

Yellow-Top-Sword Endler's Livebearer

Poecilia wingei

By John Moyles

This interesting livebearer, which looks a close relative of the guppy, is the Endler's Livebearer (*Poecilia wingei*). They are found in streams, ponds and in and around Laguna de Patos, Venezuela. Endler's were originally discovered in the late 1930's, by Franklyn F. Bond, and then forgotten until 1975 when they were rediscovered, described and published by Dr. John Endler whom they were named after.



Few pure descendants of these fish collected by Dr. John Endler in 1975 remain due to hybridization and inbreeding. In the 1990's Dr. Endler urged the capture of pure wild strain Endler's to reinvigorate bloodlines.

Now there are standards in class, strain and grade that are assigned to Endler's. Class refers to a fish's documented lineage how pure-bred/hybridized it is. Strain refers groupings of characteristics which breed true generation after generation. Grade refers to standards individual fish can be judged against as they relate to a "prime" or "perfect" within a given strain. There are three classes of Endler's and numerous strains. Class-N fish are documented to have originated from their native waters in Venezuela and are considered genetically "pure". This also includes progeny from these Endler's. Class-P fish appear to have the characteristics of an Endler's (Class-N), but whose origins can't be verified. Strains are similar to Class-N. Class-K fish are known to have been crossbred with other livebearing species.

Description

Like their close relative the guppy, females are larger and less colorful than the brightly colored males. Males can grow up to an inch in length and females get to be about twice that size. The Yellow-Top-Sword Endler's male has elongated rays in the tail fin that are a bright yellow edged in black. This strain was developed in 2004 by line breeding wild caught individuals that had traits not found in the rest of the population.

Diet

Endler's are an omnivorous species, feeding on a variety of invertebrates, algae and detritus in the wild. They will eat most foods offered but should have some vegetation in the diet.

Breeding

Breeding Endler's is much the same as for many other livebearers. Several females should be kept to every male in order to dissipate harassment by males. Hiding spaces of dense planting will also help. They generally produce new broods every 23-24 days. Broods can number from 5-25 this is influenced by the female's age and size. Adult fish will rarely eat their young but the best method of raising them is still to remove the gravid female to a separate tank and allow her to give birth there before returning her to the main aquarium. The fry are quite large and will accept brine shrimp nauplii and powdered flake from birth.

Habits

Endler's are not really suitable for a general community aquarium due to their small size. Good tank mates are other small peaceful species such as dwarf corydoras, small rainbowfish such as *Iratherina weneri* or *Pseudomugil* sp. and peaceful tetras. Males tend to be peaceful towards one another, females can be quite territorial and so several should be kept in order to disperse potential bullying. Endler's should not be kept with guppies as they will crossbreed.

