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Common Name: African Butterfly
Other Common Names: Butterfly Fish
Scientific Name: *Pantodon buchholzi*
Origin or Range: Africa
Relative Size: Larger Than Average
Average Lifespan: ??? year(s)
Compatibility: Relatively Aggressive

Animal Description:

The exotic Butterfly Fish is a favorite among many freshwater hobbyists. With their delicate 'wings' these beautiful fish seem to fly gracefully atop their tanks. Their presence adds much allure and beauty to many freshwater aquariums.

The African Butterfly Fish, also called the Butterfly Fish, is a delightful addition to many freshwater aquariums. They are surface dwellers and do not do well with other surface fish. In addition, they will eat smaller fish in the aquarium. They are classified as semi-aggressive fish for these reasons. They are carnivorous and enjoy a wide variety of foods. Most Butterfly Fish are not fussy eaters. Some preferred live foods are; small fish, tubifex worms, glass worms, bloodworms, brine shrimp, crickets and daddy long leg spiders. They also do quite well with frozen foods such as; frozen brine shrimp, plankton, beef heart, glass worms, bloodworms, daphnia, and hi-pro. Many will also eat freeze-dried pellet and flake foods. It is important to make sure these foods float as these fish remain on the surface at all times. They will not do well with sinking foods. It should be noted that these fish will jump. In their natural environments, the Butterfly Fish can be seen gliding six feet over the surface! For this reason, they should never be kept in an aquarium that is not well covered. Many who have kept Butterfly Fish state that they will jump out of even the smallest holes. It is critical that no open areas remain exposed, not even the smallest holes should be left uncovered. The ideal temperature range for the African Butterfly Fish is somewhere between 73 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit. They need a slightly acidic and well-filtered environment. Generally, the African Butterfly Fish will enjoy a tank that has some live floating plants to provide cover. They are prone to nervousness and the presence of the floating plants decreases this. The African Butterfly Fish will typically do well in a variety of community tanks, just be sure that they are the only surface fish and that you keep similarly sized fish in the aquarium. Most beginners can do well with Butterfly Fish as long as they remember to keep the tank covered, raise them with similarly sized fish and feed a diet appropriate for a carnivorous fish.

The African Butterfly Fish will grow to an average mature length of four to five inches. Males will have larger pectoral fins than females, and the male has an indented anal fin, while the female's is straight edged. The pectoral fins are very large in both species and look much like wings. They have transverse stripes, which are formed by spots running across their pectorals. The upper parts of the body are olive with the ventral a silvery yellow with red hues. Their fins are vibrant pink with tiny violet-brown spots. Violet tinting is seen on the inside as well as the extremities. From a distance, the body appears a marbled brown and beige color. They have a wide upturned mouth.

The African Butterfly Fish is found in African in the waters of the West African Rainforest. They are commonly seen in Lake Chad, the Congo Basin, throughout Lower Niger, Cameroon, Ogooue, and Upper Zambezi. They have also been seen in the Niger Delta, Lower Ogun and in the Lower Cross River. They have been seen commercially for the last 90 years.

Specific Care Information:

The African Butterfly Fish jumps! It is imperative that the tank be covered. They have been known to jump out of even the smallest holes.

Breeding and Propagation:

Breeding the African Butterfly Fish is not an undertaking for the beginner. Experienced breeders report that it is not easy.

After spawning, the female will lay approximately 200 eggs. The eggs will float on the surface. Hatching will occur after less than two days. The resulting fry are very difficult to feed and care for. It is important for the food to float right past the fry for them to eat. It should be noted that the fry will only eat live foods such as mosquito larvae and daphnia.