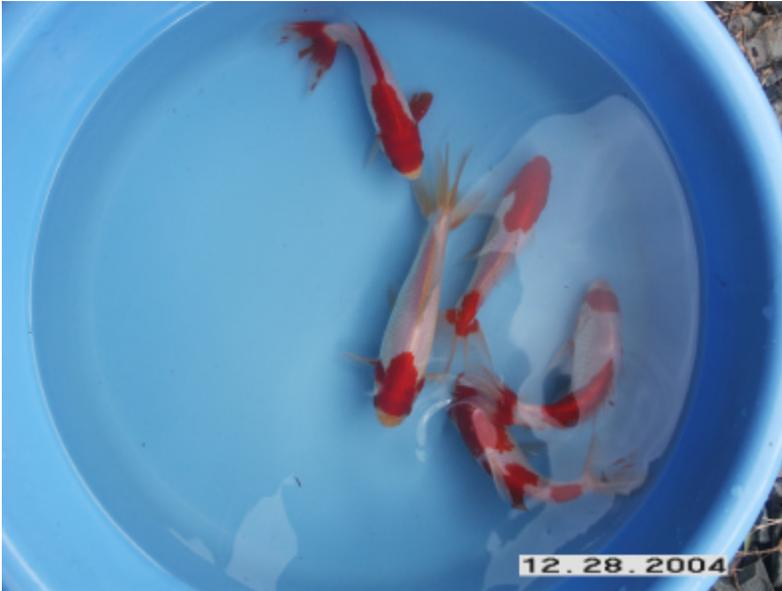


WAKIN



Wakin (*wa-keen*) goldfish are starting to make a come-back. This early form of goldfish was one of the first fancy varieties developed. Wakin were used as a basis to create many of the newer varieties popular today. While they are thought to have originated in China, Wakin were imported into Japan about 500 years ago and were intensively bred for

over 200 years thereafter. During this time it became the official goldfish in Japan. In Japanese *wakin* means *goldfish*.

The wakin are more streamlined than the new goldfish varieties. Their body contour is smooth and a little deeper than a comet or shubunkin. Wakin can grow quite large. An individual measuring eighteen inches has been reported, but most do not exceed about eight inches. The wakin fins are also about the same size as comets and shubunkins but wakin have a doubled fan-shaped tail fin and doubled anal fins. The fan-shaped tail is especially attractive when viewed from above. Wakin represented the first major departure in form and development from the wild type. This critical change is thought to have come about as a result of a single gene mutation that causes fin duplication. There is some evidence to suggest that development of divided tail fins may be dependent on temperature with only single-tail individuals produced at low temperatures.

The development of color in wakin is particularly strong. The red and white bicolor forms can be very attractive and patterns range from almost completely red to a total white fish with only a few speckles of red. Each wakin has a unique color pattern reminiscent of Kohaku koi. And just like a koi, the wakin is best viewed from above. Perhaps because of their less-developed form, wakin are generally more hardy than the modern varieties which were developed later. Their hardiness, coupled with the fact that they are best viewed from above, makes wakin an ideal pond fish. The fact that they do so well in a small pond is part of the reason their popularity is again on the rise. If kept in an aquarium, the minimum tank size is twenty gallons.

There are no special considerations necessary when feeding wakin as they accept most foods and will forage in a pond environment. They have a bad habit of eating water lily leaves unless the natural forage is abundant and diverse. Wakin feed aggressively enough that they can be housed with koi. However, they may feed too aggressively to be kept with most of the more fancy varieties of goldfish like moors, telescopes, ranchu, bubble eyes, and celestials.

Steve Hopkins, Newsletter of the Hawaii Goldfish and Carp Association.
February, 2005. page 5