

## CARING FOR YOUR GOLDFISH

The term coldwater fish is often reserved for Goldfish. It does, however, cover a wide area of fish keeping including, of course, outdoor pond fish. Whilst there are many areas of overlap between coldwater fish kept in a pond and those fish kept in an aquarium, their needs are best dealt with separately. This article deals primarily with indoor aquarium coldwater fish.



### THE ORIGIN OF THE GOLDFISH

Goldfish, the most popular coldwater fish, belong to the Cyprinidae family, as do the large Koi found in ponds. It was in China, probably in the Sung era around 1,000 AD, that we first see evidence of selective breeding of natural mutations. This resulted in the very different colours and shapes of fish which led to the Veiltails, Orandas and Moors we have today. Interestingly if any such fancy Goldfish are left alone for several generations they will tend to revert to the shape and colour of their rather bland Crucian Carp ancestors - *Carassius carassius*.

### COLDWATER TROPICALS

Some fish which are normally considered 'tropical' are happy in relatively low temperatures. In certain circumstances, these fish can be considered as 'exotic' additions to a coldwater aquarium. Care must, however, be taken. If a heater is not used, the water temperature in an aquarium reflects the temperature of the air around it. Even in centrally heated houses the temperature sometimes can fall very low - especially in winter during the night when the heating might be reduced. If you are thinking of adding coldwater tropicals to your coldwater tank it is worthwhile investing in a heater-thermostat to maintain required temperatures during more extreme conditions.

### HERE IS A LIST OF COMMONLY AVAILABLE COLDWATER TROPICAL FISH:

(Temperatures in °C)

Blue Acara, *Aequidens pulcher*: 18-25

Butterfly Goodeid, *Ameca splendens*: 18-25

Climbing Perch, *Anabos testudineus*: 15-30

Dwarf Cichlid, *Apistogramma agassizii*: 17-19(winter)and 23-26 (summer)

Blind Cavefish, *Astyanox mexicanus* (formerly *Anoptichthys joedoni*): 18-23

Rosy Barb, *Barbus conchoni*: 14 (winter) and 22 (summer)

Ticto Barb, *Barbus ticto*: 14-16 (winter) and 23 (summer)

Bronze Catfish, *Corydoras aeneus*: 18-26

Argentine Pearl, *Cynolebias belottii*: 15-20

Golden Ear Killifish, *Fundulus chrysotus*: 15-20

Star Head Top Minnow, *Fundulus dispar dispar*: 15-20

A species of Mosquito Fish, *Gambusia affinis holbrooki*: As low as 10

American Flagfish, *Jordanella floridae*: 19-22

Paradise Fish, *Macropodus opercularis*: As low as 10

Weatherfish (Loach), *Misgurnus fossilis*: Tolerates temperatures below 10

White Cloud Mountain Minnow, *Tanichthys albonubes*: 16-22

### **CHOOSING YOUR GOLDFISH**

Swimming around a tank all day on your own can't be much fun, so why not give your Goldfish some company and buy more than just one? The Common Goldfish or the Fancy Goldfish such as the Lionhead, the Oranda, the Veiltail, the Shubunkin and the Black Moor are all the same species of Chinese carp, so they will live happily together in the same aquarium.

### **CHOOSING THE RIGHT SIZED AQUARIUM**

Once you have decided how many fish you would like, you need to make sure your tank is big enough for everybody. As a rough guide a small 8" (20cm) tank will only take one Goldfish, a 12" (30cm) tank will take two fish and a 24" (60cm) tank will take up to three fish. But remember your fish will grow, so don't forget to take this into account. Sand, rocks, plastic plants or even some fun ornaments for your fish to swim around, will help it to feel at home. They can all be bought from your aquatic shop, but before you place them in the tank make sure you rinse them well in running tap water.



### **THE BIG MOVE**

At least a day before your fish moves home, fill the tank with ordinary tap water and give it time to warm up to room temperature. This will also help the water to lose its chlorine content. Gently lower your fish in, give it a couple of hours to adjust to its new environment, then help it settle down by sprinkling a few flakes on the surface.

### **CARING FOR YOUR FISH**

Goldfish are amongst the hardiest of all fish, which no doubt contributes to their popularity. Give a goldfish a good sized aquarium, well filtered water, a few plants with several pebbles and sand on the bottom and it will be much healthier, happier and live longer. With a little care and attention the tank will also become more interesting and an attractive focal point in the home.

