

Species Profile: *Haplochromis* sp. "Kenya Gold"

— by Lisa Boorman

This is a gorgeous little Lake Victorian cichlid. From what reports I can discover on this fish, it comes from the Kenyan side of Lake Victoria.

This is a very unique looking cichlid. The dominant males sport a lovely gold colour. They also develop a red tail and have an almost vertical black bar that goes through their eye, going from forehead to the gill plate. When in dominant colouring they tend to not show their horizontal and vertical stripes. Females do not have the gold colouring and will show the striping. In the wild, this cichlid reaches a maximum size of 1 1/2" (3.8 cm). However, in most aquariums "Kenya Golds" can obtain a size of up to 3" (7.6cm).

The water temperature for "Kenya Golds" should be around 74-78F. The pH should be 7.5 to 8.5.

As far as I can tell, "Kenya Golds" are omnivorous and will eat just about anything that you give them. I feed my adults pellets, flakes and occasional treats of live baby brine shrimp.

I received these fish from a friend in Texas who sent me a box full of Victorian 'goodies' (These were *Paralabidochromis* sp. 'Rock Kribensis' "Mwanza Gulf", *Haplochromis* sp. 'blue back', *Pundamilia nyere-rei* "Python Island" and *Mbipia lutea* 'spotbar'). Most of the fry were quite small yet, but the "Kenya Golds" were young juveniles. I placed them into a 33 gallon tank by themselves. The tank has a gravel bottom. There is a large *Bolbitis* plant that is attached to a large piece of wood in the tank as well to give them some place to hide since they seem to be very shy. This tank is filtered by a sponge filter and gets weekly water changes of approximately 20%. The temperature in this tank is 74F. I basically left them alone for several months except to feed and clean the tank and filter. One day I noticed that one of the smaller fish had a full mouth. I was unsure when she started holding and figured I would catch her on the weekend and then remove the fry then. The next day she was no longer

holding. So, I had to wait. The wait was not long. A short while later, I again saw a female holding and this time I stripped her since none of the fry seemed to survive in the main tank. I got 6 full term fry. The next time I got fry from the "Kenya Gold" tank, I got a mouthful of 10 fry. All these fry were placed in a 10 gallon bare bottom tank and were fed baby brine shrimp and crushed flakes. So far all of the fry have survived.

This is a wonderful little Victorian cichlid! If you have limited space, this is a fish you CAN have. It has looks, personality, and is easy to keep. What more can you want from a cichlid?



Photo By Dave Hansen