

Enjoying Arowana as a hobby

Keeping of Arowana can be a tedious job, but with a little planning, you can enjoy keeping this beautiful creature without all the unnecessary task. If you want to enjoy keeping the fish, you need to understand the fish more. Its natural habitat, its feeding habit and many many more.

Maintenance of the dragon fish in an aquarium at home is relatively simple, if a few basic requirements are met. A 90cm X 45cm tank for young fishes up to 40cm length and 120cm to 150cm X 75cm tank for larger fishes is required.

Ample space in the tank will prevent the fish from being stunted in growth.

The tank must be covered and the location should preferably be in a quiet area of the house, away from direct sunlight and constant human traffic.

Aeration and filtration is essential but no decoration within the tank is required as this may cause damage to the fish when feeding. Because of its

aggressive nature, this voracious but easily tamed fish should be raised in

isolation. The dragon fish is extremely sensitive to chlorinated water and

water from the tap should be aged at least a day before use. Weekly water

changes are encouraged, but only partially (not more than a 1/3) so as to

avoid upsetting the fish. Never change the water's pH or hardness level

suddenly because this can be fatal to the fish. pH and hardness levels must

be slowly and carefully adjusted so that the fish can adapt comfortably. This applies also to the temperature of the water.

Favorite food are insects (e.g. meal worms, crickets, and grasshoppers),

small frogs and live fishes (e.g. guppies, mollies and goldfish), but to ensure

that the fish acquires rich coloration, it should be fed live-shrimps,

cockroaches and centipedes. Young fishes are fed up to 2 to 3 times a day,

but for adult fishes daily feeding or even on alternate days is recommended.

What to note when feeding:

1. When feeding, it is best to remove the sharp pincers of the prawn to prevent injuring the throat and stomach of the fish.
2. Live-food for the feeding should be kept and reared in a separate tank. Small fishes and prawns should be properly cleared of dirt and toxic matters before feeding the Dragon Fish.
3. Weight of live-food should amount to 75% of Dragon Fish's total feed.
4. Live cockroaches should be used as dead ones may have been sprayed with insecticide.
5. Tubifex Worms should be made immobile before putting into the tank to prevent causing injury to the Dragon Fish when chasing the worms.
6. Avoid feeding young Dragon Fish with whole prawns as these may cause indigestion to the young ones, thereby resulting in death.

Things to do and have when transferring the Dragon Fish to a new aquarium tank:

Equipment:

- a. Styrofoam box (with lid) - for containing and transporting the bagged fish

- b. Plastic bags to contain the fish
- c. Oxygen tank or battery - operated air pump
- d. Newspaper, rubber-bands, polythene bags, scotch-tape and medication (in the event of injury)

During winter, one may consider using a hot-water bag to keep the fish warm as the water-changing process may be time-consuming, thus causing the temperature of the water to decrease too suddenly.

Two days before the moving, the feeding of the fish must stop.

It is best to use a double-layer of plastic bags to contain the fish. A lining of newspaper could be placed between the 2 bags. This can warm and calm the fish and also prevent the fish sharp teeth from tearing the bag.

Using Plastic Bags to hold the Dragon Fish when transferring:

Dragon Fish that are smaller (12 cm and below) may be transferred with the use of a net. The bigger ones need the use of plastic bags. Never use a net to catch the bigger Dragon Fish as it may cause injury to them.

A polythene bag is most suitable because it is transparent, so the Dragon Fish is not frightened. When catching the Dragon Fish, let the polythene bag sink into the water with its mouth wide open and slowly lure the Dragon Fish into the bag. After catching it, raise the bag out of the aquarium and transfer it into the new aquarium immediately.

Things to do before catching the fish with the polythene bag:

1. Check to see that the polythene bag is not leaking.
2. To catch the fish, face the mouth of bag towards the Dragon Fish's head and gently guide it into the bag.
3. Water in the bag should be one and a half times higher than the depth of the fish.
4. Twist the mouth of the bag to bind the bag so as to lift up the Dragon Fish.
5. If the Dragon Fish can be moved into its new environment within 10 to 20 minutes, oxygen is not required. If the period is longer, then it is necessary to pump the bag full of oxygen.
6. When letting out the fish, the whole bag should be immersed for 5 to 10 minutes for the fish to adapt to the external temperature before letting the fish out of the bag.
7. Open the mouth of the bag to let the fish out and observe it for 30 minutes to make sure that the Dragon Fish is adapting to the new environment.
8. Leave the Dragon Fish alone in the aquarium for a whole day. Lights need not be switched on in the day as darkness can calm the fish but at night leave a light on for a few days to prevent the fish from trying to break out from its new environment. Feeding is also not necessary until it is more or less stable before feeding it a little at a time until it fully regains its appetite. The transferring process is then completed.