

OVAS Chat Event – “Ask an Expert”
Freshwater Shrimp with Zapisto
December 17, 2006

*The Chat event was moderated by OVAS executive member **PaleoFishGirl**.
The member asking the question screen name will be displayed before the question in square brackets. **[asker's screen name]**.
The chat transcript was reformatted by **kyonis**.
All answers for member's questions were provided by our “Ask an Expert” guest **zapisto**.*

[zapisto]: hello all. Thanks for joining.

[sas]: **Lets get down to the dirty, sexing shrimp?**

Ok sas, first I will talk here about sexing shrimp not prawn and I will take cherry as example but the method apply for most neocaridina and caridina. you have to look at the swimlet of the shrimp. On female the swimlet are covered and with male they are not covered. Sometime it is hard to say with very colorful shrimp. Males are slimmer, more streamlined.

[babblefish1960]: **my question is in addition to the sexing, what about optimal water parameters for shrimp like amano and cheery. Are they able to be in acidic water, or do I need to be adding dolomite.**

Ok, the water parameters differ from species like for fish. Some like alkaline/hard water, some like acidic/soft water. tiger, bee for example, like acidic/soft water. cherry, green, blue like hard/alkaline water. even if most of shrimp will live wide range of ph, you have to give them the good parameter if you want them to breed and live longer. amano who have name: C. multidentata, likes a very large range of ph. so you have to check the species you have and give them the proper water parameter like you will do with fish.

[sas]: **What's the average lifespan of Cherry Under optimal conditions?**

The longer I had mine was 2 years.

[babblefish1960]: **I guess my question stems from wanting to keep shrimp in my discus community tank and the angelfish community tank, and I don't know which will thrive with them. They are 29C temp acid tanks.**

Shrimp will be food in a angel tank. Also, the temp discus need will be most likely too high for them. You will probably have some macro who will accept this temp, and who will not be food for you discus or angel but most of them will eat plant.

[fishbuddy]: **What's your take on having Cherry shrimps in an African tank??? Do they end up being food for the Africans??? Anyone had experience with this combo?**

Any fish are potential danger for most of the shrimp. If the adult did not get eaten, babies will.

[sas]: **For breeding purposes, is a bare bottom tank the way it's done with a little cover for security? Question is about breeding Red Cherry Shrimp.**

Well, you have multiple discussions about that. Personally I do the two. I have bare bottom tank with only java moss, and I have a tank with substrate. The two work so I will not say this one is better than the other. However, shrimp like grasping everywhere, so the more surface you give them the happier they will be. Gravel is a nice surface for shrimp to grasp on

[fishbuddy]: **How well do Cherry shrimps get along with BN plecos??? Do the BN plecos eat the shrimps?**

Most of the time BN will not eat your shrimp. In fact most of fish who have mouth oriented to the bottom can be considered as safe , but many exception exist

[babblefish1960]: **What fish can you keep with amano and cherry shrimp then, just for enjoying, not breeding?**

ok just for enjoyment, a lot of fish can be kept with amano. Any fish who is not a predator, and smaller enough will not touch amano shrimp. For example, no angels and discus for cherry shrimp, you have to keep in mind their size. amano with an adult size will be most likely ok with angel and lots of plants. But be aware of if the angel have an opportunity they eat the shrimp. With discus the temp will be an issue

[sas]: **I transported approximately 25 various sized cherries in a pail for about 1 hour and the amount of waste was amazing! How much are they actually adding to the tank as waste?**

Same as a school of small fish, You still have to do water changes. If you think shrimp don't do any waste you are wrong. I like to add snails with my shrimp to clean a bit. Also, If you have plants, the waste produce by shrimp is easier to assimilate by the plants.

[babblefish1960]: **We had adult amano with angels in a heavily planted tank, and one actually jumped out to get away from the fish, the angels ate them all. Is there a way to get around this?**

As I said, amano can be kept with angels but don't consider them safe in. If the angels have an opportunity, they will eat the amano.

[sas]: **What's the best feed for cherries if in a separate tank?**

All shrimp are opportunist. They will eat anything. I will tell you what I feed mine: spirulina pellet, frozen brine shrimp, cyclops eez, blood worms, zucchini, daphnia, etc. Fish flake is Also ok. The best is variety

[babblefish1960]: **What about the bee shrimp you speak of, can I keep those in the discus tank?**

No, bee is smaller than amano. Of course you can try, but I will highly not recommend it :) for the reason I talk about earlier.

[babblefish1960]: **So what would you suggest for discus? Wood shrimp?**

Vampire shrimp. But when they will molt, they will be at risk if they have no hiding places. Claw shrimp will probably eat your plant or will try getting you discus.

[sas]: can you give us a rough timeline on cherries growth? When do they change color to red etc.

