

## Species Profile: *Archocentrus sajica*

The name sajica is a acronym for SALvador Jimenez CANossa, the director of the Library of Congress of Costa Rica. *A. sajica*, also known as T-Bar Cichlid, is endemic to Costa Rica and other Central American waters.

Males are larger and get longer fins than females, 4½” and 3” respectively. Males also develop a steep forehead as they mature. An open spawner, but with tendencies toward cave spawning. Requiring a neutral pH and temperatures of around 70-80°.

I received these fish as small fry from the raffle table at a club meeting. I placed them into a 33 gallon tank along with a pair of halfbeaks. The fry immediately found any vegetation in the tank and promptly hid for most of the day while they were small. This tank has a gravel bottom and is filtered by an Aquaclear filter. Water changes are done weekly. The temperature is around 75F. I haven't tested the pH in the tank in a long time, but it comes out of the tap around 7.8. The sajicas took flake very well. In fact, I'd call them pigs. They grew extremely quickly. I ended up placing 4 *Thorichthys aureum* in with them as I'd had no other place to put them. For a short while it seemed to work, but soon there were problems. First, the sajicas spawned inside an upside down clay pot that was in the tank. Then within days, two of the aureums spawned on a large flat rock in the middle of the aquarium. This left 4 fish to try and find shelter in the tank. One of the sajicas was soon a victim of this. Soon followed by one of the aureums (the original spawning female in fact – she was killed by the other female who was larger). As soon as the fry was free-swimming, both parents defended the fry against the other sajica and the aureums. The aureums also defended their fry. I got quite busy and didn't keep up my water changes as well as I normally do, and was dismayed to see the large male sajica with popeye. He was still defending his fry though. I siphoned off some of the fry worried



I'd lose the male. They were placed into a 20 gallon tank to grow out. I did lose the male. Shortly after that, the spare aureum was also killed by defending parents. As the large sajica was the only one that had shown any 'red' in its fins, I'd assumed I no longer had any males, not knowing if this was a characteristic or not. I was pleasantly surprised a month later when I saw a new male with the female herding fry in their tight corner of the tank. I also lost this male to popeye. I'm not sure why he got it, as I'd been doing much more regular water changes. All in all, this is quite the pretty fish. The blue eye shows up well against the dark color of the brooding parents. The female did hold her own and defended fry by herself against the aureums. I finally stole the last few fry she had and placed them in with the others to grow out. The fry were fed microworms to start with, and later on were fed BBS and finely crushed flake.

— by Lisa Boorman