

Species Profile: *Paralabidochromis* sp. "rock krib"

The rock krib is a Victorian cichlid. Scientifically I do not know much about these fish, I don't know what the wild population status is for certain, and as of yet, this species has not been taxonomically classified.

I obtained my first colony of *Paralabidochromis* sp. "rock krib" in March 1997. The original group I had seemed to be of a different variant than the colony I have now. I believe these fish at one time had a lake wide distribution and the dark variant was likely from north in Ugandan/Kenyian waters, while the lighter colored rock krib variants hail from the Mwanza Gulf region.

On a related note, another Victorian cichlid in the hobby that is commonly seen, *Paralabidochromis* sp. "half crimson", is though by many (including myself) to be a rock krib variant as well.

I had much rock work, crushed oyster shells mixed in the substrate of river gravel, and an AquaClear 300 for filtration of the tank. Due to their small size, I placed a sponge block over the intake to prevent the little critters from being sucked up. This I've learned the hard way! After acclimating the fish to the water away they swam, I didn't see too much of them for the next week... the rocks in the substrate were bigger than they were. Eventually they would appear at feeding time. They were given crushed flake and an occasional treat of brine shrimp. After they got acclimated, the rock krib variants really started to put on weight. They grew to one inch in two months. Within a year they reach their adult size of around three inches.

These fish are brilliantly colored. The females have a metallic orange body with black vertical barring. The males are basically the same but with so much more! The head turns a metallic blue, the body sports a red patching on the belly, and the dorsal, anal, and tail fins are all bright red. Males grow faster and larger than the females, and these fish are not nearly as aggressive as other Victorians I've kept. Spawn sizes have varied from under ten fry in young fish, to over thirty in more

experienced breeders.

I have kept this species in tanks varying in size from 20 to 100 gallons. So long as there is rock work that the rock krib can retreat to for refuge, there should be no problem at all in their keeping. They mix well with some of the striped Victorians such as *Haplochromis* sp. 44 or *Astatotilapia nubila* as well with some of the lesser aggressive malawians. The *Paralabidochromis* sp. "rock krib" is a particularly good tank mate for most of the *Auloncaras* as well.



Paralabidochromis sp. "rock krib" does not grow large, gets along with most other species, is not a finicky eater and breeds readily. They also sport rather beautiful coloration. What's not to like about them?

— by Greg Steeves