

## Species Profile: *Paracyprichromis nigripinnis*

*Paracyprichromis nigripinnis* or Blue Neon is a maternal mouthbrooder native to the rocky areas of Lake Tanganyika where caves and other hiding places are found. The surface temperatures of the water range between 78-82 degrees and 70 degree at deeper levels. The pH of the lake ranges between 8.6 and 9.5. I obtained seven full grown adults from George Martinez. *P. nigripinnis* is an elongated fish with a dull orange color and iridescent blue horizontal stripes. Males achieve a size of 4.5 inches. Females achieve a size of 3.5 inches and have the same colors as the male although the blue striping is less intense.

The fish bred in a 75 gallon tank which contained pool filter sand and Texas holey rock. The tank was filtered by an AquaClear 500 and Filstar XP3 canister and had a pH of ~7.8. I performed weekly water changes equal to 15-20% of the tank volume. I used fluorescent lighting for duration of 10 hours each day. In the wild, *P. nigripinnis* feed on zooplankton, but I fed them brine shrimp flake, Cyclop-eeze and HBH pellets.

I did not observe the spawning, but these fish will generally spawn on a diagonal rock allowing the eggs to roll down until picked up by the female. The brood consisted of 6 fry. After spawning, the female retreated to a hiding place to avoid harassment by other fish. To protect the fry, I moved the female to an empty tank until she release. The total numbers of eggs were unknown but spawns are generally small (3-10 eggs).

The fry were release about 20 days after spawning but since I did not observe the spawn, I am not exactly sure how long she held. The fry were brown/grey in color and of pretty good size at about 1 cm. They were free swimming with no yolk sack and began feeding immediately.

The fry tank uses a small power filter for filtration. The mother showed no care for the fry. She was re-

turned to the main tank the day she released. I started the fry off on Cyclop-eeze and crushed flake which they eat well. Growth rate is yet to be seen.



It is best to keep these fish in a large group. These fish are a wonderful addition to a community tank. They aren't aggressive and are very beautiful. A side-effect of having them in the tank is that normally very shy fish feel more comfortable when they venture from their hiding places. I would recommend this fish to anyone with at least a 3 foot tank. Tank mates should not be very aggressive. These fish are also very sensitive to stress. I lost one of the adults when I first obtained the group. Care should be taken to keep stress to a minimum.

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— by Roberto De Leon