

# Making the right selection

Arowana is a highly prized fish, so when you are choosing a fish to purchase, it is important to know that you are getting the best fish. In our farm, we only sell the best fish to you and here are some criteria when you choose your Arowana.

<a href="#">Colour</a>	According to species, color should be bright and lustrous.
<a href="#">Body Shape</a>	Sufficiently broad and long, with each fin complete and in place.
<a href="#">Scales</a>	Neatly arranged, shiny, evenly shaped and big.
<a href="#">Mandibular</a>	Long and straight, equal in length, and matching Barbels with body-color of the fish.
<a href="#">Fins</a>	Big and widespread. Each fin should have smooth hard-fin rays.
<a href="#">Eyes</a>	Even in shape and size, not droopy, not protruding, must be clear and not misty.
<a href="#">Mouth</a>	Tightly closed, and jaws not protruding out.
<a href="#">Teeth</a>	Neatly arranged and in-line with the jaw-line.
<a href="#">Gill Covers</a>	Compact and close to the head and body. Gill covers must be shiny and not scarred.
<a href="#">Vent</a>	Not protruding, flat on pelvic region.
<a href="#">Swimming Style</a>	Graceful and often swimming in the upper part of the water in the aquarium.

## Colour

The most important criteria is the colour of the fish because it is often the colour that first attracts the hobbyist. Hence, if the body shape is attractive but the colour is not, it cannot be considered perfect. According to the different types of Dragon Fish, the standard colours differ. **BEWARE OF FAKE RED AND BLOOD AROWANAS IN THE MARKET!** One way of preventing this is to get your fish from a CITES registered farm and make sure that the farm has a good sales record.

## Body Shape

The ideal shape is one that is proportionate, neither too fat nor too thin. Essential to look after its environment and the food that it takes. The space (size of tank) directly affects the growth and progress of the body. A limited space may result in its stunted size, or rounded, hunched shape. Basically the length of the tank should be 3 times the average length Dragon Fish during the growing stage. Food should be nutritious. Besides fish and prawns, other types of food may be fed. Do not allow the Dragon Fish to be inclined to one type or eat too much. Feeding should be well controlled.

## Scales

Scales are the Dragon Fish's distinctive feature. Neatly layered and slippery scales are comparable to the good complexion of a person. The scales should be even and radiant. They should not have dark spots, although red spots are welcome as they are considered auspicious.

Many people have a misconception about the scales. They think that when the scales drop off, they may not be replaced naturally. The only point to note is in replacement, it has an itchy sensation causing it to rub its body against the side of the aquarium. This may cause the fish to be damaged. To prevent this, it is advisable to remove anything that may cause injury in the aquarium. If there is loss of scales, they can grow back after 3 to 5 weeks. While they are being replaced, the water condition should be noted so as to prevent harmful bacteria from proliferating. If any scale is out of shape, it could be removed by anesthetize the fish during the operation. A new scale will eventually grow in its place.

### Mandibular Barbels (Whiskers)

Many fish lovers have high regard for the Dragon Fish's whiskers because they resemble the dragon's horns - a sign of blessing.

Mandibular barbels must be equally long, straight and the color similar to its body-color. These act as an extension of the Dragon Fish's power. Any broken, shortened or bent whiskers may mean a reduction to its majestic appearance.

How then can these whiskers be preserved and maintained?

First of all, one must prepare ample space for free activity and to prevent the whiskers from getting damaged. Without this ample space, the Dragon Fish's whiskers cannot grow properly and the tips may rub against the sides of the aquarium thus getting damaged.

Points to consider:

- § Do not decorate aquarium with furnishings such as rocks and other decorations.
- § Do not drop food in a corner. They should be put in the Centre of the aquarium.
- § Do not knock against the aquarium to cause the Dragon Fish to be shocked or frightened.
- § Cover the aquarium with a thick glass, the edges of which should be smoothed and rounded.

The above 4 points can help to prevent the Dragon Fish's whiskers from getting damaged in its excitement or when it is frightened.

Should the whiskers be broken or damaged, the recovery period varies according to the age of the Dragon Fish. Normally a young Dragon Fish recovers faster than an older Dragon Fish.

