

Betta

Betta, /ˈbɛtə/ is a large genus of small, often colorful, freshwater ray-finned fishes, known as "**bettas**", in the gourami family (Osphronemidae).^[1] The best known *Betta* species is *B. splendens*, commonly known as the Siamese fighting fish.

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Characteristics

All the *Betta* species are small fishes, but they vary considerably in size, ranging from under 2.5 cm (1 in) total length in *B. chanoides* to 14 cm (5.5 in) in the Akar betta (*B. akarensis*).^[1]

Bettas are anabantoids, which means they can breathe atmospheric air using a unique organ called the labyrinth. This accounts for their ability to thrive in low-oxygen water conditions that would kill most other fish, such as rice paddies, slow-moving streams, drainage ditches, and large puddles.^[2]

The bettas exhibit two kinds of spawning behaviour: some build bubble nests, such as *B. splendens*, while others are mouthbrooders, such as *B. picta*. The mouthbrooding species are sometimes called "pseudo bettas", and are sometimes speculated to have evolved from the nest-builders in an adaptation to their fast-moving stream habitats.^[3]

A phylogenetic study published in 2004 concluded tentatively that bubble-nesting was the ancestral condition in *Betta*, and that mouthbrooding has evolved on more than one occasion in the history of the genus. However it was unable to establish a correlation with any of three habitat variables studied: whether a species was found in lowland or highland streams, whether it was found in peat swamp forests, and whether it was found in water with fast or slow currents.^[4] Mouthbrooding species tend to exhibit less sexual dimorphism, perhaps because they do not need to defend a territory as the bubble-nesters do.^[4]

<i>Betta</i>

<i>Betta albimarginata</i>
Scientific classification 
Kingdom: <u>Animalia</u>
Phylum: <u>Chordata</u>
Class: <u>Actinopterygii</u>
Order: <u>Anabantiformes</u>
Family: <u>Osphronemidae</u>
Subfamily: <u>Macropodusinae</u>
Genus: <u>Betta</u> <u>Bleeker, 1850</u>
Type species
<u>Betta trifasciata</u> Bleeker, 1850
Synonyms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>Anostoma</i> van Hasselt, 1859■ <i>Micracanthus</i> Sauvage, 1879■ <i>Parophiocephalus</i> Popta, 1905■ <i>Oshimia</i> D. S. Jordan, 1919■ <i>Pseudobetta</i> Richter, 1981

Name

Siamese fighting fish (*B. splendens*) are frequently sold in the United States simply as "bettas". In fact, as of 2017, around 73 species are classified within the genus *Betta*.^[1] A useful distinction is that while the generic name *Betta* is italicized and capitalized, when used as a common name it is usually neither italicized nor capitalized.^[5] The common name of *B. pugnax*, for example, is thus Penang betta.

The name *Betta* (or betta) is pronounced /ˈbɛtə/;^[5] the first part is the same as the English word bet. The name is often pronounced /ˈbeɪtə/ in American English, and may be spelled with one 't'. The name of the genus is derived from the Malay word *ikan betah* ("persistent fish").^[6]

The vernacular name "plakat", often applied to the short-finned ornamental strains, derived from *pla kad* which means "fighting fish", is the Thai name for all members of the *B. splendens* species complex (All have aggressive tendencies in the wild and all are extensively line-bred for aggression in eastern Thailand). The Thai phrase is not restricted to one specific strain. The term "fighting fish" is generalized to all members of the *B. splendens* species complex, including the Siamese fighting fish.^{[7][8]}



Betta splendens, the Siamese fighting fish, is often referred to simply as a "betta" in the U.S.

Diet

Wild *Betta* fish are hardy and eat almost any animal small enough for these small fish to consume, including worms, larvae of mosquitoes or other insects, and smaller fish. Their natural environment is often resource-limited, so many *Betta* species are generalist feeders.

Conservation

While many *Betta* species are common and *B. splendens* is ubiquitous in the aquarium trade, other bettas are threatened. The IUCN Red List classifies several *Betta* species as Vulnerable. In addition, *B. livida* is Endangered, and *B. miniopinna*, *B. persephone*, and *B. spilotogeta* are Critically Endangered.^[9]

The United Nations Environment Programme lists an unconfirmed species, *Betta* cf. *tomi*, as having become extinct in Singapore between 1970 and 1994.^[10] This likely refers to the extirpated Singaporean population of *B. tomi*, which continues to exist in the wild in Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as in captivity; the Red List classifies it as Vulnerable.^{[11][12]}

Species

There are currently 73 recognized species in this genus. The currently described *Betta* species can be grouped into species complexes:^{[1][13][14][15]}

- *B. akarensis* complex:
 - *Betta akarensis* Regan, 1910 (Akar betta)
 - *Betta antoni* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2006
 - *Betta aurigans* H. H. Tan & K. K. P. Lim, 2004
 - *Betta balunga* Herre, 1940



