

TAN NEVER SAW THESE!- by Jeff Bollbach

Who is Tan you ask? He's the Chinese Boy Scout leader with the fish--ya know, "Tan's Fish" [Tanichthys] Tan+ichthys. Found them right at the base of the White Cloud Mountain circa 1930. White Cloud = albonubes. Simple translation is Tan's Fish from White Cloud. Don't you love Latin?

The White Cloud Mountain minnow remained the only fish in its genus for over 70 years. Not until 2001 was another species discovered. This time, Tan, now 117 years old had moved down to Vietnam for his health. Just kidding, folks. But someone discovered a new fish to add to the genus that year and it came to be known as the Vietnamese sparkle eye White Cloud with the Latin description *Tanichthys micagemmae*. The species name means "Sparkling Gem" and sparkle it does!

This is a lovely little fish that is similar to the common White Cloud but has a few notable differences in appearance and care. It is a smaller fish topping out at an inch with the lower half of the body being lighter in color. The lateral stripe is centered on the body whereas it is higher up on albonubes. The Sparkle eye also has a bit more iridescences particularly in the eyes.

Micagemmae is also from a warmer climate and has a temperature range of 65 to 78 degrees.

Care is extremely easy. It is a hardy fish tolerant of a range of conditions and is not picky in its diet. Small foods are a must due to its tiny mouth. Forget about frozen bloodworms or adult brine shrimp. Baby brine shrimp and fine flake food are all it needs.

This is also a fish that truly breeds with almost no effort from the keeper. Fry will appear readily in a planted tank and the adults will not molest them at all. Older siblings will however eat their juniors though so it is best to wait for fry to appear and then move either them to another tank. Fry are small and require foods such as protozoa, vinegar eels, or APR powder. After a weeks growth they will begin to take newly hatched baby brine shrimp.

One thing that struck me about *T. micagemmae* is its iridescence. Sparkling gem is really an apt description. I

especially noticed this when I moved a few dozen two week old fry into a five gallon tank. Looking in the tank all one could see was a school of reflective color even at such an early age. One problem with this fish is that it still falls into the "rare fish" category. This means that it is going to be a hard fish to find in a local fish store. One place you can usually find it is Franks Aquarium [www.franksaquarium.com]. I hope that this lack of availability changes as I have found this fish delightful in both its beauty and temperament. Add to that the ease of care and you have a recipe for a fish that should become a staple in the hobby for years to come!