

Clown Loach

Botia macracantha



Natural Range

The Clown Loach originates from the inland waters in Indonesia on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo.

Maximum Size and Longevity

The maximum size of loaches varies between 40 -50 cm. In aquaria it can reach a size of about 12 - 15cm easily.

Water Quality

- Temperature: 25 °C - 28 °C
- pH: 6.4 – 7. 4
- General Hardness: 150- 200 ppm

Feeding

In the wild, the Clown Loach is a bottom-dwelling omnivorous fish. They are not difficult to feed in an aquarium and it can be given a varied diet of Tetra Crisps, Tetra Colour Bits, bloodworms, flake food, live, frozen foods, freshwater shrimp and vegetable matter. Like all fish, juvenile Clown Loaches will relish the addition of live foods (such as black worms), They will also eat any snails within the aquarium.

Compatibility

This beautiful peaceful fish with spectacular designs of black bands and bright red fins makes an excellent addition to a community tank. The Clown Loach will be a little shy when initially introduced to the tank but soon becomes accustomed to its new environment. Do not keep them with aggressive fish as they will stress out this sociable active fish.

Colour and Varieties

It has a long and laterally compressed body with an arched dorsal fin and four pairs of barbels. The main body is reddish orange in colour with three wide vertical black bands. Its mouth faces downwards and has fleshy lips.

Sexing

Clown Loach are sexually dimorphic, meaning there is morphological difference between individuals of different sex in the same species. The females are slightly plumper than males and the tips of the tail on the male curve inwards slightly, whereas the females have straight tips. It is very rare to breed loaches in aquaria.

General Information

As their defence mechanism, Clown Loach can extend the movable spines found in the groove below the eye. They should be handled carefully as the spine may cause a painful wound, but fortunately is not venomous. For more information about Handling Hazardous Fish, download the "Handling Hazardous Fish Care Sheet" from the Aquarium Industries website.

Sometimes they appear to lie on their sides on the bottom of the tank or swim upside down and appear to be dead, this however is normal behaviour.

They are very effective at eradicating infestations of pond snails from aquariums.

Hints for Success

Since they come from fast moving waters of rivers and streams, it is best to provide them a tank with lots of clear, well filtered fast moving water. This can be achieved by correctly sized filtration, or with the use of power heads to create additional currents in the tank. They are sensitive to poor water quality and bright light. They should be given plenty of hiding places and should be kept in a large aquarium as they grow fairly quickly when given the right conditions.

Diseases and treatments

Clown Loach are prone to white spot and due to them being scaleless, they are sensitive to many medications containing formalin or copper sulphate. Half doses are recommended as are using malachite green based remedies.