

Lipstick Characin

Moenkhausia cosmops



Natural Range

The upper basins of the rivers Rio Paraguai and Rio Tapajos in Brazil

Maximum Size and Longevity

Maximum length reported for *Moenkhausia cosmops* is about 6 cm and life span of 3-5 years.

Water Quality

- Temperature: 24 °C - 26 °C.
- pH: 6.0—7.0
- General Hardness: 30—150 ppm.

Feeding

Lipstick characins are omnivorous and will readily take most types of aquarium foods. They will accept flake and pellet and also benefit from most frozen foods. We recommend AI Naturals Range Frozen Brine Shrimp, Krill and Tropical Mix for these fish. Ideally, add live foods such as Black worms and *Daphnia* to their diet as well.

Compatibility

Best kept in schools (minimum 5 in the group). Different characin species can generally be kept together with no problems. Lipsticks will also mix readily with a wide range of species and are generally an ideal community fish. It is not a good idea to mix them with species that grow very large as predation can be a factor due to their smaller size. Beware of elongated fins on some species as they can be nipped. Note: as they are omnivorous, they can be prone to eating aquatic plants.

Colour and Varieties

The name *cosmops* in ancient Greek means “with a decorated face” and the Lipstick characin certainly has a striking one, with red lips, blue eye shadow and a shimmering scale pattern it’s a very attractive little characin. Note: Being new to science only one variant is known to exist.

Sexing

This species, like many in its genus, shows no sexual dimorphism at all. This makes sexing of the fish difficult. Best to set up a breeding program with small schools.

General Information

This species has only recently been described scientifically and is considered to be a close relative of the well known species *Moenkhausia sanctaefilomenae* (Red eye tetra) and *M oligolepis* (Glass tetra).

Lipstick characin have only recently (within the last 4 years) started to be imported into the fish keeping hobby and have had great success. Being unique they have fitted in well with many people’s community tanks.

Given a varied and well balanced diet with enough tank space to openly school, looking after the Lipstick characin is something any fish hobbyist can do.

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