

Hatching Rainbowfish Eggs - By Gary Lange

Rainbowfish eggs are easy to hatch and the fry aren't too difficult to raise if you know the right tricks. Buying a mop or a vial of eggs at an auction is an easy way to obtain a whole aquarium full of these amazing fish. There's nothing more beautiful than a tank full of lacustris or boesemani rainbows. Before you get started... If you have obtained multiple vials of eggs. **Hatch them separately and raise the fry separately.** Different species grow at different rates and the big ones will eat the small ones! Make sure you write down the name of the species on the tank AND in your log somewhere in case you lose the label. There are lots of blue rainbows and yellow rainbows so asking me to ID that yellow rainbow I brought to your club two years ago will not get you anywhere! This is a method for hatching small amounts of eggs in shallow trays. You'll need a small shallow tray that holds about two to three cups of water. If your water is soft (< ~ 70 ppm) you'll need a little bit of crushed shell or coral to add to the hatching tray and perhaps a pinch of aquarium salt. Do not use acriflavine in the water. Add 1-2 cups of warm **(80-82 degrees F)** freshly dechlorinated water. Don't use aged tank water as it contains lots of bacteria and fungi, which can destroy your eggs. A higher hatching temperature promotes fungus & lower temperatures end up losing eggs. Carefully add the eggs to the tray, taking a few minutes to acclimate them, especially if the temperatures or water conditions are very different. (My water is 125 ppm GH and 2 degrees KH). **Separate them as much as possible with an eyedropper, toothpicks or fine point tweezers if they are clumped together. If one egg funguses, remove it before it spreads to another. Protect the tray from strong light.** Make sure you keep it warm though, **80-82 F**. You can **float the tray in the aquarium** that you are going to use for the hatched fry or place it in a warm spot in your fish room. A freshly prepared bare 5 or 10 gallon tank makes for a good raising tank. Just add a seasoned sponge filter and you're set. Change the water in the tray at least once every other day. Large rainbowfish eggs take from 7-11 days to hatch from when they were laid. Pseudomugils can take as long as 18 days. As fry hatch use an eyedropper and cup to transfer them. Then acclimate them to the fry-raising tank. **Start feeding the fry** small amounts of their first food **immediately**, they don't have much of an egg yolk sac so if you wait, they will die! I like to use 2.5-5 gallon tanks for 12-50 fry. Be careful with the 2.5 gallon tank it is easy to lose water quality in a small aquarium. If you have a lot of fry go to the 5-gallon size or even a 10-gallon. A ten is what I most often use if I'm hatching a large mop of eggs. It is important that the temperature of this fry-raising tank be **at least 80 degrees F, preferably 82 degrees F**. Water cooler than 78 degrees will result in a loss of most of the fry in a few days. I have raised fry in temperatures as high as 88 degrees F without any problems. Higher temperatures actually help them grow faster. Add a few snails and an established sponge filter to the fry tank. **Bubble the sponge filter VERY SLOWLY!** Rainbowfish fry live at the top 1/8-inch of the water for their first few days and they will soon drown in "the surf" that you produce by heavy aeration. For a first food you can use green water (say some), vinegar eels (great, but time consuming) or use what I use. There is a fry food by called

Golden Pearls, 5-50 micron size that is perfect for rainbows. Sprinkle a little on the surface; don't mix it in the water. **Feed twice a day, if possible more often.** You can get it at Brine Shrimp Direct www.brineshrimpdirect.com. In three to seven days they will be ready to eat newly hatched brine shrimp. Your goal is to get them to eat **LIVE** baby brine shrimp as soon as possible so they will thrive. I also alternate other first foods with Golden Pearls or feed a powder mix including Chlorella powder, (health food store) spirulina, (not as good as Chlorella though) and Astaxanthin powder (NatuRose, BS direct), which really brings out the reds early in red colored fish. Keep it in a tightly sealed container in your freezer, just a bit in the fish room as it does go bad, same advice for all of the mentioned powdered foods. **Go easy on the feedings** but the snails should clean up the excess. If you feed too much, siphon off the bottom debris. I usually like to wait about two weeks before I do the first water change (about 20%), which is then performed every few days. *** Make sure the water you add back is the same temperature as **the fry are very temperature sensitive.** Once they get about 6 weeks old I increase the percentage of water changed to 30% especially with a large hatch. For non-rainbows I would most likely be performing weekly 50% water changes. If you can remember to do smaller frequent water changes your bows will reward you with good growth. Rainbows certainly grow slower than most tropical fish but if you keep doing your water changes and keep them warm they will be producing their own eggs in 6-8 months. **For hatching eggs in a mop I do basically the same thing except I add the mop directly to the rearing tank with fresh dechlorinated water.** A slight amount of bubbling to avoid surface scum is all that is needed until they are hatched, and then you can add a sponge filter. Once the young juveniles reach about 1 to 1.25 inches in length I start backing off of the temperature, especially if I have raised them in the high eighties. Somewhere between 74 and 78 is fairly ideal for juveniles and most adults. Many of your adult rainbows will actually do better at even lower temperatures but most can thrive in temperatures anywhere between 70 and 80 degrees.

With just a little work up front you can have an aquarium full of constantly moving color. There are still SO many new species of rainbowfish that haven't even been discovered yet! So by all means do a little practicing so you can have a whole school of these magnificent creatures. There's **always** a new one just around the corner that will tickle your fancy.

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Email gwlange@sbcglobal.net

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rainbowfishaquarium/>

<http://rainbowfish-forum.freeforums.net/>

Take a tour of my fishroom https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcO3CG_xh58

ANGFA - <https://www.angfa.org.au/>

Home of the Rainbowfish & Adrian's Book <http://rainbowfish.angfaqld.org.au/>

<http://www.regenbogenfische.com/>

<http://www.irg-online.de/pages/publikationen/articles-in-english.php>