

Hilltop Pet & Aquariums

Siamese Fighting Fish Information Sheet

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Open Monday - Friday 9:30am-6pm Weekends & Public Holidays 10am - 5pm

Introduction

In the wild, Siamese fighters (also known as 'Bettas') are found in ponds, slow flowing streams, water logged ditches and in rice paddy fields in tropical countries like Thailand (formerly known as Siam).

Life Span

Siamese fighters have relatively short lives. The average fighter will live for approximately two years; three or more is considered extremely old.

Housing

Siamese fighters, for oxygen purposes, do not need an overly large tank because they can take oxygen directly from the air (labyrinth fish). They will however require a tank large enough to house a heater as they are a tropical fish and not a cold water fish, as is a popular belief. The average temperature of Thailand is similar to that of Cairns. Tiny containers are unsuitable because the smaller the body of water, the more the polluted it can become. The larger the body of water, the less your tank will pollute (given the same amount of food and waste). Most Fighter deaths are attributed to polluted housing or temperature.

With the exception of a few, Fighters will live happily amongst other tropical fish. By themselves they are quite peaceful; it's other fish that you can have a problem with. Please see staff for compatible fish.

Never put two male Siamese Fighters together, as they will fight to the death, or place two male fighters in view of each other or house them in mirror backed tanks as they will become stressed and exhausted.

Temperature

Because of the Fighter's place of origin, they are considered a tropical fish. The optimum temperature for tropical fish is between 24°C and 26°C. They can become dull and refuse to eat if the temperature drops below 20°C.

Water Conditions & Filtration

The water should be kept at a neutral pH of 7.0 (6.8-7.2 is the ideal pH range). If using tap water, chlorine neutralizer must be used at a triple dose to remove the chlorine, chloramines and heavy metals. Chlorine and chloramines will burn the fish. Rainwater (assumedly not toxic) can also be used. Aquarium salts should be added to rainwater as it can be too soft. There are corner filters, power filters and canister filters available. The filtration needed by a tank all depends on the size of tank and the number of fish being kept. Replacement filter media/sponges are available for most filters.

Water Changes

If your aquarium has satisfactory filtration, water changes should be done every 4 weeks. If there is no filtration, weekly changes are recommended. This should be done with a gravel syphon cleaner, taking out a maximum of 25% at any given time - unless advised otherwise. Taking out too much water will change the pH, hardness and other water conditions too much which can stress the fish and may even result in death.

The sponge from your filter must always be rinsed in tap water with chlorine neutralizer added as chlorine kills the good bacteria set up in the sponge. They are not meant to be spotless, as long as you remove the major debris, it is clean enough. The best way to add water is to put the new water into a bucket, add de-chlorinator (at a triple dose rate or water hardening crystals if rainwater), then add to your tank. Recheck and adjust your pH every 6-8 hours until it is correct. When cleaning your tank, be sure never to use any chemicals as these are deadly to your fish. Using an ammonia test kit is the best way to monitor if the tank is polluted and can often save the lives of the fish.

Maintenance

The requirements for keeping Siamese Fighting fish are the same as keeping tropical fish. A separate FISH INFORMATION SHEET is available which explains in detail how to set up and maintain a tropical aquarium.

Feeding

Most Fighters will not readily accept flake food; some will eat it to avoid starvation. They are carnivorous so they prefer live and frozen food. There are also a specific pellets designed for fighting fish that are available. A fish's diet should always be as varied as possible.

This brochure was put together by the staff of Hilltop Pet & Aquariums as a general guide to assist you in raising your pet and advising requirements to keep your friend happy and healthy.

If you cannot provide the proper care and housing, we strongly suggest you not purchase the animal.

We have books available for sale should you require more information.