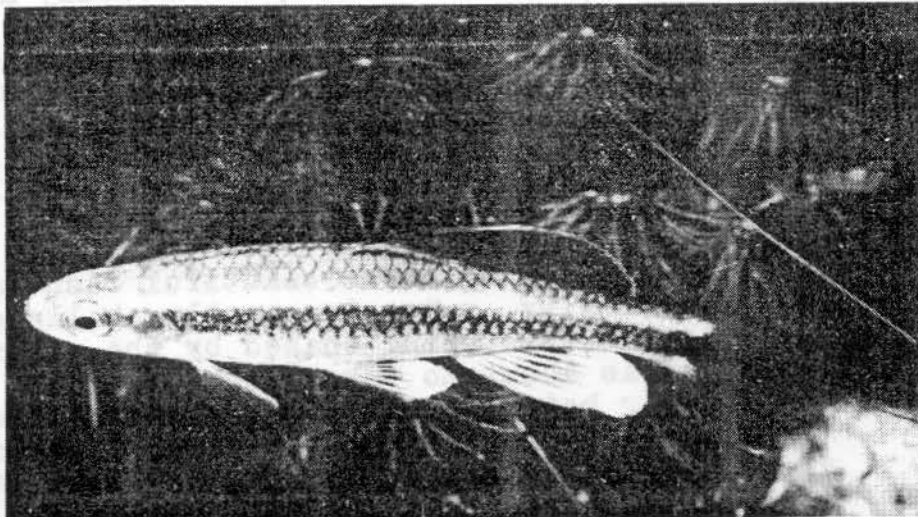


Notropis welaka

by:A.Terceira

During the 1974 AKA Convention in Portland, Oregon, I was touring the fish exhibit with some friends, and noticed a large group of "killie nuts" gathered around a tank in the far corner that was not entered in the exhibit. Being one of the nosey types, I tuned tail and headed for the crowd. There in a small 2 1/2



Notropis welaka Everman & Kendall

gallon tank were four of the most beautiful fishes I had ever seen. The two males were constantly approaching each other, and spreading all of their fins in one harmless challenge after another, a sight that held the attention of all of those gathered.

Once the initial shock of the beautiful gold body traversed by a bold black stripe, and sprinkled intermittently by gold spots had passed, I noticed that the fish had VIVID BLUE NOSES!!!! I was uncertain exactly what kind of fish they were, or where they originated from, but vowed that I would find out more about these "blue-nose" beaties.

During the many hours of conversations, these fish kept coming into the picture, they had stolen the hearts of everyone; later that evening over supper with Dr. Alfred Radda, the ichthyologist at the University of Vienna in Austria, I asked what type of fish he thought they were. He told me that they had been brought to the convention for him to take back to Austria, and that they were Notropis welaka, a native of the United States, and one of the finest fishes he had been given to take back with him -- even nicer than the Jordanella floridae I had brought for him. At that instant I decided that I must acquire these beautiful fish, and have them in one of my aquariums.

A few months later, a good friend of mine sent me two pairs of N. welaka Everman & Kendall which he had collected in the Flor-

ida area. I immediately set up a tank for these fish in the following manner: I used a 15 gallon tank that was located in a cooler area of my fish room and in such a position that it would receive some natural front sunlight. The tank contained natural gravel, and a heavy top covering of water sprite (Ceratopteris sp.). At one corner of the tank foxtail (Myriophyllum sp.) was planted to form a dense planted area in which I hoped the fish would deposit their eggs. The adults took little time adjusting to their new home, and readily ate any and all food offered to them. They ate dry staple food with the same gusto as the live foods, and seemed content at any temperature from 70° to 80°F., showing little stress at either temperature extreme. I had placed an inside filter containing activated carbon and wool in one corner, and added an airstone which I set bubbling at a rather fast rate in the middle of the tank to provide maximum circulation of the water.

The tank containing these beautiful fish was a constant picture of activity, males innocently challenging one another! Soon females were being chased by the males, a sure sign that spawning was about to take place. The fish spawned within two weeks after being set up, and scattered their eggs throughout the dense cover that I had provided. I removed the parents, and patiently waited, The young were free swimming in 6 days, and seemed to feed on infusoria present in the tank. Once the young were free-swimming I began to feed Paramecium sp. twice daily for one week, and then added newly hatched brine shrimp to their diets, all of which were quickly consumed. The young fish grew at a normal rate, and within three weeks separating of sexes must be done to assure some of the slower growing young a chance to catch up to their faster growing brethren.

The Notropis genus consists of over 100 species, and are seldom looked on as a source of additions to an aquarium. Most members of the genus are lively, active, and small enough to do quite well in the average community tank. They are good eaters, and seldom quarrel with themselves or their tank mates. There are only three members of this genus generally mentioned in aquarium literature, the Red Shiner (Notropis lutrensis), the Common Shiner (N. cornutus) which is abundant in streams east of the Rokies, and the Spot Tail Shiner (N. hudsonsis) which is noted for a conspicuous tail spot which appears during the breeding season. Why Notropis welaka has not been introduced or mentioned in most aquarium literature is truly a mystery to me. It is surely one of the most beautiful of the Notropis species I have ever seen, and a hardy, peaceful companion to most any tropical species.

In the future I hope to distribute tank raised specimens to some of our native fishes lovers to insure that we do not have to be without these fish. According to the collector, they are becoming harder and harder to find in Florida, and that's where they supposedly abound. I hope this fish does not become another fatality of progress, it is simply too beautiful to lose.....