



## Jeweled Splitfin (*Xenotoca variata*) - Bean, 1887

Order: Cyprinodontiformes - Family: Goodeidae



### Also known as:

**Type:** Freshwater - Gamefish

### Description: Jeweled Splitfin

**Physical Characteristics:** The population reported for the Lago de Cuitzeo differs from *Xenotoca variata* in some details and is in description to be a separate species (pers. com. Dominguez 2011). It will be named in honour of the late Ivan Dibble. The remaining populations are forming 4 phylogenetically clear distinguishable lineages, one comprising the populations from Aguascalientes, one from the Chapala-Lake area (La Alberca), a third one from the Zacapu lagoon and the forth encompassing populations from the ríos Lerma (middle) and Panuco basins, with little prospects to separate Lerma and Panuco populations.

Bean described *Characodon variatus* from females and *Characodon ferrugineus* (that he thought to be a different species) from both sexes. Five years later, he recognized his mistake and synonymized both species.

"*Xenotoca*" *eiseni* has been erroneously synonymized with *variata* because in preservation (without seeing the striking colouration) both species differ slightly in the meristic characters. However, Fitzsimons in 1972 detected that both species are valid.

After recent studies (Webb, Dominguez), *Xenotoca variata* is the only remaining species in this genus. The both other described species of *Xenotoca*, *eiseni* and *melanosoma* belong to a different but undescribed genus.

*Xenotoca variata* is one of only four species reaching the Río Panuco system on the Atlantic Slope, that is draining to the Atlantic Ocean. It can be found sympatric with *Xenoporus captivus* in the Río Santa María.

Though this species resembles *Chapalichthys pardalis* and *Ameba splendens* in their appearance, all three species can be kept together without crossbreeding.

### Size / Weight / Age:

**Color Form:** Females are coloured grayish-brown, slightly darker on the back. On the sides are several - differing in shape, size and number - dark blotches, forming a midlateral band in older females, dusky on the head and more prominent posteriorly. Males are coloured grayish-green on the back and white to yellow on the venter. The unpaired fins are dark gray, the caudal fin nearly black with a flashing yellow terminal band. The dorsal fin has sometimes got a bright band, too, whitish to yellowish. The anal fins may be coloured yellow instead of gray. A different number of big greenish or yellowish glimmering scales cover the sides.

### Sexual dimorphism:

**Reproduction & Spawning:** Captures of young or pregnant females indicate that the reproduction occurs from at least February through May.

### Lifespan:

**Origin / Distribution:** This species comes from the Pacific Slope, inhabiting the ríos Lerma-Grande de Santiago basin, the Río Grande de Morelia basin (excluding Lago de Cuitzeo) and from the Atlantic Slope from the Río Santa María drainage, an upper tributary to the Río Panuco in the states Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Querétaro and San Luis Potosí.

### Conservation Status:

### Behavior:

**Habitat / Biotope:** *Xenotoca variata* prefers habitats like clear to murky rivers and lakes with currents of moderate to absent. It can be detected in shallow water (less than 1m deep) over substrates from deep mud to rocks. Usually, vegetation is abundant. Detected genera have been (besides much floating or attached green algae) *Potamogeton*, *Eichhornia*, *Nasturtium* and *Myriophyllum*.

**Diet:** Mouth, jaws, gut and dentition suggest omnivorous feeding habits, but the length of the gut differs in length (between 1 and 1.5 times the size of the body) as well as the food preferences, depending on the nutrition available (preferring carnivorous food), from water insects and fish-fry to algae.

### Aquarium Setup:

### Minimum Tank Size:

### Care Level:

### Water Conditions:

### Swimming Level:

### Compatibility / Temperament:

