing the fish. All in all, these fish ARE carnivorous and will not survive on flake or freeze dried foods. Those dry foods should make up a SMALL percentage of their diet

While these fish are territorial. They seem to enjoy each others company, and will be quite peaceful, as long as enough space is given to each fish. In fact to prevent disruption, as many different spaces above water should be provided as possible having at least two times as many perching spots above water as there are fish. If over aggressive behavior does occur, it can usually be remedied by providing more spaces. A good rule of thumb is to give about ten gallons of tank space per fish (so a 30 gallon could accommodate three fish)

Because of this fish's special requirements, they are best care for in a species tank, unless the tank is large enough to suitably accommodate other brackish fish or crabs. (A word of warning, fiddler crabs and mudskippers are often found natively in the same habitat, and mudskippers are known to consume small crabs, so make sure you a good sized crab)

When I kept these amazing fish, I had a 30 gallon tank filled half way with water. The temperature was set at a toasty 82 degrees producing lots of humidity for the mudskippers. for the land areas, I used a large piece of wood that sat on the bottom of the tanks, and emerged from the water. I also used several suction-cup platforms, that were designed for turtle tanks, but worked perfectly in this set up. I also used several pieces of untreated- fish safe wood, that just floated around like little rafts. Finally, I added about a tablespoon of salt to each gallon when I performed water changes. The mudskippers I kept were expected to grow to about 4.5 inches, but, within the two years that i kept them, they grew to 8 inches! While I kept these guys during that time, none of them died. In the end I had to sell them back to the LFS because I was moving across the country.

Dragon Goby

By Clint Norwood





Also known as: Violet Goby or Dragon Eel

Origin: The Americas, from North Carolina to Brazil

Latin Name: *Gobioides broussoneti*

Temperature: 68 - 77°F (20 - 25°C)

pH: 6.5 to 8

dH: Medium to Hard

Temperament: The Dragon Goby is a gentle monster, it's nowhere close to as mean and evil as it looks. The Dragon may sometimes eat a small sick or injured fish but it is not a predatory fish. Dragons get along well with other non aggressive fish.

Adult Size: Up to 2 ft (60cm)
Smaller in captivity

Minimum Tank Size: 30 gallons, but bigger is better

Feeding: Best results with small live foods, but will accept frozen and/or pelleted and flake foods. Loves worms.

Comments: Here is a novel fish. Though it looks like a vicious predator, it's really a teddy bear. The Dragon Goby will do well in a community of not too small fish. It is easy to care for and will always be the main attraction for your visiting friends.

Dragon Gobies like caves and rocky hiding places, and enjoy a good roll in the sand. They are very active for a goby, not in the least skittish.

If you see Dragon Gobies for sale in a petshop they will almost always claim they are very aggressive and not to be trusted with other fish, this is wrong.

Please don't pass off on the Dragon because it's ugly and mean looking, give em a chance.

© Clint Norwood, Images and text

Comments

Name : Nick

Comments : I just bought a dragon goby for my tank. It is around 4.5" presently, and he is in a freshwater tank. If you get one, and he hides out a lot during the day, check up on him later on at night, when it is dark, he'll venture out.

Name: Jared

Comments: First off, most people get the wrong idea and info. about these fish. I have owned aquariums for 7 years, and my dragon fish (dragon goby) for 2. You don't need a brackish tank if your tapwater is slightly high. Around 8.5-9.5ph. Most eat algae wafers, and shrimp pellets. Mine was 5" when i bought it, and is now 14". If you make a rock cave, they will stay there awhile. They don't like fast moving water or rough gravel.

Name: Byrl

Comments: I have had my dragon fish for 2 years. He was around 4" long when I got him and is 1' long and very thick and healthy looking now. He has been one of my favorite fish out of a hobby extending a period of over 12 years. He is a gentle giant that's great in a community tank. The only aggression or appearance there of was towards another dragon fish I purchased at the same time. He had out grew the other dragon by a couple of inches in length and was a lot thicker than the smaller one...he would chase the smaller one when it would get near him, but he never went looking for a fight, we'll say. The smaller dragon met its demise by finding a power sweep intake that's siphon had fallen off (may she rest in peace). These fish are very hardy fish that have survived a couple instances of very harsh conditions. My dragon's like to hide in tight surroundings, but they don't mind whether it's day time or night time when they come out to stir around and patrol for the almighty shrimp pellet or frozen blood worm. I would recommend these fish to Long John himself if he wouldn't cook them.

