

# Poecilia

***Poecilia*** is a genus of fishes in the family Poeciliidae Poeculent of the order Cyprinodontiformes.<sup>[1]</sup> These livebearers are native to fresh, brackish and salt water in the Americas, and some species in the genus are euryhaline. A few have adapted to living in waters that contain high levels of toxic hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S)<sup>[2]</sup> and a population of *P. mexicana* lives in caves (other populations of this species are surface-living).<sup>[3]</sup>

Some common and widespread species are often kept as aquarium fish, while other have very small ranges and are seriously threatened.<sup>[2]</sup> All species in *Poecilia* are called **mollies** except for the Endler's livebearer (*P. wingei*) and the well-known guppy (*P. reticulata*). Without a modifying adjective, **molly** usually refers to the species *Poecilia sphenops*.

*Micropoecilia* has been proposed to be included as a subgenus of *Poecilia*.<sup>[4]</sup>

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## Etymology, taxonomy, and history

Franz Steindachner first described the species in 1863. *Poecilia* refers to the Greek word *poikilos*, which means "with a lot of colours". Common names include "shortfin molly" and "Atlantic molly."<sup>[5]</sup> The type specimen was found in Orizaba, Mexico.

## Aquaria

Along with their swordtail and platy relatives, the mollies are part of a pivotal aquaculture group of livebearers, which can live in water from fresh to fully marine, and a wide range of other conditions. They feed on smaller insects, animals, and vegetation.

| <i>Poecilia</i>  |
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| <span></span> <div>Male sailfin molly (<i>P. latipinna</i>)</div>                        |
| Scientific classification <span></span>  |
| Kingdom: <span></span> <u>Animalia</u>   |
| Phylum: <span></span> <u>Chordata</u>  |
| Class: <span></span> <u>Actinopterygii</u>   |
| Order: <span></span> <u>Cyprinodontiformes</u>   |
| Family: <span></span> <u>Poeciliidae</u>   |
| Subfamily: <span></span> <u>Poeciliinae</u>  |
| Tribe: <span></span> <u>Poeciliini</u>   |
| Genus: <span></span> <i><b>Poecilia</b></i> <div>Bloch &amp; J. G. Schneider, 1801</div> |
| Type species   |
| <i><b>Poecilia vivipara</b></i> <div>Bloch &amp; J. G. Schneider, 1801</div>             |
| Species  |
| See text.  |

IUCN lists two of the species, the sulphur molly, *P. sulphuraria*, and the broadspotted molly, *P. latipunctata*, as Critically Endangered.

The generic name *Poecilia* derives from the Greek ποικίλος (variegated), in reference to the fishes' coloration.

The common mollies (*P. sphenops*) occur in several different colors and spot patterns, such as black, white, black and white spots, orange, and orange and white spots. These have been kept successfully in freshwater, brackish, and saltwater conditions, although the last is not recommended for the novice aquarist.

## Species

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The 40 currently recognized species in this genus are:<sup>[6][7]</sup>

- *Poecilia boesemani* Poeser, 2003
- *Poecilia butleri* D. S. Jordan, 1889 (Pacific molly)
- *Poecilia catemaconis* R. R. Miller, 1975 (Catemaco molly)
- *Poecilia caucana* (Steindachner, 1880) (Cauca molly)
- *Poecilia caudofasciata* (Regan, 1913)
- *Poecilia chica* R. R. Miller, 1975 (dwarf molly)
- *Poecilia dauli* M. K. Meyer & Radda, 2000
- *Poecilia dominicensis* (Evermann & H. W. Clark, 1906)
- *Poecilia elegans* (Trewavas, 1948) (elegant molly)
- *Poecilia formosa* (Girard, 1859) (Amazon molly)
- *Poecilia gillii* (Kner, 1863)
- *Poecilia hispaniolana* Rivas, 1978 (Hispaniola molly)
- *Poecilia hondurensis* Poeser, 2011
- *Poecilia kempkesi* Poeser, 2013<sup>[7]</sup>
- *Poecilia koperi* Poeser, 2003
- *Poecilia kykesis* Poeser, 2002
- *Poecilia latipinna* (Lesueur, 1821) (sailfin molly)
- *Poecilia latipunctata* Meek, 1904 (broadspotted molly)
- *Poecilia marcellinoi* Poeser, 1995
- *Poecilia maylandi* M. K. Meyer, 1983 (Balsas molly)
- *Poecilia mechtildae* M. K. Meyer, Etzel & Bork, 2002
- *Poecilia mexicana* Steindachner, 1863 (shortfin molly)
- *Poecilia nicholsi* (G. S. Myers, 1931)
- *Poecilia obscura* Schories, M. K. Meyer & Schartl, 2009
- *Poecilia orri* Fowler, 1943 (mangrove molly)
- *Poecilia parae* C. H. Eigenmann, 1894
- *Poecilia petenensis* Günther, 1866 (Peten molly)
- *Poecilia reticulata* W. K. H. Peters, 1859 (guppy)
- *Poecilia rositae* M. K. Meyer, K. Schneider, Radda, B. Wilde & Schartl, 2004<sup>[8]</sup>
- *Poecilia salvatoris* Regan, 1907 (Liberty molly)
- *Poecilia sarrafae* Bragança & W. J. E. M. Costa, 2011
- *Poecilia sphenops* Valenciennes, 1846 (black molly)
- *Poecilia sulphuraria* (Álvarez, 1948) (sulphur molly)
- *Poecilia teresae* D. W. Greenfield, 1990 (mountain molly)

