

Species Profile: *Neolamprologus brichardi*

Neolamprologus brichardi or AKA Brichardi or "The Princess of Burundi", is a substrate spawner native to the rocky shoreline of Lake Tanganyika, Africa. The climate is sub-tropical with temperatures in the mid 70's to 80's and native waters for this fish are pH of 8.6 - 9.1. I obtained 12 brichardi of mixed sizes and ages from Diane Tennison (gryhouse). Both males and females achieve a size of 4 inches. Fins are tipped in white and speckled yellow with a lyre shaped long flowing tail. Head is flecked with blue and yellow. A black T shaped marking is formed from the gill plate to the eye. A bright yellow dot is located at the top end of the gill plate. Eyes are crystal blue in color. Females look much like the males except the male may have a slight hump on the top of the head and the female may be smaller in size.



Photo by Jennifer Prince

The fish bred in a 45 gallon tank which contained Aragonite Seaflor Special Grade Reef Sand and was planted with Hornwort, Anubias Nana, and several types of Java Fern. The tank also contained quite a bit of limestone rock forming many large caves. The tank had a pH of 8.4. I performed water changes once every 2 weeks equal to 30 - 40% of the tank volume. SeaChem Tanganyika Buffer as well as Lake

Salts was added to maintain a high pH and hardness. I used power compact lighting on a timer for duration of 10 hours each day. I fed the fish NLS Cichlid Formula & Freeze Dried Krill.

No marked change in spawning colors. Breeding was not observed. Eggs were laid on the underside of a small cave. These were only discovered after some tank maintenance exposed the nesting area. The same day the eggs were noticed, they disappeared. Not sure if they hatched or if the parents moved them. At first, I thought they had been eaten. 6 days later, fry were observed around the mouth of the largest cave.

The pair laid approximately about 50 copper colored eggs.

Both male and female

cared for the eggs with the male acting as primary caregiver. No change in care was required. Approximately 46 eggs representing most if not all of the total hatch were viable and hatched after an unknown hatching time. The fry were a clear white color and about 1/4 of an inch long.

The fry didn't require any special care on my

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part. I left them in the 45 gallon tank with the other inhabitants which included other brichardi, a baby red-eared slider turtle, several small Alto.compressiceps, and bristlenose plecos. Once the eggs were hatched the fry were accepted into the brichardi community. Both parents took active roles in caring for the fry. The male's aggressiveness and strength is clearly demonstrated defending breeding territory from a turtle as well as other inhabitants. All threatening tank mates but one other male brichardi vying for dominance quickly got the message to leave this spot alone. He took refuge in the floating hornwort to recover.

The male took a stronger care giving role defending the nest and fry than that of the female. Many of the brichardi would come and inspect the nest and also keep a watchful eye on the newly hatched fry. It almost seemed like an open house party. Once the fry were free swimming, the male made a point to screen the opening of the large cave with unplanted narrow leafed java fern. He would drag it from across the tank and place it around the opening. The fry stayed close to the cave opening for the first few days and have ventured out into the main tank within a week. This is the first

spawn for me as well as for this group of brichardi. It has been fun watching them interact as a community and observing their parental behaviors. It is said that brichardi breed like rabbits (or rats) but it is their strong bond

to family that helps ensure survival of their offspring. I look forward to seeing how the fry grow and also how their behavior affects the next spawn. They are a great beginner fish especially for someone interested in breeding.



Photo by Diane Tennison

Offer heavily planted or protective areas for ousted tank mates. Floating plants like hornwort work great for offering a refuge. A larger tank than needed is a good thing to keep in mind - lots of babies will be coming along shortly.

■ *Jennifer Prince*