## WATER QUALITY

Water is not only the environment in which fish live - it is the 'air' they breathe. Pay regular attention to the water and your fish will thrive. Ideally you should allow at least two gallons of water per fish. More once your fish grow over a few inches long. If you don't have in-tank filtration, water changes should be carried out every week - about 30 % of the volume. Even if you do have a good filter unit you should still carry out a 30 % water change every 2 or 3 weeks. Use tap water, ideally mixed with a little hot water to warm it to room temperature. You should also add tap water de-chlorinator before you pour the water into the aquarium.



## FEEDING YOUR GOLDFISH

To stay healthy, active and colourful Goldfish need a regular balanced intake of a range of essential nutrients. The best and easiest way of providing these is with a complete, balanced diet. [AQUARIAN Goldfish Flakes](#) have been specially formulated to provide all the nutrients goldfish and other coldwater fish require-ensuring excellent growth, long life, less pollution and reduced stress.

How Often? How Much? Ideally you should feed your fish every morning and evening. Sprinkle a few flakes on the water. If they are eaten within a few minutes give a little more food. If the fish stop feeding, or after about 15 minutes, remove any uneaten food with a small net.

## HEALTH CARE

Many fancy Goldfish are prone to swim bladder problems. This susceptibility is in part due to the selective breeding process, which shortened the body and hence the swim bladder of varieties such as the Oranda and Black Moor. This is, however, made worse by poor water conditions, overfeeding and sometimes by low water temperatures. Fish showing signs of disorientation can be helped by ensuring that they are kept in good quality water, with frequent water changes, and by installing a small heater thermostat to keep the temperature at about 20 C.

### **Prevention is always better than cure:**

- Make sure that you don't introduce infestation and disease into your aquarium - only buy from a reputable dealer who quarantines all stock before sale.
- Water pollution is probably the main cause of health problems. Poor water quality puts pressure on the body systems of the fish, creating stress, which, in turn, lowers resistance.
- Correct feeding is critical. With the right balance of nutrients fish will be less prone to health problems. The palatability of the food is also important -uneaten food simply adds to water

pollution problems. -Keep careful watch over your fish. Should you notice any body sores or degeneration of fins it is possible they need a special treatment. Your aquatic retailer will advise on the range of proprietary treatments available. If in doubt you should always consult your veterinary surgeon.

### **Making their aquarium feel more like home - living happily ever after**

A healthy fish is a happy fish. To make sure yours get all the vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and other nutrients they need, we recommend you feed them Aquanan 2-3 times a day (see the label for further instructions). Goldfish thrive in clean water, so you should carry out a partial water change at least every week (a complete water change can stress the fish). To do this, use a jug or siphon tube, remove about a quarter of the water into a bucket. Then simply refill the aquarium using a mix of hot and cold tap water to help it reach room temperature.

### **IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS**

Aquarian have a dedicated team of experts just waiting to answer them. So, if there is anything you'd like to ask you can write to them at Aquarian Advisory Service, Waltham Aquacentre, PO Box 5059, Melton Mowbray, LE14 4ZN, England.

In the meantime, here are just a few of the most common problems our experts have been able to answer:

#### **Q, Which is better for my fish, a bowl or a tank?**

A. Most beginners start with a bowl because it not only looks attractive, but it provides a safe and happy home for one or two small fish. However, if your fish outgrows the size of its bowl or you decide you want to add to your collection you need to find a tank that's big enough.

#### **Q, How do I know if I'm feeding my fish enough food?**

A. The easiest way to decide how much food to give your fish is to observe them during and after feeding. If there is no food left on the surface of the water after a few minutes, give a little more until the fish stop eating. Then, always net or siphon out any uneaten food.

#### **Q, If I go away for the weekend should I feed my fish extra?**

A. No, it's actually better for your fish to miss a day or two, rather than be over fed. In fact, they can be left up to two weeks without being fed, as they can survive on the algae and micro-organisms that are already present in their tank.

#### **Q, I'm always cleaning out my fish tank. Is there anything I can do to keep it cleaner for longer?**

A. yes, you could invest in a filter. This will help aerate the water as well as keep it clean. You should also try using Aquarian fish food because it contains specially selected natural ingredients, which are easily digested by the fish. This reduces the amount of waste that the

fish passes into the water and helps to cut down pollution.

**Q, How long will my goldfish live?**

A. Fancy Goldfish will live at least 10 years. However, the Common Goldfish can live up to 20 years indoors and over 30 years in a pond.

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