

Ancistrus sp. Albino Long Fin Variety

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In the fall of 2007, I picked up four small juvenile albino long fin Ancistrus catfish from Aquabid. After spending a month or two in a grow-out tank, the four were transferred to a heavily planted 36g tank with several livebearers and loaches (for snail control). The tank is kept at 78 degrees, ph 7.4 and features a large piece of driftwood for the Ancistrus to chew on if they want. After ten months, I put several clay pleco caves in the tank not intending to breed them so much as to provide more shelter since they were outgrowing their usual hiding spots. By this time, the largest of the Ancistrus had a face full of the fleshy growths that adult males develop.

In less than a week, this male was guarding a batch of large orange eggs on the ceiling of the far end of one of the caves. The eggs were yellow-orange and several millimeters across. The male fanned the eggs continuously while the female remained on top of the cave. I moved the cave (with the male still inside) to another tank to protect the future fry from predation by the loaches.

A week after the transfer, empty eggs shells were littered around the mouth of the cave but the male kept his fry sequestered in the cave for several more days before allowing them to venture out. I left the male with the fry to avoid another spawn too soon.

The baby Ancistrus have been growing nicely and are being fed a variety of sinking pellets including spirulina tablets and occasionally blanched zucchini. A few of the fry appear to have normal length tails but the majority is long-finned like the parents. What was really interesting to me is when they are just big enough to start hanging from the glass you can watch their hearts beat through their bodies since their bellies are almost transparent at that size. I enjoyed raising these babies, and they were quite unfussy.