

## Kissing Gourami

### *Helostoma rudolfi*

Pic: Pink Kissing Gourami



#### Common Names

Kissing gourami, kissers, or kissing fish

#### Natural Range

Southeast Asia

#### Maximum Size and Longevity

Maximum size 20- 30cm, with a lifespan of up to 20+ years.

#### Water Quality

- Temperature: 24 °C - 28 °C.
- pH: 6.8—7.8
- General Hardness: 100—200 ppm.

#### Feeding

Kissing gouramis are easy to feed and will accept a variety of foods, including pellets, flakes and frozen. Their diet should primarily consist of foods high in vegetable matter; products with spirulina listed in the ingredients are advised. We recommend feeding Aquarium Industries Naturals Range frozen Leafy Spinach, as part of a balanced diet, to help with their need for plant matter.

#### Compatibility

Kissing gouramis are suited to community tanks with medium to large size fish. As they can be aggressive towards smaller species they should not be kept with small fish unless there is sufficient space. Kissing gouramis have been known to occasionally rasp the sides of other fish, including other kissers. This may remove their slime coat and potentially damage their scales. (This behaviour is not common.)

#### Colour and Varieties

Colour forms include the commonly seen pink (pic above), along with marbled and wild green forms.

A short bodied mutation is relatively new and very popular (pic at right). The shorter body gives it a balloon-like appearance, which is sought after in many countries. This mutated strain is not as hardy as the naturally occurring varieties, and has a shorter lifespan.

#### Sexing

Sexual dimorphism is minimal as both sexes of *H. rudolfi* look almost identical. Females will be slightly larger around the midsection, when mature.

#### General Information

In nature *H. rudolfi* are usually found in slow moving, heavily vegetated lakes or marshes. Because they require plant matter in their diet, the use of sturdy live plants such as Java Fern (*Microsorium pteropus*) is recommended.

They derive their common name from the behaviour you see when keeping a few individuals together. Kissing gouramis will appear to lock jaws in a 'kiss' at random times. Scientists still aren't sure of the true purpose of this behaviour, although it's believed to be related to their complex hierarchy. It is thought that males will lock jaws to find their place within the group. This is supported by the fact that we see a reduction in the frequency of the kissing behaviour with age, as the desire to conquer mating territories diminishes.

Overall these interesting little gouramis are a great beginner fish, as they will tolerate a range of water conditions, are compatible with most tank mates, and will eagerly take most foods.



Pic: Short Bodied Kissing Gourami

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