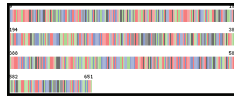




Bluefin Killifish (*Lucania goodie*)

Order: Cyprinodontiformes - Family: Fundulidae (Topminnows)



Also known as:

Type: benthopelagic; non-migratory; freshwater - Egg layer

Taxonomy: *Lucania* is a genus of small ray-finned fishes in the family Fundulidae. Formerly placed in monotypic genus CHRIOPEOPS (Lee et al. 1980). See Duggins et al. (1983) for relationship to *L. PARVA*. Removed from family Cyprinodontidae and placed in family Fundulidae by B81PAR01NA; this change was not adopted in the 1991 AFS checklist (Robins et al. 1991).

Synonyms: *Chriopeops goodie*.

Description: Bluefin Killifish (*Lucania goodie*) This little beauty comes from Florida where it is common in many waters. European visitors often wonder about the pretty, active, little fish with the flashing blue dorsal fin that they see in the waters around and in the tourist areas. The common name of *Lucania goodie* is the Blue fin or the Blue Fin topminnow the latter being rather a mouthful for such a small creature.

Physical Characteristics: *Lucania goodie* or the Bluefin Killifish, as it is called, is one of the smaller and more colorful of the native killifish. Bluefin males seldom exceed 2 to 2-1/2" with the females a little smaller. The body of *L. Goodie* is elongated, minnow-shaped making it more akin to a minnow or a Rivulus species as opposed to the stockier, bulky characteristics of Cynolebias species. The major sex differential is in the unpaired fins (as one could almost assume from the name); a blue cast on the anal and dorsal fins distinguish the males of the species. The overall body color of the fish is brown. The fish is bisected by a dark, coco-colored, longitudinal line; beginning at the mouth, extending through the eye and ending at the caudal peduncle. Body color above this line is a lighter brown with subtle green highlights giving at times the appearance of being a hazel color. The underside is a more pale brown almost a cream color. Blue, red and black are the small splashes of color that save this little fish from an olive-drab existence. The dorsal and anal fins are basically a vibrant, iridescent blue, tinged at their bases with varying amounts of red. All of this is enclosed in a distinctive black margin that serves to highlight the adult male who seems continually on display. The caudal fin also has its moment of color, although not as distinctive, it begins with small areas of blue at the base and then a noticeable concentration of red, which varies in intensity from a vivid red, gradually paling-out to pink and finally leaving the last quarter of the caudal translucent. All the fins of the female are void of color. Note should be made on the colors of *L. goodie*, it seems that the color is a variable depending on the health of the fish and the quality of its environment. I have seen this fish in poor physical condition, maintained in a crowded tank and the fish totally lacked any of the vibrant coloring after which it was named. How does the saying go: "You can't make a silk purse from a sow's ear"? Take good care of this little fish and it will be a "silk purse".

Size / Weight: Small-bodied :

- Male: 6cm (2.4")
- Female: 6cm (2.4")

Color Form: The Body color is a green to yellowish brown with a brassy sheen and it sports a dark almost black line that runs from the mouth to the caudal pedicel. The males have bright blue marks on the dorsal fins, whereas the females only clear dorsal and anal fins with no color at all.

Sexual dimorphism: The Bluefin killifish are sexable when they are mature. The males also have red or yellow marks on caudal and anal fins and are larger and more slender than females, which are smaller but plumper.

Lifespan: 2 years (wild)

Behavior: Diurnal; Active during the day. Very engaging personality for such a small fish, and well worth keeping in a species tank. Males will establish territories and frequently flare their fins and chase each other, but these quarrels are harmless.

Habitat: Stream; Usually found in small streams, but this species is capable of living in almost any freshwater environment. Heavily vegetated ponds, lakes, sloughs, and pools and backwaters of streams, in areas of little or no current. Frequently associated with spring habitats, and may occur in waters of moderate salinities (up to 10.3 ppt). Usually swims well below surface of water

Diet: Bluefin Killies are omnivores, meaning they eat both animal and plant matter. Bluefins prefer munching on invertebrates such as mosquito larva, snails, scuds etc. Bluefins also will pick on the algae on aquatic plants. Best food for them is frozen bloodworms, especially for the wild caught and pond/tub bred ones that are picky eaters, refusing to consume flakes.

Breeding: Spawns late January to mid-September throughout most of range, with reproductive peak from late March to mid-summer, some populations appear to reproduce throughout year. Breeding is actually easy, as long as you have lots of plants such as Java moss or use a spawning mop, and feed them live/frozen foods. I always put the Bluefins in my 470 L tub outside with duckweed and elodea during the summer. I always get some fry in the fall when I fish the Bluefins out of the tub. The Bluefins can breed in the tank as long as you can provide the fry with green water, then later newly hatched brine shrimp. Make sure the parents are removed from the tank if you want babies, as the parents will eat the eggs and the fry. Bluefins are my favorite native killifish because they have playful personalities and are very easy to take care of. Spawns late January to mid-September throughout most of range, with reproductive peak from late March to mid-summer, some populations appear to reproduce throughout year. Maximum age probably no more than 2 years. Eggs are laid in dense vegetation. Produces up to 200 eggs; no guards open water/substratum egg scatterers.

Origin /Distribution: Throughout Florida, except in panhandle only as far west as Choctawhatchee River drainage and southeastern Alabama in Chipolatas River drainage (Page and Burr 1991); sporadically along Atlantic Coast as far north as central South Carolina (where possibly introduced). The Blue fin is not often kept by Stateside aquarists who prefer species from more exotic lands; a number of British aquarists over the years have kept them in their tropical tanks which are rather too warm for this attractive species.

Status: Established in California, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Predators & Threats:

Aquarium Setup: The Bluefin killifish do better in heavily planted tanks than bare tank or not enough plants. They will behave naturally in the planted tank which is why I always have to add Java moss, banana plants and elodea to my Bluefin killifish tank. They are better in a species tank, as they can be shy or playful depending on the tank mates.

Minimum School Size: Raising a batch of "Bluefins" is rewarding in itself, they tend to be a schooling fish and make a very attractive display. Everyone should give this fish a try sort of as a "refreshing change of pace."

Minimum Tank Size: A five gallon tank is suitable for a pair of Bluefin Killies. The tank should have heavily planted areas for the fish to hide and forage in, as well as open swimming areas.

Care Level: Easy; **Water Conditions:**

- pH: 6.5 - 7.5
- Temperature: 12°C - 22°C, 54°F - 72°F
- Hardness: 5 dH - 20 dH

Swimming Level: All; This species will swim at all levels in the tank.

Compatibility / Temperament: Because of this species' rather shy disposition, do not keep them with boisterous tank mates. Dwarf livebearers (*Heterandria formosa*) and Japanese Rice fish (*Oryzias latipes*) are my Bluefin Killies' tank mates, all of them in a 115 L tank without a heater. Bluefins tolerate up to 26°C but they do better at lower temperatures.