A pair of *Betta smaragdina*

- *Betta chini* P. K. L. Ng, 1993
- *Betta ibanorum* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2004
- *Betta obscura* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2005
- *Betta pinguis* H. H. Tan & Kottelat, 1998
- *B. albimarginata* complex:
 - *Betta albimarginata* Kottelat & P. K. L. Ng, 1994
 - *Betta channoides* Kottelat & P. K. L. Ng, 1994
- *B. anabatoides* complex:
 - *Betta anabatoides* Bleeker, 1851 (giant betta)
 - *Betta midas* H. H. Tan, 2009
- *B. bellica* complex:
 - *Betta bellica* Sauvage, 1884 (slim betta)
 - *Betta simorum* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 1996
- *B. coccina* complex:
 - *Betta brownorum* K. E. Witte & J. Schmidt, 1992
 - *Betta burdigala* Kottelat & P. K. L. Ng, 1994
 - *Betta coccina* Vierke, 1979
 - *Betta hendra* I. Schindler & Linke, 2013
 - *Betta livida* P. K. L. Ng & Kottelat, 1992
 - *Betta miniopinna* H. H. Tan & S. H. Tan, 1994
 - *Betta persephone* Schaller, 1986
 - *Betta rutilans* K. E. Witte & Kottelat, 1991
 - *Betta tussyae* Schaller, 1985
 - *Betta uberis* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2006
- *B. dimidiata* complex:
 - *Betta dimidiata* T. R. Roberts, 1989
 - *Betta krataios* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2006
- *B. edithae* complex:
 - *Betta edithae* Vierke, 1984
- *B. foerschi* complex:
 - *Betta dennisyongi* H. H. Tan, 2013
 - *Betta foerschi* Vierke, 1979
 - *Betta mandor* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2006
 - *Betta rubra* Perugia, 1893 (Toba betta)
 - *Betta strohi* Schaller & Kottelat, 1989
- *B. picta* complex:
 - *Betta falx* H. H. Tan & Kottelat, 1998
 - *Betta picta* (Valenciennes, 1846) (spotted betta)
 - *Betta simplex* Kottelat, 1994
 - *Betta taeniata* Regan, 1910 (Borneo betta)
- *B. pugnax* complex:



Male *Betta tussyae*

- *Betta apollon* I. Schindler & J. Schmidt, 2006
- *Betta breviobesus* H. H. Tan & Kottelat, 1998
- *Betta cracens* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2005
- *Betta enisae* Kottelat, 1995
- *Betta ferox* I. Schindler & J. Schmidt, 2006
- *Betta fusca* Regan, 1910 (dusky betta)
- *Betta kuehnei* I. Schindler & J. Schmidt, 2008
- *Betta lehi* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2005
- *Betta pallida* I. Schindler & J. Schmidt, 2004
- *Betta prima* Kottelat, 1994
- *Betta pugnax* (Cantor, 1849) (Penang betta)
- *Betta pulchra* H. H. Tan & S. H. Tan, 1996
- *Betta raja* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2005
- *Betta schalleri* Kottelat & P. K. L. Ng, 1994
- *Betta stigmosa* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2005
- *B. splendens* complex (fighting fish):
 - *Betta imbellis* Ladiges, 1975 (crescent betta)
 - *Betta mahachaiensis* Kowasupat, Panijpan, Ruenwongsa & Sriwattanarothai, 2012
 - *Betta siamorientalis* Kowasupat, Panijpan, Ruenwongsa & Jeenthong, 2012
 - *Betta smaragdina* Ladiges, 1972 (Blue betta)
 - *Betta splendens* Regan, 1910 (Siamese fighting fish)
 - *Betta stiktos* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2005
- *B. unimaculata* complex:
 - *Betta compuncta* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2006
 - *Betta gladiator* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2005
 - *Betta ideii* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2006
 - *Betta macrostoma* Regan, 1910 (spotfin betta)
 - *Betta ocellata* de Beaufort, 1933
 - *Betta pallifina* H. H. Tan & P. K. L. Ng, 2005
 - *Betta patoti* M. C. W. Weber & de Beaufort, 1922
 - *Betta unimaculata* (Popta, 1905) (Howong betta)
- *B. waseri* complex:
 - *Betta chloropharynx* Kottelat & P. K. L. Ng, 1994
 - *Betta hipposideros* P. K. L. Ng & Kottelat, 1994
 - *Betta pardalotos* H. H. Tan, 2009^[16]
 - *Betta pi* H. H. Tan, 1998
 - *Betta renata* H. H. Tan, 1998
 - *Betta spilotogena* P. K. L. Ng & Kottelat, 1994
 - *Betta tomi* P. K. L. Ng & Kottelat, 1994
 - *Betta waseri* Krummenacher, 1986

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- ication/SpeciesList.php?genus=Betta) in FishBase. March 2019 version.
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External links

- Betta (https://curlie.org/Recreation/Pets/Fish_and_Aquaria/Freshwater/Species/Labyrinth_Fishes/Bettas) at Curlie
 - The Aquarium Wiki category on Betta care information for sub varieties
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