

## Bitterling

*Rhodeus sericeus, Rhodeus amarus*



### Natural Range

These cold water fish are mainly found in western Asia and Europe in ponds, lakes and backwaters.

### Maximum Size and Longevity

Bitterlings will grow to about 10cm and live for up to 3 years.

### Water Quality

Bitterlings are not a fussy fish when it comes to water conditions. They can handle varying temperatures, pH, and general hardness. The conditions you should keep your Bitterlings at, as follows.

- Temperature: 13°C - 22°C.
- pH: 7.0—7.5
- General Hardness: 100—200 ppm.

### Feeding

Bitterlings will feed on a lot of different foods including dry flakes, pellets and appreciate live or frozen foods.

### Compatibility

Bitterlings are a very popular coldwater fish that can be kept in ponds and tanks. They can be kept with a range of species including goldfish and coldwater natives such as Murray River rainbows. They are not an aggressive fish and will not be found nipping at other fishes fins.

### Colour and Varieties

A wonderful aquarium fish; peaceful, active and hardy. They have a high body with a pointy nose. They grow to a good size and display a beautiful bluish green iridescent sheen and rose coloured fins. When the males are in breeding season they will get a bright orange shine to their bellies and the fins on the fish will get a bright red colour to them.

### Sexing

Bitterlings have a fascinating and unusual breeding method. The female Bitterling lays her eggs in the gills of a fresh water mussel. The male which develops brilliant colours at breeding time, quickly follows and his sperm is sucked into the mussel's gill cavity to fertilise the eggs. The eggs will then stay inside the mussels gill cavity for up to 4 weeks, after which the baby Bitterlings (fry) emerge fully able to fend for themselves.