

AN UNEXPECTED SPawning OF SPECKLED DACE

by Valerie Burtson, South Lake Tahoe, California

I have a 55-gallon Tru Vue Hexagon Tank which is my plant tank. It had been inhabited for several months by five Speckled Dace (Rhinichthys osculus), two Lahontan Redside Shiners (Richardsonius egregius), and a large Tahoe Sucker (Catostomus tahoensis). They are rather shy fish, and I had provided them with a large ceramic castle to take refuge in. The fluorescent light is left on about twelve hours a day, and the tank receives indirect light from the window. As a result, there is always a growth of algae. The leaves of the giant vallisneria that reach the top of the tank always have a thick growth.

Around the middle of July, I was feeding the fish when I noticed a small movement at the top of the tank. I was really surprised when I noticed about six free-swimming fry feeding on the algae growth on the leaves of the plants. A closer examination of the Magnum power filter revealed about a dozen fry. So after returning the fry to the tank, a circular sponge from my Eheim inside power filter was placed over the tube. I then began feeding the fry on microworms and baby brine shrimp. Shortly afterwards I added Tetra egglayer baby food to the menu. Now the kids grew like crazy. Since the adults were busy hiding on the bottom of the tank, it seemed like an ideal situation; the fry stayed at the top of the tank and could feed uninterrupted. About the middle of September, however, I noticed that someone had been munching on the tails of a few of the fry, so the adults were removed.

The conditions at the time of spawning were as follows: temperature, approximately 74-76°; pH 7.0; water soft, with rock salt added at the rate of a teaspoon per gallon. This works well with my goldfish, and the native fish that I have seem to like it as well.

I did not see any part of the spawning procedure, so unfortunately I can't add any details. Yet!

Speckled Dace young are available from Valerie for the cost of postage or for trade. Write Valerie Burtson, PO Box 14373, S. Lake Tahoe, CA 95702 or call 916-541-0369.