

Species Profile: *Copadichromis azureus*

Copadichromis azureus is a maternal mouthbrooder native to the open waters of Lake Malawi, Africa. The climate is subtropical with temperatures in the mid 70's to 80's and native waters for this fish are pH of 7.4. I started with a trio of juveniles that I raised from a pair I purchased from CB Pets. . Males achieve a size of 6 inches and are Fluorescent blue with black stripes, a white edge to the dorsal fin and a yellow edge to the anal fins. Females achieve a size of 4 inches and are Silver with three black spots along their sides.

The fish bred in a 55 gallon tank which contained fine gravel and was filtered by a Emperor 400 and Penguin 170 with a pH of 7.8. I performed weekly water changes equal to 25% of the tank volume. I fed the fish Bulk krill flake, NLS pellets, with fluorescent lighting for approximately 14 hours per day.

When spawning, the blue color of the male intensifies and his black stripes are more pronounced. The male dug a pit in one corner of the tank and enticed (see chased) the female over and began his ritual. After spawning, the female retreated to a hiding place to avoid harassment by the male. This was her second spawn, but she spit the first time only a few days in. I left the female in the main tank for 17 days, then stripped the 10 fry. Since she had spit the time previously I didn't want to take the chance of her spitting in the main tank, so I did not let her go the normal three weeks. The fry were a silver translucent color and were about 1/4" long. The fry did not really require any special attention on my part. After stripping them I placed them in a 15g fry tank by themselves. In the tank I used a sponge filter for filtration. I started the fry off

on Cyclop-Eeze and crushed flake.

If you obtain this fish as juveniles, you should expect at least the first spawn to be spit prematurely. Once full grown these fish are very prolific breeders, with spawns up to 60 fry. Overall, this has been one of the easiest and least demanding fish I have kept. With quality food and good water conditions, they will breed very frequently. I would recommend this fish to anyone interested in keeping Malawi haps, as they go well with most other haps as well as *Aulonocara*.

— by *Jeff Caroline*



Photo By Jeff Caroline