

## Species Profile: *Paralabidochromis* sp. "Rock Kribensis"

**Common Name:** The Rock Krib, Chessboard

**Family:** Cichlidae (Cichlids)

**Synonyms:** *Haplochromis* sp. "Rock Kribensis"

**Distribution:** Africa; Lake Victoria. They are found all over the lake. There are a lot of different variants in the lake. The locale I have is from Kenya.

**Habitat:** As per their name, "rock kribis" are found in rocky areas at depths between 16-82 feet (5-25 metres).

**Max. Size:** Males top out at about 5-6", with females slightly smaller.

**Coloration:** Both sexes have a checkerboard type pattern on their sides. Males are more highly colored than females. Females have a gold-yellow body with the checkerboard pattern, and some females can have an egg spot but not well defined. Males get a red anal fin, and have red in their pelvic and dorsal fins. They also have very well defined egg spots.

**Diet:** Omnivorous: filamentous blue-green algae, aufwuchs, chironomids (midges/gnats) and other insect larvae.

**Breeding:** Mouthbrooder

**Spawn size:** Depends on size of the female, but in general can run from 5-40 fry. At 78°F (25°C) the fry should be released in approximately 18 days.



Photo by Greg Steeves

**pH:** 7.2-8.6

**Water Hardness:** Hard

**Temperature:** 76-79°F (24-26°C)

I received these fish originally from Greg Steeves in Texas. He sent me a box full of Victorian 'goodies' (These were *Paralabidochromis*

sp. 'Rock Kribensis' 'Mwanza Gulf', *Haplochromis* sp. 'blue back', *Pundamilia nyererei* 'Python Island' and *Mbipia lutea* 'spotbar'). Most of the fry were quite small yet. These were a smidge larger than the smaller fry so they ended up in a 20 gallon tank. I received 10 of them. The tank is filtered by a Hydro-sponge filter. There is no décor or substrate in this tank. I fed this tank on assorted flake foods until the fry were large enough to handle the New Life Spectrum pellets that I had. The tank received weekly water changes. These ranged from 25-40% depending on my schedule.

Since this tank is on the bottom row of my

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tank stand, I did not pay as much attention to the tank as the higher tanks get. One day while doing some filter maintenance on a tank above the Rock Krib tank I discovered that the fish were coloring up nicely. I guess since I had stood there so long, they came out of hiding while I was there. They tend to hide in this tank. I imagine that in a larger tank with some dithers they'd come out of hiding better. I started paying more attention to this tank.

I kept up with the feeding and started adding in any extra brine shrimp I had occasionally. I figured that this could only help the females with egg production. Shortly after this, I noticed a small fish in the group holding. She was the smallest fish in the tank. Not knowing how long she'd been holding, I stripped her. There were 3 little baby Rock Kribs in there that had barely hatched. I finished the fry up in a tumbler.

I ended up placing these 3 little guys in with some slightly older electric yellows as I am always looking for ways to make space in my fishroom, and 3 baby fish did not justify a whole tank to me. I started looking to see when they'd hold again. It seemed like it took forever! In the meantime, I somehow lost 2 of the original baby Rock Kribs. They were of an age

that I did not expect them to die.

After a few more months, I discovered a different female holding babies in her mouth and stripped out a small group. These babies were again finished off in the tumbler. This time all the babies survived. They were originally fed baby brine shrimp, and are now being fed flake food. They are currently residing in a 10 gallon tank with some clown plecos and a few baby *Synodontis multipunctatus*. The adults are still



Photo by Greg Steeves

in the original 20 gallon tank I'd started with. I really don't like keeping them that way, but I had run out of larger tanks to put them into. It seems to have kept the aggression level down a fair ways though. It does mean doing larger water changes now though.

All in all, *Paralabidochromis* sp. "Rock Kribensis" is a very pretty fish that should be easy enough to appeal to most people.

■ *Lisa Boorman*