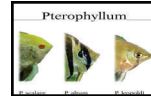




Angelfish (*Pterophyllum scalare*)

Order: Perciformes - Family: Cichlidae



Type: Tropical

Also known as:

Origin: Its natural habitat Amazon River basin in Peru, Colombia, and Brazil, particularly the Ucayali, Solimões and Amazon rivers, as well as the rivers of Amapá in Brazil, the Oyapock River in French Guiana and the Essequibo River in Guyana.

Overview: Angelfish are one of the most commonly kept freshwater aquarium fish, as well as the most commonly kept cichlid. They are prized for their unique shape, color and behavior. They are considered one of the most beautiful angels, but are more difficult to keep than the common angelfish, *Pterophyllum scalare*. They are also difficult to find in pet stores, as they are usually wild caught.

Description: *Pterophyllum scalare*, the species most commonly referred to as angelfish or freshwater angelfish, is the most common species of Pterophyllum held in captivity.

Physical Characteristics: It is found in swamps or flooded grounds where vegetation is dense and the water is either clear or silty. Its native water conditions range from a pH of 6.0 to 8.0, a water hardness range of 5 - 13 dH, and water temperature ranging from 24 to 30 °C (75 to 86 °F). It was originally described as *Zeus scalaris* in 1823, and has also been described by several different names, including *Platax scalaris*, *Plataxoides dumerilii*, *Pterophyllum eimekei*, *Pterophyllum dumerilii*, and *Pterophyllum eimekei*.

Sexing / Sexual Dimorphism: *Pterophyllum scalare* are hard to sex, when spawning they will pair off but it is not until the eggs are laid that the females become obvious.

Color Form: Its natural base color is silver but with three brownish/red vertical stripes and red striations into the fins.

Temperament: Compatibility (temperament to other fish species): Peaceful

Diet: Omnivore - Angelfish have a voracious appetite and will accept all flake and pellet foods. Twice a week they should be offered blood worms or brine shrimp. As they are mainly obtained in the wild, live foods will be preferred. They will eat live and frozen brine shrimp, granular fish food, and live and frozen blood worms.

Breeding: *P. scalare* is relatively easy to breed in the aquarium, although one of the results of generations of inbreeding is that many breeds have almost completely lost their rearing instincts resulting in the tendency of the parents to eat their young. In addition, it is very difficult to accurately identify the gender of any individual until they are nearly ready to breed. Angelfish pairs form long-term relationships where each individual will protect the other from threats and potential suitors. Upon the death or removal of one of the mated pair, breeders have experienced both the total refusal of the remaining mate to pair up with any other angelfish and successful breeding with subsequent mates. Depending upon aquarium conditions, *P. scalare* reaches sexual maturity at the age of six to twelve months or more. In situations where the eggs are removed from the aquarium immediately after spawning, the pair is capable of spawning every seven to ten days. Around the age of approximately three years, spawning frequency will decrease and eventually cease. When the pair is ready to spawn, they will choose an appropriate medium upon which to lay the eggs and spend one to two days picking off detritus and algae from the surface. This medium may be a broad-leaf plant in the aquarium, a flat surface such as a piece of slate placed vertically in the aquarium, a length of pipe, or even the glass sides of the aquarium. The female will deposit a line of eggs on the spawning substrate, followed by the male who will fertilize the eggs. This process will repeat itself until there are a total of 100 to more than 1,200 eggs, depending on the size and health of the female fish. As both parents care for the offspring throughout development, the pair will take turns maintaining a high rate of water circulation around the eggs by swimming very close to the eggs and fanning the eggs with their pectoral fins. In a few days, the eggs hatch and the fry remain attached to the spawning substrate. During this period, the fry will not eat and will survive by consuming the remains of their yolk sacs. At one week, the fry will detach and become free-swimming. Successful parents will keep close watch on the eggs until they become free-swimming. At the free-swimming stage, the fry can be fed newly-hatched brine shrimp (*Artemia* spp.) or microworms. It is generally accepted that brine shrimp are the superior choice for fast growth rates of fry.

Life Span: Expected lifespan is 10 years, there are cases of *Pterophyllum scalare* living considerably longer.

Disease:

Max. Size: The Altum is much larger than the common angelfish and can reach 15 inches tall. Size of the fish in home aquariums (min-max): 10 - 15 cm (3.94" - 5.91")

Care Level: This species is recommended for intermediate to advanced aquarists due to the detailed maintenance it requires for proper health

Minimum Tank Size: The tank for Altums must be large and deep due to their size.

Water Conditions: Angelfish will do best if kept in an acidic environment, pH should be below 7.5 (note: 7.5 is still slightly alkaline – acidic is defined as below 7.0). All angelfish will prefer water with a pH of at most 7.0. Though most *Pterophyllum scalare* will thrive in a wide range of pH values.

•Temp: 28-30 ° C
•pH: 4.5 to 5.8

Aquarium Setup: Large, long stemmed plants are recommended to enhance the Altums vertical appearance and to provide hiding places. The water should be very soft and peat filtration is recommended. Open swimming spaces should also be provided. Although Altums are peaceful, they can also be territorial. Some open swimming spaces should be provided. The substrate should be large, smooth gravel to ensure their mouths are not cut when gravel is picked up. Temperatures in the tank are best at the higher end of their range.

Compatibility: Altums are not a great community fish, but larger tetras may successfully be kept with them. Aggressive fish should not be kept with angelfish because their flowing fins are vulnerable to fin nipping. Some smaller more aggressive fish may even nip at the fins of these fish.

