

BAZZ THE BARRAMUNDI

by Belinda Carriage

It all started early one morning whilst watching the Cichlids that occupied my 4 foot tank (two Jewels and a Pearl Cichlid). Having had these species of fish for some time, I felt it was time for a change. Off to the fish shop in Belconnen for a look. A batch of new arrivals, commonly known as "Barramundi" caught my eyes, at only 1 inch long I bought two. Back home the Cichlids were relocated into another tank and the new 'hungry' arrivals were established in the 4 foot tank.

I didn't know much about the species besides being a native fish living in tropical streams, rivers etc. in the top part of Australia, eating almost everything and anything.

The two Barramundis grew in harmony until they were about three inches long when one ate the other. So much for being mates!

The one left was affectionately named "Bazz". He now needed a new tank companion, so I put my Eel (native also) which is about one and a half foot long and an inch thick in with him. We also purchased a Tandanus Catfish.

A beautiful friendship has now surfaced and a certain degree of respect has now surfaced in the tank. No hand or fingers enter the tank as "Bazz" is now about one foot long and loves any unsuspecting fool to put these prized possession into his domain, only to have them surprisingly bitten. His lightning speed still amazes myself and friends. Like a stealth attacker he floats without any movement and suddenly he attacks, wetting everything in sight if I'm slow putting the lid back down. Timing is essential!

His diet consists of Hikari™ Cichlid Pellets (green only - fussy), any live fish, yabbies, and frozen unsalted Whitebait.

I recently found that feeding them any meat or food not from the sea builds up fat deposits in their bodies which kills them. (Editor's Note: **This is real important. Do not feed Beef Heart to large Native fishes. It does kill them. Dead dead dead!**)

He's a great conversation piece. My sister-in-law brought her Budgie over for a visit. He was just about to land on Bazza's tank when a large explosion took place, water going everywhere! The glass lid was knocked aside and the poor Budgie sat on the carpet, puffing and panting and trying to make sense of what had just happened. Who said fish can't see much outside their tanks?

Don't get me wrong, It's been a challenge and extreme fun raising a young Barramundi to a great looking mean eating machine of a fish.

Bazza's filtration is an undergravel with a powerhead. Due to the messy way he eats, regular water changes are a must. Bazz will soon need to be upgraded to a larger & wider tank. He doesn't like to be moved, as he only fits into a large plastic garbage bin and catching him is not the easiest experience.

I say "Go for it" if you've been thinking of having a change. I also have a Murray Cod in a tank with a Bristlenose Catfish. Both Bazz and the Murray Cod are Australia's own and they make spectacular aquarium display fish.