

Species Profile: *Julidochromis transcriptus* “Gombe”

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When I got my group, they were still juveniles; they were about 1.5 - 2 inches in length. I had them in a 10 gallon tank with no substrate and no other tank mates. It was loaded with caves for them to hide in. After about 6 months or so, I started to notice that there was a pair that kept hanging out together in a terra cotta cave but I didn't take too much notice of them. I started to observe that this pair continuously chased off the other fish in the tank. At the time, I had no other larger tanks for them so I gave Greg and Lee Ann Steeves four of my fish; keeping three of my own. After removing the fish, the aggression level was much better.

After about another three months, I moved into my apartment and brought these guys with me. This time, I housed them in a 20 long with a sandy substrate and lined with a lot of caves for them. I also used a sponge

filter. At first, it took a while for them to get acclimated; the pair bond still existed between the original pair. After about a month, I noticed that there were these teeny tiny fish that were scaling against the cave. I got very excited since I've never seen these guys spawn before. The parents just let them swim wherever they wanted to. They grew out very slowly. Unfortunately, I moved again from my apartment to my current home so I had to move them again after six months in the apartment. I did my best to keep the tank the same, but that's just impossible. I was not able to save any of the fry from the Julies. When moving the tank, the pair bond still remained and they were already back to spawning in no time.

Till this day, I still have the original parents. There's a definite size difference between the male and female. There's the smaller of the two, which got about 3 inches (I'm assuming this is the male), and then there's the larger one which is about 4.5 inches (I'm assuming this is the female). The larger of the two kept watch over the cave where the other one just kind of hangs out. I think these fish are extremely interesting in looks and in behavior. Notoriously, Julies tend to be pretty aggressive, but mine weren't too bad. For example, the pair that's in the tank now tolerates the spare male. He just doesn't swim over to their end of the tank. I feed mine Tetramin Cichlid flakes. I also feed them occasional baby brine shrimp and spirulina flakes.

Overall, I would highly recommend the *Julidochromis transcriptus*. They're an extremely attractive fish and a great addition to anyone's Cichlid collection.

— by Duc Nguyen

