

THE PEACOCK GUDGEON SAGA

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In July of 1985 we purchased a lovely pair of Peacock gudgeons, (*Tateurndina ocellicauda*) at the clubs auction. Being new members then, our first intention was just to put them in our community tank as another pretty fish. However we became more involved in the hobby and had seen two articles in the Tropical Fish

Hobbyist Magazine, Volume 31 Book 8 (#326) April 1983 Pages 56 to 60 inclusive, involving the Peacock gudgeon. We decide then we would definitely try to breed these lovely looking fish. We placed them in a 27 litre (6 gallon) tank with a 20cm (8 inch) depth of water. Inside the tank we had put one and a half to two inches of coarse gravel, a ceramic bridge and a corner filter, it was also well planted. The water was aged tap water with a neutral pH and a constant temperature of 26 degrees Celsius.

We conditioned the pair on a mixture of Freeze Dried foods and live *Daphnia*, fed alternately twice daily. About 4 months after purchasing, the pair were ready and willing to breed. The male was approximately one and a half inches long and the female slightly smaller. The females tummy started swelling and turning a deep yellow colour and the male proceeded to chase her and display around her at any opportunity. The males colours became brighter as well as showing the contrasting red and blue colour to its best.

The male at this time was searching for a spawning sight and after choosing it under the ceramic bridge, he cleaned it out and spent his time either under the bridge or chasing the female. Eventually, he enticed the female to join him under his bridge. Over a period of two days, the eggs were laid suspended from the underside of the bridge. The female was then in no uncertain terms kicked out. There were approximately 50 eggs laid but it was difficult to see them while hidden under the bridge. They were yellow in colour and suspended individually by a fine thread. The male stayed under the bridge guarding and fanning

the eggs only coming out occasionally for food but mainly waiting until the live *Daphnia* swam to him. The eggs seemed quite small to us as it was our first introduction into the breeding of egg layers.

We had recently bred guppies (*Poecilia reticulata*) 2-4 weeks ago and these were in the same tank, thinking they were too small to eat the newly hatched Peacocks. Thinking to ourselves that the Peacocks, when hatched, would be about the size of a new born guppy. Boy were we mistaken! The Peacocks' eggs hatched in about 6 days, unfortunately we never saw any fry from that spawning.

When the male had nothing left to guard, he began chasing the female, once again, which had grown large with roe. We had another spawning a couple of weeks later and still had not learned to remove the young guppies. Also to make it even more interesting the male decided the safest place in the tank was at the back and inside of our cartridge filter. The fry of this did not survive either.

By now the guppies were large enough to be put into our larger community tank. Meanwhile, in the breeding tank, we had changed filters, removed the ceramic bridge and in its place put in a rock to form a cave. Soon the mating ritual began again and they were in the rock cave side by side in no time at all. The female was ousted the next day and the male was guarding and fanning the newest batch of eggs. At this time we removed the female.

7 days after the eggs were laid we noticed free swimming fry (about one third to one half of the size of a new born guppy) being herded

by the male. Afraid that he may turn and eat them, we promptly removed him to the community tank.

The fry were fed at frequent intervals on Sera Micron food. At a couple of weeks old we also added some fine freeze dried Brine Shrimp to their menu. A week later we tested them on frozen small *Daphnia* just to see if they could handle it, they did, so we introduced very small live *Daphnia* and Cyclops to their menu, plus small bits of freeze dried Tubifex. The Peacocks seem to prefer eating in the lower half of the tank, so we tried a Tetra Tabi Min tablet, which soon breaks up into fine peices and they got stuck into that in no time.

The only other fish present in the breeding tank at all times was a bronze catfish (*Corydoras aeneus*), to help with any uneaten food. We had read in the Tropical Fish Hobbyist Magazine that this catfish would not harm eggs or fry and this proved right for us. When the fry were spotted, we turned the filter to the lowest position to prevent the young from going in.