Name: Effendi

Comments: I recently bought a Dragon Goby. It was EXPENSIVE. I'm living in Singapore and that that kinda fish is rarely seen here. So I bought it. I thought it would eat my small fishes like my baby giant whiptail catfish...my bumblebee goby. My banded knifefish and all. But it didn't. Currently its livin with them along with a new addition of A threadfin paradise. Its not ugly..It really has a beautiful body with gold bands... Really weird yet attractive. Mine's currently small around 10cm? Still a baby. Hope its colours will stay that way.

Name: Seth Thompson

Comments: I have had my dragon fish for about 6 months its doing great. I lost my first one due to temp of the water and the pH. I recently came across another place that had dragon fish so I purchased another one, the two became friends instantly they are doing great now. I hear a lot that unless you have a 125-200+ then they won't survive, thats a myth, I have a 55 gallon tank and they do just fine. My two dragon fish are 8 and 10 inches they're still small but they do well with smaller fish. I just bought baby cichlids, they're still there.

Name: laura

Comments: Had our dragon goby for 5 months now going strong and has grown 2 inches in the meantime reaching about 8 inches now. He loves frozen bloodworms and brine shrimp but will also eat flakes and algae tabs. He loves his big corner cave but is always out swimming around non the less. Great fish personality and doesn't bother a soul (not even the neons or cories).

Name: Janet

Comments: Went and got a baby dragon today, mostly out of sympathy for it. They had 3 of them in a tank full of Red belly Pacu. The clerk proceeded to tell me how mean and aggressive they are, how they need water that's 80F+ and how one "bit" her and left a hole in her hand. (they are maybe 4 inches long).. so far it hasn't bothered a thing, including the feeders for the mean evil nasty goldfish.

Spawning Desert Gobies - Pictures

By Clint Norwood



The male is facing out, female is upside down depositing eggs.



Male is violently wriggling, releasing sperm.



Male turning around for a better position.



A good view of the eggs already deposited on top of the PVC pipe "cave".

I originally half buried the PVC cave, not knowing how the pair preferred their cave. The male cleaned the sand out of the cave before spawning took place.

Hours before the spawning the male had been doing a spawning dance of hopping around the female with his fins held rigidly erect and his colors flashing.

I was thinking that spawning might be eminent but the female had been doing a very good job of appearing completely uninterested.

The pair will wriggle and move around pretty violently for a while as the female lays about 5 to 10 eggs, at that point she would become completely motionless for a period of about 30 to 45 seconds, then the process would begin again.

Neither parent would leave the cave during the whole spawning process.

At the end of the spawning the female left the cave looking very much thinner.

Pictures and article © Clint Norwood

Australian Desert Gobies

By Clint Norwood



Male Australian Desert Goby

Latin Name - *Chlamydogobius eremius*

Origin - Australia

Size - Up to 2.5 inches [6.25cm]

Water Parameters - Hard Alkaline, with the addition of a teaspoon or 2 of salt per gallon of water. Desert Gobies can survive temperatures of between 40 to 100F [5 to 40C] but seem to do best in the high 70's

Spawning - Cave Spawner, males will guard the 100 to 200 eggs which will hatch in 7 to 12 days.

Fry Care - Fry need to be separated from the adults, they can be started on baby brine shrimp and/or microworms.

Basic Care - ADG prefer a sandy bottom with plenty of rocks and caves. They will eat just about anything but have an unnatural love for shrimp pellets. Very poor swimmers these gobies get around by hops and scoots and enjoy plenty of rock or PVC pipe caves to explore and play on. They can get by pretty well in as little as 5 gallons per pair. Desert Gobies typically live for only 1 year at best.



Pair, male in foreground © Clint Norwood

Bumblebee Goby

By Clint Norwood

Species/genus: Brachygobius xanthozona



Bumble Bee Goby © Clint Norwood

Origin: Java, Borneo, Sumatra

Temp: 72-88°F (22-30°C)

pH: 6.5 - 8.2 dH: Medium Hard

Temperament: Bumble Bees have a well deserved reputation as being a fin nipper, and they will actively hunt, kill and eat any fish small enough to swallow.

Adult Size: a little over 1 inch (3cm), but a chubby little fellow

Minimum Tank Size: 1 gallon

Feeding: Prefers live foods such as brine shrimp and grindal worms, but will eat frozen foods and even flakes in a pinch

Breeding: Difficult to spawn. Strange in that they will spawn in water that is hard and acid. Spawn in caves, seashells or PVC pipe.

Comments: Very cute fish, gets it's name from it's marked resemblance to a bumble bee. Likes slightly brackish water, up to a tablespoon of salt per gallon. They are best kept in a species tank where they are somewhat peaceful among their own and much more active swimmers.

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