

Discus (fish)

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Symphysodon, colloquially known as **discus**, is a genus of cichlids native to the Amazon river basin. Due to their distinctive shape and bright colors, discus are popular as freshwater aquarium fish, and their aquaculture in several countries in Asia is a major industry.^{[1][2][3][4]} They are sometimes referred to as **pompadour fish**.^{[5][6]}

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Species

There are currently three recognized species in this genus:^[7]

- Symphysodon aequifasciatus* Pellegrin, 1904 (Blue discus)
- Symphysodon discus* Heckel, 1840 (Red discus or Heckel discus)
- Symphysodon tarzoo* E. Lyons, 1959

Taxonomy



Symphysodon discus

Discus are fish from the genus *Symphysodon*, which currently includes the above species.^[8] However, another review of the genus published in August 2007 suggested that the genus held these three species: *S.*

aequifasciatus (the green discus), *S. haraldi* (the blue/brown/common discus), and *S. discus* (the Heckel discus).^[9] Further arguments have been made that *S. tarzoo* was not described in accordance with ICZN rules and thus should be considered invalid and replaced with *S. haraldi*,^[10] currently considered a synonym of *S. aequifasciatus* by FishBase.

Other (sub)species have been proposed, but morphometric data (unlike in *Pterophyllum*, the freshwater angelfish) varies as much between individuals from one location as across the whole range of all discus fish species. *S. tarzoo* was described in 1959 and applies to the red-spotted western

Symphysodon



Symphysodon aequifasciatus

Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Actinopterygii
Order:	Perciformes
Family:	Cichlidae
Subfamily:	Cichlasomatinae
Tribe:	Heroini
Genus:	<i>Symphysodon</i>
	Heckel, 1840

Type species

Symphysodon discus

Heckel, 1840

Species

See text

population. *S. aequifasciatus* and *S. discus*, meanwhile, seem to hybridise frequently in the wild or have diverged recently, as they lack mitochondrial DNA lineage sorting but differ in color pattern and have dissimilar chromosomal translocation patterns. *S. discus* occurs mainly in the Rio Negro. Whether *S. haraldi* is indeed distinct from *S. aequifasciatus* remains to be determined; if valid it is widespread but it might just be a color morph.

Description

Like cichlids from the genus *Pterophyllum*, all *Symphysodon* species have a laterally compressed body shape. In contrast to *Pterophyllum*, however, extended finnage is absent giving *Symphysodon* a more rounded shape. It is this body shape from which their common name, "discus", is derived. The sides of the fish are frequently patterned in shades of green, red, brown, and blue. The height and length of the grown fish are both about 20–25 cm (8–10 in).

Reproduction and sexual dimorphism

There is no real sexual dimorphism for this fish. In breeding form varieties, solid red discus (red melon, red cover) females are generally redder than males. Another characteristic of *Symphysodon* species is their care for the larvae. As for most cichlids, brood care is highly developed with both the parents caring for the young. Additionally, adult discus produce a secretion through their skin, which the larvae live off during their first few days. This behaviour has also been observed for *Uaru* species. However when bred in captivity the larvae will tend to live off their parents secretion for up to 2 weeks.^[11]

Distribution and habitat



A map of the range (orange shading) of *Symphysodon*

Symphysodon species inhabit the margins of floodplain lakes and rivers in the Amazon Basin of lowland Amazonia,^[12] where it is part of the highly diverse Neotropical fish fauna.

The three species of *Symphysodon* have different geographic distributions. *S. aequifasciatus* occurs in the Rio Solimões, Rio Amazonas and the Río Putumayo-Içá in Brazil, Colombia and Peru. In contrast the distribution of *S. discus* appears to be limited to the lower reaches of the Abacaxis, Rio Negro and Trombetas rivers. *S. tarzoo* occurs upstream of Manaus in the western Amazon.

See also

- List of freshwater aquarium fish species

References



Captive strain



Red turquoise discus

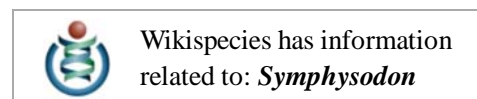
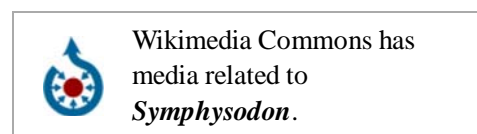


Discus with two of its young nearby

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External links

- Basic Care Tips for Discus Fish (http://discusturka.com/)
- Discus photogallery from Club Live World (http://liveworld.biz/photo/6)
- Discus Society Malaysia (http://www.malaysiadiscus.com/)
- DXK Forum - Malaysia Premier Discus Forum (http://www.discus.com.my/)
- IDF Discus - Photo albums of discus fish (http://www.idfdiscus.com.my/index.php?cPath=21)
- Fanatik-Discus-International informations, pictures, videos about discus fish (http://www.fanatik-discus.fr/)



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