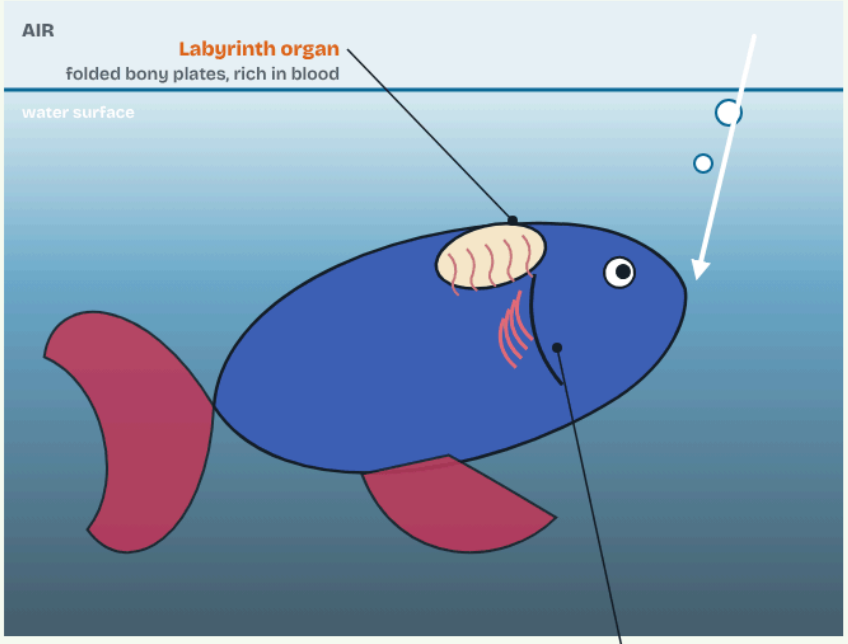
That is why

Why does a betta fish breathe air?

Bettas have a labyrinth organ above their gills that takes oxygen from air. They must reach the surface to survive.

A Inside the head



Air is held against the thin, blood-filled lining of the labyrinth, where oxygen passes straight into the blood, much like a lung.

B Why breathe air?

1 Warm, shallow homes

Wild bettas live in shallow marshes and rice paddies, where water is low in oxygen.

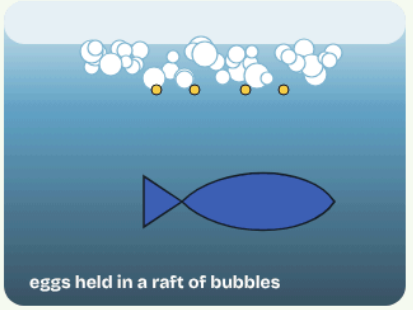
2 Must reach the surface

They are air-breathers: kept from the surface, they can suffocate.

3 Babies start on gills

The labyrinth develops at about 3 to 6 weeks old.

C The bubble nest



The male blows sticky bubbles at the surface, places the eggs in them and guards the nest.

Eggs hatch in 24 to 36 hours; the young stay 2 to 3 more days.

Bettas belong to a group of about 137 labyrinth fishes from Africa and southern Asia, including gouramis.

A fish that lives underwater but breathes from the sky.

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