

Xiphophorus nezahualcoytl

Northern Mountain Swordtail



By John Moyles

Common Name: Northern Mountain Swordtail, Montezuma Swordtail, Nezy. The fish is named after a famous philosopher king of the Texcocan people in Mexico, Nezahualcoytl, (1403-1473), whose name means "hungry fox". After the death of his father, the king, in a war, he was forced to flee his country. But some years later, after many adventures, he returned to overthrow the conqueror and reclaim the throne. His reign was apparently one that encouraged the arts.

Scientific Name: Xiphophorus nezahualcoytl, X. montezumae.

Distribution: Fast flowing waters located in the Rio Tamasi drainage in the Mexican state of San Luis Potosi.

Conservation Status: They are not listed on the IUCN Red list nor the CITES Appendices

Description: They are truly a dwarf when compared to their more common cousins X. helleri. They only get about 2.5 inches long while X. helleri can grow to about double that. They are a pretty fish. The males have an elongated bottom half of the caudal fin which gives them the swordtail name. Both males and females have similar coloration, a base of olive green with some stripes.

Care: Their small size allows a small group to be housed in a 10 gallon tank. I used a sand bottom and decorated it with floating plants. These fish enjoy cooler water, so I kept them in the low 70's.

Feeding: Omnivorous in the wild. I fed mine small prepared foods (pellets and flakes), small live foods (microworms, fruit flies and copepods), and frozen foods.

Social Behavior: Males tend to chase females around and should be kept 1 male for every 2 or 3 females. My colony started with 2 males and 5 females.

Breeding: They are livebearers. The female will give birth to about 2 dozen live young after about 30 days. I left the fry with the parents and let them hide in the plants. They almost

immediately started eating decapsulated brine shrimp eggs, spirulina powder and crushed flakes.

References:

aquaticcommunity.com

iucnredlist.org

fishforums.net

Wikipedia.com