

Species Profile: *Sciaenochromis fryeri*

Commonly known as an Electric Blue cichlid and erroneously identified as *Sciaenochromis ahli*, *S. fryeri* is a mainstay in the hobby. Its bright blue body and trademark white blaze make it very popular.

I obtain three juveniles that luckily turned out to be a male and two females. They were housed in a 75 gal tank along with some *Aulonocara* and some *Pundamilia nyererei*.

When I purchased them, I was fortunate to have an option as to which variant to choose. I chose the Maleri Island variant (aka Iceberg) because of its wide, white blaze and red anal fin. These are by far my favorite variant.

I had read that *S. fryeri* often become hyper-dominant and difficult to keep with other fish. As mine grew, things appeared not to be the case. My male developed rapidly and obtained its trademark colors.

At first it had more of a powder blue color but as it matured, the blue darkened into its adult dress. The females lack the glamour of the males and remain a dull silver/gray color.

When the male and females reached breeding age, the first signs of aggression began to develop. The day the female was ready to spawn, the male would become aggressive and chase all the other fish into a corner of the tank. After spawning was complete, everything would return to normal and the male would not bother any other fish in the tank. The female would occasionally be harassed by the male, but nothing serious.

The female would hold for a couple weeks and then I would move her into her own tank for the last week or so. There she would release her fry. After releas-



ing, she was promptly returned to the main tank. I always feared that their predatory nature would result in eaten fry although I never gave her a chance to do so.

Spawns were large, usually 20+ fry. They grew quickly and it wasn't long before the two females were producing too many fry. I couldn't give them away fast enough. One thing I noticed was that the broods always seemed to be male heavy. I had heard that was the case but assumed it had to do with the practice of giving hormones to fry for retain purposes resulting in tanks full of what appeared to be all bright, colorful one inch males.

As time went on, the aggression problems I had heard of really started to show. No longer was the male aggressive only during spawning time, but he was terrorizing the tank constantly. The females regularly took a beating and all the other fish were bunched into an ever shrinking area of the tank. Because of my limited tank space, I could no longer continue to keep my *S. fryeri*. For the sake of all the other fish in the tank, I was forced to find

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S. Fryeri "Maleri Island"
Photo by Robert De Leon

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them a new home. They hadn't even reached their full size! They are beautiful fish, but as they mature, they definitely need lots of tank space.



S. Fryeri "Maleri Island"
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