- *Poecilia vandepolli* van Lidth de Jeude, 1887
- *Poecilia velifera* (Regan, 1914) (Yucatán molly)
- *Poecilia vivipara* Bloch & J. G. Schneider, 1801
- *Poecilia waiapi* Bragança, W. J. E. M. Costa & Gama, 2012
- *Poecilia wandae* Poeser, 2003
- *Poecilia wingei* Poeser, Kempkes & Isbrücker, 2005 (Endler's guppy, Endler's livebearer)<sup>[9]</sup>

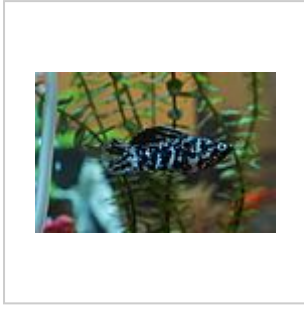
If *Poecilia* in the wider sense is used then the species would be divided up into subgenera as follows:<sup>[10]</sup>

- *Poecilia* Bloch & Schneider 1801
  - *Poecilia (Poecilia) vivipara*
- *Acanthophaelus* Eigenmann 1907
  - *Poecilia (Acanthophaelus) kempkesi*
  - *Poecilia (Acanthophaelus) obscura*
  - *Poecilia (Acanthophaelus) reticulata*
  - *Poecilia (Acanthophaelus) wingei*
- *Allopoecilia* Hubbs 1924
  - *Poecilia (Allopoecilia) caucana*
  - *Poecilia (Allopoecilia) dauli*
- *Curtipenis* Rivas & Myers 1950
  - *Poecilia (Curtipenis) elegans*
- *Limia* Poey 1854
  - *Poecilia (Limia) caudofasciata*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) caymanensi*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) dominicensis*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) fuscomaculata*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) garnieri*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) grossidens*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) immaculata*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) melanogaster*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) melanonotata*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) miragoanensis*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) nicholsi*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) nigrofasciata*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) ornata*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) pauciradiata*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) perugiae*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) rivasi*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) sulphurophila*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) tridens*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) versicolor*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) vittata*
  - *Poecilia (Limia) yaguajali*

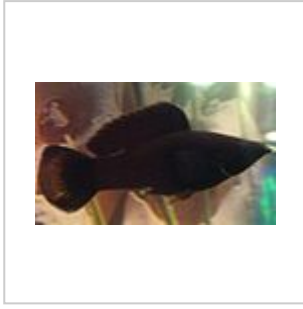
- *Poecilia (Limia) zonata*
- *Micropoecilia* Hubbs 1926
  - *Poecilia (Micropoecilia) bifurca*
  - *Poecilia (Micropoecilia) branneri*
  - *Poecilia (Micropoecilia) minima*
  - *Poecilia (Micropoecilia) parae*
  - *Poecilia (Micropoecilia) picta*
  - *Poecilia (Micropoecilia) sarrafae*
  - *Poecilia (Micropoecilia) waiapi*
- *Mollienesia* Lesueur 1821
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) boesemani*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) butleri*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) catemaconis*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) chica*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) formosa*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) gillii*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) hondurensis*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) koperi*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) kykesis*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) latipinna*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) latipunctata*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) limantouri*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) marcellinoi*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) maylandi*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) mechthildae*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) mexicana*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) nelsoni*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) orri*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) petenensis*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) rositae*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) salvatoris*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) sphenops*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) sulphuraria*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) teresae*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) thermalis*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) vandepolli*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) velifera*
  - *Poecilia (Mollienesia) wandae*
- *Pseudolimia* Poeser 2002
  - *Poecilia (Pseudolimia) heterandria*
- *Psychropoecilia* Myers 1935
  - *Poecilia (Psychropoecilia) hispaniolana*
  - *Poecilia (Psychropoecilia) montana*

# Gallery

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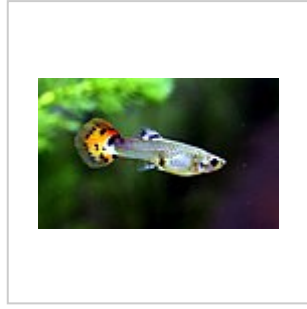
A male Dalmatian sailfin molly in a community aquarium



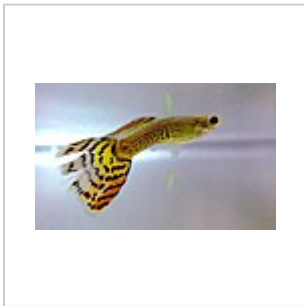
Black male molly



*Poecilia vivipara*



A female guppy - *Poecilia reticulata*



A male guppy

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## External links

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- Poecilia care information
  - [www.mollyfish.com](http://www.mollyfish.com) (<http://www.molly-fish.com>)
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