

Paradise fish

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The **paradise fish**, **paradisefish**, or **paradise gourami**, *Macropodus opercularis*, is a species of gourami found in most types of fresh water in East Asia, ranging from the Korean Peninsula to northern Vietnam. This species can reach a length of 6.7 cm (2.6 in), though most are only about 5.5 cm (2.2 in).^[2] Paradise gouramis were one of the first ornamental fish available to western aquarium keepers, having been imported to Europe as early as the 19th century. The paradise fish is one of the more aggressive members of its family. It is more aggressive than the three spot gourami, yet less pugnacious in nature than the less commonly kept combtail.

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Behaviour



Albino paradise fish

Paradise fish are fairly combative, harassing and attacking each other, as well as potentially killing small fish. During a fight, the paradise fish will often change its color, usually displaying dark blue lateral lines on the sides of their bodies; extend its fins; and spread out its operculum.^[3] Paradise fish are more likely to show aggressive behavior towards other paradise fish than to fish of a different species. Acts of aggression tend to increase as the distance to the fish's home increases.^[4] In the wild, they are predators, eating insects, invertebrates, and fish fry. The popularity of this species has waned in recent decades as much more colorful (and often less pugnacious) species of gouramis have become widely available to hobbyists. This species is one of the few fish that can change its color (lighter or darker) in response to stimuli. It also appears that paradise fish are capable of

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Conservation status



Least Concern (IUCN 3.1)^[1]

Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Actinopterygii
Order:	Perciformes
Suborder:	Anabantoidei
Family:	Osphronemidae
Subfamily:	Macropodusinae
Genus:	<i>Macropodus</i>
Species:	<i>M. opercularis</i>

Binomial name

Macropodus opercularis

(Linnaeus, 1758)

Synonyms

- *Labrus opercularis* Linnaeus, 1758
- *Chaetodon chinensis* Bloch, 1790
- *Macropodus chinensis* (Bloch, 1790)
- *Macropodus viridiauratus* Lacépède, 1801
- *Macropodus venustus* G. Cuvier, 1831

learning though a type of restrictive process. Most forms of active teaching seem to hinder the paradise fish's ability to learn.^[5]

Habitat and diet

Paradise fish are tolerant of a wide range of water conditions, surviving in cool and warm waters alike. In the wild, they are most commonly found in shallow water containing dense vegetation, such as a marsh or rice field.^[6] However they can be kept in outdoor ponds, or even the simplest of unheated aquaria. They will accept virtually any food, but should be given a reasonably high-protein diet (as opposed to vegetable-based foods.) They also eat mosquito larvae, black worms, brine shrimp, and small flies.

Disease control

In Taiwan, the native populations of paradise fish have been reduced to low levels by pollution in the rivers, and are now listed as a threatened species. The yellow fever mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*) is breeding in the absence of one of its main predators, and dengue fever is threatening the human population. Paradise fish are also considered to be an ideal subject for behavioral genetic studies and have been used to study Iridoviridae type viruses.^[7]

In home aquaria

Male paradise fish should be kept apart, since they will fight aggressively by locking jaws. A male can be kept with females; females may also be kept together in groups. A tank that includes paradise fish should be at least 20 gallons in size for a single male or 20-30 gallons for a community tank. The tank should be well planted and covered; bogwood and rockwork may be included.

Paradise fish tankmates must be chosen with care. Suitable ones include giant danios, large tetras, most smaller catfishes, and even some of the less aggressive cichlids, such as firemouth cichlids. Slow-moving or long-finned fish such as fancy goldfish and freshwater angelfish are likely to be attacked by males; bettas and gouramis may also be victimized due to their resemblance to paradise fish. Male paradise fish may also attempt to court female bettas and gouramis.

Fish less than 3 cm are likely to be consumed. If kept with significantly larger but non-aggressive fish, such as geophagus cichlids, large synodontis catfishes, or larger gouramis, they are usually submissive and do not act nearly as aggressively as when they are the dominant species in the aquarium. However, if the larger fish are also aggressive, they will not even attempt to fight and will take to hiding behind filters, plants, or in décor, and will succumb to stress.

Reproduction

As is typical of most bettas and gouramis, spawning involves a male building a bubble nest (a floating mat of saliva-coated air bubbles, often incorporating plant matter) and attracting a female to it. If the female accepts the male's advances, the fish will 'embrace' in open water, releasing both eggs and sperm into the water. The male gathers the fertilized eggs after each embrace, spitting them up into the bubble nest. After spawning, the male has no further use for the female and may violently attack her (and any other fish that approaches the nest). Once the fry hatch and have begun to swim freely, the male is best removed and the fry raised on

- *Macropodus ctenopsoides*
Brind, 1915
- *Macropodus filamentosus*
Oshima, 1919



Macropodus opercularis (♂) in a home aquarium

infusoria or newly hatched brine shrimp.

An albino form of *Macropodus opercularis* is available. Many aquarists consider this form to be less aggressive than the wild type, but also less hardy, having more trouble with low temperatures.

References

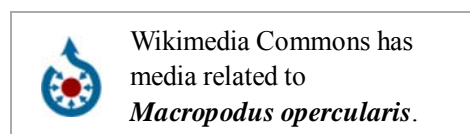
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Sexing is easy, as males are more colorful and have longer fins compared to the females.

External links

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Categories: IUCN Red List least concern species | Osphronemidae

| Freshwater fish of Taiwan | Biota of Hong Kong | Fauna of Hong Kong | Animals described in 1758

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