

Goldfish Varieties – Common Goldfish

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In the original article for this series, we defined a number of characteristics common to all goldfish, and introduced the concept of goldfish varieties, or different types of goldfish. Each subsequent article would provide detailed guidelines to appreciate and understand the characteristics of each variety recognized by the Goldfish Society of America (GFSA).

Goldfish originated from the Crucian Carp, which share a common ancestry with koi. The Crucian Carp was an olive to light brown colored fish, twelve to twenty inches long, with medium length fins and no barbells. The Crucian Carp, through a series of natural adaptations, developed into the goldfish, which is classified as *Carassius Auratus*.

The earliest known common goldfish were probably similar in coloration to the original Crucian Carp, that is an olive green to light brown color, and were also twelve to twenty inches in length, although the body shape was somewhat different than that of the Crucian Carp, being more streamlined, and the fins were somewhat shorter.

Goldfish originated in China, and were found in natural lakes and ponds throughout the countryside. Man-made ponds began to appear throughout the rural areas and after a time, the more affluent people began to breed goldfish as a form of hobby. In Japan, goldfish were reserved for the aristocracy, as these fish were considered too rare for common people to raise and own. In fact, goldfish were reserved for the samurai for many years, and gradually made available to the general public. The origination of goldfish as a form of hobby for more affluent people is in direct contrast to the origination of Nishikigoi as a form of food supplement for rice farmers in the northern portion of Japan.

Though a series of mutations, goldfish began to produce red coloration in the body, and these red fish were selected by early fish enthusiasts in order to enhance the red coloration. Eventually, the red coloration developed throughout the body and produced an entirely red fish. Early red common goldfish in Japan were known as ***Hibuna***.

The common goldfish is classified as a single-tail fish, having a dorsal fin. The fish possess a "torpedo" shaped body, and is from twelve to twenty inches in length. Lengths of twelve to twenty inches occur for fish raised in a pond environment, with lengths of six to ten inches common for tank-raised fish.

The body shape of the fish, while similar in appearance to that of a carp, is not as deep as that of a carp, and hence, has a more streamlined appearance when viewed from the side. Common goldfish do not develop the thickness of body exhibited in koi just before the start of the dorsal fin, and commonly referred to as the "shoulder" area in koi. When viewed from the top, the goldfish has an aerodynamic appearance, with the front and rear of the fish tapering into a "torpedo" shape. The common goldfish possesses double pectoral and pelvic fins, a single anal and caudal fin. The general shape of the fish, combined with the relatively short fins, allow the goldfish to swim powerfully, and to elude capture quite well.

Common goldfish, while often thought of as red fish, come in a host of colors, including orange, yellow, white, olive or drab green, yellow-brown, and black. Scalation in common goldfish is limited to the metallic form. Sometimes, people think of nacreous or matte fish as common goldfish, but these would be classified as a Shubunkin. People often confuse the Common Goldfish with the "Comet" goldfish, but closer inspection will reveal differences between the two varieties. A Comet has a longer body, without the thickness exhibited by the Common goldfish, and the Comet has greatly elongated fins, particularly the caudal, or tail, fin.

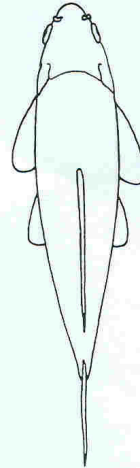
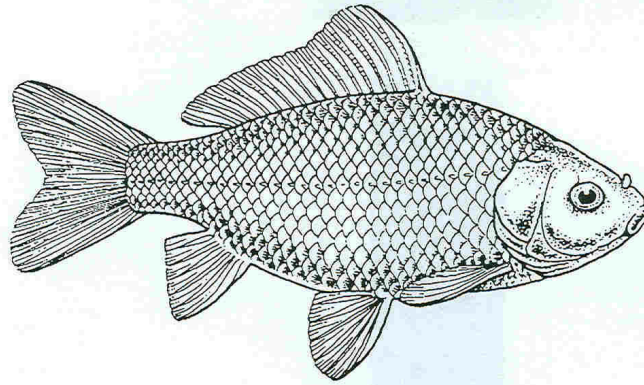
Since the common goldfish is a relatively plain fish, when compared to some of the more exotic varieties, judging for these fish is very strict, in much the same manner that single-colored koi are judged very strictly. The number one criteria in judging a fish is the overall appearance or "conformation" of the fish. The fish should be free of defects and disease, and should swim vertically through the water. Scalation should be regular and even, and scales should not be missing. Since this is a metallic fish, the sheen of the fish is important, and coloration takes on added significance and should be a deep uniform color, throughout. Fins should be in good shape, with the tail fin being about $\frac{3}{8}$ the length of the fish. The dorsal should be carried erect, and should be about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ the depth of the body. Paired pectoral and pelvic fins should be the same size, and should be full.

Since the Common goldfish is a relatively plain fish, they usually do not take major awards at most fish shows, as is the case for many single-tail fish. Occasionally, a very good Shubunkin or comet will do well at a show, but Common goldfish rarely take major awards. Despite the lack of top awards at fish shows, large Common Goldfish can be quite impressive, and a pond full of these fish is a beautiful sight.

Single Tail

Breed: Common

Goldfish Society of America



Description:

The Common Goldfish is a long (up to 20" in length) carp-like fish. The body depth is approximately $1/4$ to $3/8$ the length of the body. The caudal fin is short (approximately $1/4$ the length of the body), with rounded lobes and having moderate forking. The dorsal fin should be approximately $3/8$ the depth of the body. The pectoral and pelvic fins are paired, short and rounded. The single anal fin should match the pelvic and pectoral fins in appearance. The Common Goldfish is a metallic scaled fish and acceptable colors are bright red-orange, and red and white patterns.

Point Schedule:

Body Style	20 points
Coloration	20 points
Finnage	20 points
Special Characteristics:	
Color intensity	20 points
Department and condition	20 points



Common Goldfish, from
Goldfish in Hong Kong by Hanson Man-Shek Hay



Common Goldfish, from
Chinese Goldfish, Tetra Press