Whiskers may be damaged in 2 ways:

1. **At the root**

When this occurs, recovery may be difficult even for a young Dragon Fish.

2. **Away from**

It is necessary to decide whether to leave it to grow the root back naturally, or to use a needle to help speed the growth. Even if the whisker is bent but not broken, it is best to cut it off so that it will not be out of shape when regrown.

## Fins

The fins of the Dragon Fish are like its limbs. Any damaged fin can affect the Dragon Fish's graceful movement and ultimately the beauty of the whole fish. A beautiful fin should be smooth and outstretched, with all its hard rays straight and smooth. There should be no tear.

Care should begin with the baby Dragon Fish. At this stage, it should not be given too much space. The fish is easily frightened as it feels insecure in a spacious environment. In dashing about at every slightest disturbance, often suffers injuries.

A smaller space which gives the fish a feeling of security will also enable the fish to be more active, thereby strengthening its fins.

When it is at the adolescent stage and more stable, it can then be transferred into a larger aquarium.

To avoid hurting the fins, these points should be noted:

- § Do not install ornamental displays such as rocks and other decorations.
- § Do not rear with other fishes in the same tank.
- § To lift the young, fine net should be used. When it reaches 15 cm, net should not be used. Hold in plastic bag instead.

If a piece of the hard ray of the fin is injured, it could be gently removed at the base and a new ray will grow in its place. In case of more rays, then the Dragon Fish needs to be given anesthesia before operation to remove the broken rays with a pair of scissors.

When fin-rays are broken, they need to be treated immediately, especially tail fins, as the Dragon Fish depends largely on its tail fin to move about.

Although fins may recover by themselves, they may be disfigured when they do.

After surgery, a replaced fin can be almost perfect, except it may be a little wavy.

However, it is best to get a specialist to perform the operation.

## Eyes

In the natural environment, the eyes are focused above water-level to search for live food. However, when the fish is reared in a fish tank which is transparent all round, the eyes tend to focus downwards due to distractions around and as food is readily found around and at the bottom of the tank.

The hobbyist need not be unduly worried about the fish's health although the value of the fish is affected by this phenomena. This is only a natural adaptation to its environment.

A good quality fish's eyes must be centralised, compact and focused, not droopy or protruding. They must revolve naturally and be shaped evenly, sparkle brightly and clear.

In the aquarium, the Dragon Fish's eyes tend to focus downwards sometimes because:

1. When it is kept in an aquarium, its feeding habit changes because its prey are no longer floating above but are at the bottom of the aquarium.
2. It gets distracted by movement outside the glass panels of its aquarium.
3. It does not exercise enough, so fat is accumulated to bulge or protrude within the socket of the eyes causing the eyes to protrude or droop.

## Mouth

When close the upper and lower lips must not protrude. The lower jaw should not be loose. In the fish tank, the fish often rubs against the glass wall resulting in the loosening of the jaw muscles. To avoid this, the space must be increased or install a water jet to increase the speed flow of the water.

## Teeth

Generally, fish hobbyists do not pay much attention to its teeth. However, its teeth are quite important. If the teeth of the fish are not healthy, they will affect the fish's health.

## Gill Covers

Normal gill covers should be smooth and flat with no scratches or wrinkles. The following points should be noted:

- § Do not install ornamental displays in the aquarium.
- § Maintain the right temperature. Gill covers and head tissues may wrinkle if temperature is too high. A vast change in temperature may cause the fish to suffer tilted gill covers.
- § Change water regularly and maintain cleanliness and the best water condition.
- § Raise oxygen content in the water.



If there is any injury in the gill region, fish-treatment medication should be put into the water to prevent bacteria infecting wound.

## Vent

A healthy fish's vent should be horizontally located at the pelvic region. It should not be easily seen. If the vent protrudes it means the fish has a stomach problem- revealing the unhealthy state of the fish.

Exception is when the fish is due to deliver eggs or after it has delivered.

## Swimming Style

The style of movement is important in enhancing its beauty. A beautiful fish that does not swim gracefully can affect its aesthetic value. Correct posture is to swim vertically in water, spreading out all its fins. The mandibular barbels must be straight. It must be able to turn swiftly. Moving up and down or diagonally is not ideal.