

Breeding Angelfish



Cichlids are a large group of egg-laying fish that care for their young. The Freshwater Angelfish (*Pterophyllum scalare*), a member of the cichlids family, is a majestic and popular freshwater ornamental aquarium fish exhibiting quite peaceful behavior in its habitat. When breeding, the following must be considered.

Aquarium/Tank Size

The spawning tank should be able to hold at least 75 liters of water, while the rearing tank should have at least 187 liters. The factors that critically affect the size of tank used include **species, pH, feeding practices, water changing volume** and **frequency**. A **gentle filtration system** is necessary since these types of fish are not very fast swimmers.



Breeding Pair

Under ideal conditions, it generally takes a year for breeders to pair off. The pair is identified as one isolated in the aquarium as they protect a particular territory for spawning. The behaviour of the breeding pair entails male fishes attacking other males, or females dancing around their mate.

Breeding pair should be fish that are strong & healthy.

Tank Conditions

The tank should be cleaned daily to remove detritus material at the bottom. And on a weekly basis, a partial water change of at least 1 – 2/3 the tank's volume must be done. The spawning tank should be **slightly acidic** of optimum **pH 6.7**. The temperature of the water should be about

26°C. The rearing tanks from eggs to two (2) weeks old fry entails the use of **de-ionized** or soft water and **fungus preventatives**. In addition, a 20% water change is needed. For over two weeks old fry, the use of normal dechlorinated tap water can be used. Rain water is also excellent.

Spawning Tank Setup

The best suited spawning materials are PVC pipes, slate, Amazon plants or a **band of acrylic** of about 2 inches wide. This should be set at a 45° angle resting against the side of the aquarium. The reason being Cichlids such as Angelfish prefer laying eggs at an angle. Plants and /or gravel are usually negligible.



A pair of Angelfishes spawning.

Food and Feeding Schedule

The type of food ingested by the Cichlid could drastically affect breeding. As the Angelfish grows, so does its appetite. However, at a young age the diet is very limited.

At one to three weeks the young fry could be fed the **yolk of hard boiled eggs** squeezed through **cheesecloth**. They could also be fed **Brine Shrimp** in light quantities three to four times daily so as to prevent overfeeding, ammonia accumulation and disease.



At three to five weeks, **fine flakes** and/or Brine Shrimp could be fed to the fry. **Dry foods** can now be used twice daily for five to seven week old fry until adulthood. Adult spawners on the other hand, should be fed **high quality flakes** and/or **Tubifex worms** up to four times daily while keeping in mind the cleanness of the water.

Common Problems with Breeding Cichlid

- The Cichlids such as Angelfishes have a **habit of eating their first spawn** completely especially when the parent fishes are disturbed.
- As **cold-blooded** animals, Cichlids will live longer at lower temperatures (**24°C**). Higher temperatures such as about **85°C** promote faster growth, better immune response but shorter life span.
- **Low quality strains** of Angelfish may occur if proper culling (elimination of flawed strains) is not executed during breeding.