

Species Profile: *Pundamilia igneopinnis*

Pundamilia igneopinnis is a great fish from Lake Victoria. Initially this fish started off as *Haplochromis* "black and orange nyererei", before it was later classified as *Pundamilia igneopinnis*. It is thought that this fish and *Pundamilia nyererei* are closely related not only anatomically, but also ecologically. The distribution is limited to three locations at the southern mainland shore of Speke Gulf: Igombe Island, Ndurwa Point, and the Vesi archipelago.

The appearance of the fish is striking. Males have black or brown-black body. The anal, caudal, and pelvic fins are a bright orange. The dorsal fin also has some orange in it as well as blue. The females are darker than most fish, but drab for the most part. My females have a hint of orange and blue in the dorsal, but only the top trim of the dorsal. There is some variance in the anal, caudal, and pelvic fins. Depending on the location they can also be a red wine color.

I acquired some small fish from Armke's. I placed them in a 20 gallon long. The tank was setup with a sand substrate and a few pieces of holey rock. Initially the dominant male was kind of a grayish color with some color in his fins. He chased around the others non-stop. I talked to our local Victorian expert, Greg Steeves and he recommended that I either add some



more or maybe some other fish to distract the male. I had a bunch of small Yellow labs in another tank and I pulled 4 out and added them to the mix. It didn't go well at all for the as *Pundamilia igneopinnis*. The dominant male lost all color and went into hiding and the others hung around the top of the tank. After a couple days I pulled the labs out and added some zebra danios instead. That was a bad experience for the danios as they were massacred by that night. The next step was to add more rockwork. I threw in a couple of more pieces of holey rock and that worked wonderfully. The dominant male turned a deep black with positively glowing finnage. It gave the others, which I thought were all females some refuge. Over the next week or so another male presented himself. At times he would get almost as dark as the dominant male but mostly was a medium gray color. Surprisingly the dominant male was very tolerate of the other male and has left him alone to this point. Though they are small I did have a female holding for a couple of days. The male was very hard on her. From what I understand that is typical and your best success is to strip the female early and tumble the eggs. I may try to pull her immediately next time and



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isolate her before trying the strip and tumble method.

This is fast becoming one of my favorite fish and I am very happy that I own them. I would recommend that everyone give them a try. You can never have too many Victorian fish! I am eagerly looking forward to this fish spawning and sharing them with my fellow HCCC members.

— *by Dave Hansen*