

## A New Subspecies of *Thorichthys helleri*

WALTER LANNOY BRIND, F. Z. S.

When Dr. Seth Eugene Meek was studying the fishes of Mexico he noted certain characteristics in several species of *Cichlasoma* that seemed to set them apart. For these he proposed his genus *Thorichthys*,\* designating *T. ellioti*, a new species, as the type. *Thorichthys* differs from *Cichlasoma* in having a "deep body, much compressed; mouth rather small; caudal fin lunate, its outer rays produced into a filament; pectoral fin long and pointed, about as long or longer than the head; *subopercle* with a black blotch, otherwise as in *Cichlasoma*" (Meek, Loc. cit.) He adds that *T. helleri* and *T. ellioti* are very variable, though they represent quite a distinct type of cichlids.

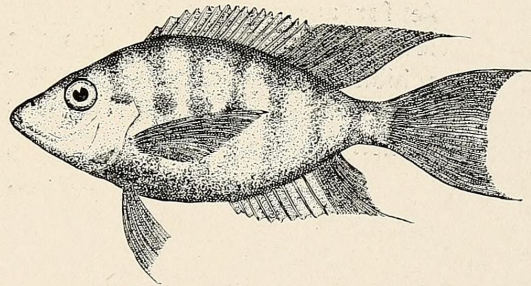
Typical examples of *T. helleri* are light olive in color, with six rather indistinct dark cross-bars; side of head with small blue spots; a black spot on subopercle or lower margin of gill cover.

*Thorichthys helleri meeki* subsp. nov.

In May, 1917, a French sailor arrived in New York with 265 specimens which he had captured in the shallow reaches of a river near Progreso, Yucatan. These were soon distributed among aquarists and the fish became popularly known as the scarlet chanchito. The fish presents such a marked departure in color from the type that the writer proposes for it subspecific rank. Meek in his color description of the species, makes no mention of the presence of red. In our specimens a brilliant scarlet suffusion and striping extends from the throat and lower gill covers back and

beyond the extremities of the pectoral fins, otherwise the coloration is much as in the type. It is more than likely that the fish is a local color variety, but the fact that so many specimens were collected, indicates that it is well established and is not to be regarded as an individual variation. The type specimen has been deposited in the United States National Museum, where it is recorded as Accession 61490.

For the aquarium the scarlet chanchito



*Thorichthys helleri meeki*

makes an attractive specimen. While its breeding habits have not yet been observed, it does not appear to be a difficult fish to maintain. It reaches a length of six inches, a goodly size as "aquarium fishes" go, so it follows that a roomy, shallow tank should be provided if one would have it flourish. As it comes from Yucatan, well within the Tropic of Cancer, it is a truly tropical species and should be treated as such, care being exercised not to permit the water temperature to drop below 70 degrees. While it will take dry prepared foods, preference should be given to tender worms and similar materials.

That the differences in the proportions and shapes of the fins of *Cichlasoma* and *Thorichthys* may be more apparent, in

\*The Fresh-water Fishes of Mexico North of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Meek. Zool. Ser., Vol. 5, Field Columbian Museum, 1904.