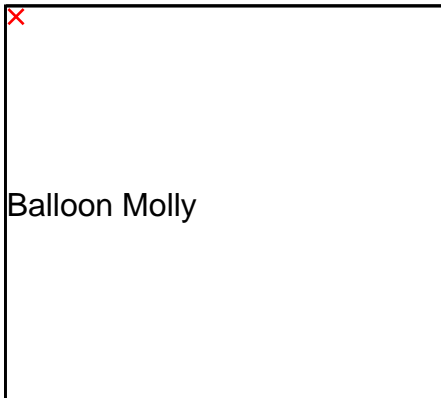


Balloon Molly

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Poecilia latipinna



Balloon Molly

Quick Stats: Balloon Molly

Family: Poeciliidae

Range: Gulf of Mexico through the east coast of Florida to North Carolina

Size: Up to 3 inches

Diet: Omnivore

Tank Set-up: Freshwater: Tough plants, good filtration

Tank Conditions: 68-82°F; pH 7.0-7.8; dH 10-25

Minimum Tank Capacity: 30 gallons

Light: Medium

Temperament: Peaceful

Swimming Level: Top to middle

Care Level: Moderate

Reproduction: Livebearer

The Balloon Molly is a hybrid variation of *Poecilia latipinna*, the Sailfin Molly. The Sailfin Molly, *P. latipinna*, can be distinguished from the [Mexican Sailfin](#), *P. velifera* by the number of dorsal rays. The Mexican Sailfin has 18-19, and the Sailfin Molly has 14. The Balloon Molly has an arched back and a rounded, large belly. Color varieties include a combination of black, yellow, and white. This fish also has a large, lyre-shaped caudal fin and an impressive dorsal fin.

Mollies have the ability to adapt to a variety of salt levels in the aquarium. With a gradual acclimation, this fish may be maintained in either a freshwater or saltwater aquarium. In the freshwater aquarium, a teaspoon of aquarium salt per gallon is recommended for optimum health. The Balloon Molly requires a tank of at least 30 gallons with plenty of strong plants such as Java fern, *Sagittaria*, *Vallisneria*, and *Anubias*. It requires a good filtration system because of its hearty appetite and resulting waste products. The Balloon Molly is well suited for the community tank because of its peaceful nature, and is compatible with other peaceful, large fish that can withstand similar water conditions. It may pursue its young and the young of other fish.

The pointed anal fin and much larger dorsal fin on the male, and the rounded anal fin and pregnancy spot on the female differentiate the two. The Balloon Molly is a livebearer that requires a spawning box in a 25 gallon, or larger, breeding tank. The aquarium should be planted as densely as possible or have a thick algae mat. Having a group of floating plants in the corner of the aquarium will promote rearing outside of the breeding tank. Every 60-70 days the female will give birth to 10-60 young that are approximately one-half inch long.

The Balloon Molly is omnivorous and requires both meaty foods as well as algae. Provide this fish with an algae-based flake food, as well as freeze-dried bloodworms, tubifex, and brine shrimp.

Ideal tank mates include:

- [Guppies](#)
- [Platies](#)
- [Mollies](#)
- [Swordtails](#)
- [Tetras](#)
- [Barbs](#)
- [Danios](#)
- [Rainbowfish](#)
- [Gouramis](#)
- [Rasboras](#)
- [Loaches](#)

- [Plecos](#)
- Scavenger Catfish