

Species Profile: *Pseudotropheus saulosi*

Pseudotropheus saulosi were in the first batch of African Cichlids we purchased. When I was researching our first tank, I was intrigued by their color variety, smaller size, and personality. Males are blue with black vertical bars; subdominant males will be lighter with less barring. Females and juveniles are a beautiful orange. They only grow to 3-4", so they are one of the few mbuna that can be kept in smaller tanks. One of articles I found that helped me solidify my decision was at The Gas Station (www.africancichlid.net), written by Lee Ann.

My decision was made; *Pseudotropheus saulosi* were going to be the central fish in our new 100-gallon mbuna tank. We purchased 10 unsexed juveniles and added *Labidochromis caeruleus* and *Labidochromis* sp. "SRT Kimpuma" to round it out. Of those 10 we ended up with 4 males and 6 females. They spawned regularly, and often. As time went on, I traded some fish, and lost some through embarrassing, newbie mistakes. We still have 2 males and probably 2 females from that first group. When I had holding females, I would catch them at the 2-week point, and let them release in a nursery tank. After about a week of eating and regaining strength I would re-introduce the female to the main tank. Brood sizes were in the 12-20 fry range.

We now keep *Pseudotropheus saulosi* in a species only 55-gallon tank. There are 8 adults - 3 males and 5 females. I found out the hard way that we needed at least 3 males to spread out the aggression. My current methodology of fry rearing is to let the mothers release in the tank. It is heavily stocked with Texas Holey Rock, and a few artificial plants. Initially, only a few fry would survive. But now, it seems that more and more fry from each brood are surviving. Perhaps the mothers have figured out better places to release them; or the smallest fry are following the older fry's example and staying hidden better. All I know is that the number of fry is growing weekly. Of the 5 adult females, it seems

that I always have one holding. In fact, as I write this, we have 3 females holding! Before long, I plan to remove all of the rocks, and attempt to catch all of the fry and then let the process start over again.

If you can't tell by now, this tank is one of our favorites. The fish are colorful, active, not so aggressive that they stress me out worrying about their survival. They are enjoyable to look at daily to see who's holding now, and to try to figure out how many fry are in there.

I feed them a mixed diet of spirulina flakes and whatever general cichlid flakes I'm feeding in my other tanks. Sometimes they get more spirulina, sometimes they don't. They are algae grazers, so they will supplement their diet by eating algae in the tank. I use tap water with only dechlorinator added. The pH is 7.6-8.1, hardness around 9 kH and 13 gH. I try to keep the temperature between 78 and 80 degrees F. As you can see, the substrate is sand and there is plenty of holey rock.



— by Paul Barber