

Pearl Arowana (*Scleropages Jardini*)

The Pearl Arowana, also known as the *Pearl Arowana* or *Pearl Dragon Fish*, is a highly prized freshwater fish belonging to the **Osteoglossidae** family. It is a variant of the *Asian Arowana* (*Scleropages formosus*), which is renowned for its beauty, cultural significance, and rarity. Here's a detailed description:

Physical Characteristics:

1. *Coloration:*

- The Pearl Arowana is distinguished by its *iridescent, pearl-like scales* that shimmer in shades of silver, green, and blue. The scales often have a metallic sheen, giving the fish a regal and elegant appearance.

- The body may also exhibit subtle hints of gold or red, depending on the lighting and the fish's lineage.

2. *Body Shape:*

- It has a long, sleek, and streamlined body, typical of Arowanas, with a slightly arched back.

- The fish can grow up to *90 cm (35 inches)* in length, though most captive specimens are smaller.

3. *Fins:*

- The dorsal and anal fins are elongated and extend toward the tail, creating a graceful, flowing appearance.

- The pectoral fins are large and fan-like, aiding in precise movements.

4. *Mouth and Barbels:*

- The Arowana has a large, upturned mouth with a prominent lower jaw, giving it a distinctive "dragon-like" appearance.

- It has two barbels (whisker-like sensory organs) near its mouth, which are used to detect prey in the water.

Behavior:

1. *Feeding:*

- Pearl Arowanas are *carnivorous* and feed on insects, small fish, crustaceans, and even small birds or mammals in the wild.

- In captivity, they are typically fed a diet of pellets, shrimp, crickets, and small fish.

2. *Swimming:*

- They are surface-dwelling fish and often swim near the top of the water, where they can easily catch prey.

- They are powerful swimmers and can leap out of the water to catch food or escape predators.

3. *Temperament:*

- Pearl Arowanas are generally *solitary* and can be territorial. They may exhibit aggressive behavior toward other fish, especially those of similar size or appearance.

Habitat:

- In the wild, Pearl Arowanas are found in *slow-moving rivers, lakes, and swamps* in Southeast Asia, particularly in regions like Indonesia and Malaysia.

- They prefer warm, clean, and well-oxygenated water with plenty of vegetation.

Cultural Significance:

- Arowanas are often referred to as **“Dragon Fish”** due to their resemblance to the mythical Chinese dragon.
- They are considered symbols of **wealth, prosperity, and good luck** in many Asian cultures, particularly in Feng Shui.
- The Pearl Arowana, with its unique coloration, is especially sought after by aquarium enthusiasts and collectors.

Care in Captivity:

1. *Tank Requirements:*

- A large tank (at least **250 gallons**) is necessary due to their size and active nature.
- The tank should have a secure lid, as Arowanas are known to jump.

2. *Water Conditions:*

- Temperature: **24–30°C (75–86°F)**
- pH: **6.0–7.5**
 - Clean, well-filtered water is essential to maintain their health.

3. *Tank Mates:*

Careful selection of tank mates is required. Larger, non-aggressive fish that occupy different water levels are ideal.

Conservation Status:

- The Asian Arowana, including the Pearl variant, is listed as **Endangered** by the IUCN due to habitat destruction and overfishing.
- Trade is regulated under **CITES (Appendix I)**, and captive-bred specimens are often the only legal option for ownership.

The Pearl Arowana is a stunning and majestic fish, but it requires dedicated care and a significant investment of time and resources to thrive in captivity.