

SPAWNING OF FUNDULUS CHRYSOTUS

by Rodney Harper, Marietta, Georgia

The Golden-ear Killifish (Fundulus chrysotus) is common along the Gulf Coast in freshwater drainages with very little salinity. The biotope is usually densely vegetated, with a muddy substratum. Fundulus cingulatus and F. olivaceus occur in these same areas.

On a recent trip to my home town of Bayou la Batre, Alabama, I had a chance to collect these beautiful fish. After catching 25-30 within an hour, I headed for home. On arrival, I introduced the fish to a 20L aquarium with one teaspoon of salt to every two gallons. The salt was added for the purpose of controlling parasites. The fish didn't seem to mind, and they adjusted very well.

After two weeks of captivity, the males began to turn to breeding colors. They displayed several small red spots along the abdomen. Their gill plates became brilliant gold and their fins dull gold. The females colored up a little, but not much; the only noticeable change was to the gold spot on the gill plate.

To induce spawning, I introduced some home-made spawning mops of typical crochet yarn. The pairs found these mops to their liking and began to spawn in them.

After three days, I removed the mops to collect the eggs. I gave up after collecting 200-300 eggs because there were so many. The eggs themselves are not large, but they can be seen in the dark yarn. Some of the eggs were sticking to the mop and some were not. I transferred the eggs to several small betta bowls with 2" of water in the bottom. Twenty eggs went into each jar with the addition of three drops of methylene blue to deter fungus.

The eggs began to hatch eight to ten days later with almost 90-percent yield. The fry were large enough to take brine shrimp nauplii. They grew to ½" in four weeks and were then transferred from a five-gallon tank to a ten-gallon. Rapid growth continued; the fry reached 1" in 12 weeks.

Golden-ears are fairly peaceful fish when kept in a species tank, but they will devour almost anything that will fit into their mouths. Therefore, it is not advisable to raise the fry in the parents' tank until they have grown past mouth size.

References

Audubon Field Guide to North American Fishes, Whales & Dolphins (New York: Knopf, 1983)

Ostrow, Marshall E. Breeding Killifish (Neptune, N.J.: TFH Publications).