Cherry is fast growing. I will say 3 to 4 month to be ready to spawn. Even before. With all my shrimp, I noticed something with color -specially cherry. Depending on the environment they are in they will have a more dark red color or not. dark bottom, will make your cherry more red.

After 2 month you should see some color in young shrimps.

[artw]: ok we have rock shrimp in the store, when my customers ask me how big they get I am not sure what to say. They are already approx 1-2" (about 5 cm) in the store tanks.

ok sorry , I am not very good with inch :). But rock shrimp can go up to 15cm. vampire shrimp can become bigger. Most the one I see have an average of 10 cm.

[apuppet]: how do you control the cherry shrimp populations boom -Aside from selling them? Yet still keep them manageable.

Hmmm, good question. I sort mine and only keep best looking ones. Also, they will control themselves. You start to see the population stabilizing -no more berried females will show up and thing like that.

You will know it is time to raise tank size.

[artw]: Hey Zap how much space a cherry shrimp needs (how many cm of shrimp per tank size).

Wow, that's the sort of question I never ask myself but I can tell you I have more than 300 shrimp in 3.5 g. I start to see now sign of subpopulation

[sas]: Medications, what's safe? Do they handle salt well? prazipro? Say if they're in a community tank?

Hmmm, honestly, I will not recommend any medication in a shrimp tank. Some people experimented some medication I forgot the name and this was a success. But most of the usual medications will most likely kill the shrimp.

I think the medication was prazi., I have to double check

[babblefish1960]: We used praziquantel successfully in a community tank with a lovely vampire shrimp and discus, they were all fine.

Myself I test some medications, and it was really not a success. Vampire is a big shrimp, I am not sure of the result on a smaller species

[daniel]: what shrimp can you buy at the pet store for freshwater?

Oh boy, The problem is finding them. Most of the time you will find ghost, and cherry shrimp but you have more than 20 species of freshwater shrimp.

[babblefish1960]: How many wood shrimp, or similar filter feeder shrimp can I put in a 15 gallon tank.

I will not put more than 2 or 3. Of course depend of the way the tank is setup they need current to feed.

[mila]: **What is optimal temp. for breeding? Can some breed in low temp? Under 20C.**

Depending on the species. My cherry shrimp are in 24/25 degree C. some shrimp prefer lower. Some species will breed at temp. under 20C. Example, cherry support 70F to 80F (21C - 27C) but will breeds better at 74F – 76F (23C – 24C).

[sas]: **will I kill cherry shrimp at 82F?**

You will short their lifespan. They most likely live in this temp but it is not optimal.

[daniel]: **are the shrimp going to cut the fishes up. if you put them with other fish?**

Claw shrimp will. However, most the usual specie you can found on the market will not.

[babbelfish1960]: **I think keeping shrimp is very exciting, but they are so hard to find in good shape and numbers, and keeping them doesn't seem as simple as fish, as they are so more delicate, can you recommend a good starter shrimp and set up.**

Ok, I love your question :)

The shrimp is fairly new in the hobby in North America, but Europe and Asia is way in advance on us. Shrimp is not so difficult. They are less subject to be sickness like fish, but they are hard to find in North America, especially under a good name.

To start I will recommend cherry shrimp. A good setup will be especially for people who love plants:

A 10 or 20g well cycled with good vegetation.

You have to put special attention to your filter; it is a dangerous for shrimp.

A good cover.

Room temp is ok, so you don't need heater in most of house.

A dedicated tank will be the best if you want to breed them.

The most frequently problem is over feeding. You have to feed you shrimp so they will eat everything in the next 15 min. I feed mine every other day.

[babbelfish1960]: **would a sponge filter be adequate, or is there not enough flow?**

I use internal corner filter and sponge. aquaclear with a sponge on the intake is great also.

[PaleoFishGirl]: **do cherry shrimp eat their own eggs/young?**

No, most of shrimp don't eat they young. It is difficult for them to eat their eggs, because they keep them until hatching.

[PaleoFishGirl]: **I keep cherry shrimp but am thinking about getting Amano shrimp for my main tank.**

Amano is hard to breed. It will be a nice challenge, as they do need brackish water. The young need brackish water to go by the entire larval steps they have.

[PaleoFishGirl]: **what are babaulti like? What size?**

babaulti is a green shrimp that is rare. Same size as cherry shrimp.

[PaleoFishGirl]: **can you keep babaulti with cherries? Can you keep more than one species together?**

you can , they will not cross breed. The cherry will breed faster than the green, and you will end up with the green refusing to breed. But for show it is a nice mix.

[sas]: **So.... You can actually see egg masses on the females? Do I need to get a magnifying glass?**

No you don't need magnifying glass. On the top of the shrimp, you can see when they will have eggs before the eggs appear.