

Species Profile: *Metriaclima hajomaylandi*

Other names: *Pseudotropheus hajomaylandi*, *Pseudotropheus greberi*, *Maylandia hajomaylandi*.

Common names: none.

Origin: Lake Malawi, Africa.

Localities/Morphs: Endemic to Chizumulu Island which is located approximately 15 kms west of Likoma Island.

Maximum size: 14cm (males) 10cm (females) but have been known to grow larger in captivity.

Natural habitat: Sediment-rich rocky habitat at depths between 5-25 meters.

Natural foods/prey: Most feed on plankton in the open water.

Water chemistry in the wild: pH 7.5-9, 10-11 dH

Predators: larger fish, birds

Brood size: 30-40, it is prolific breeder once they start breeding. They normally start to breed from 5cm.

Breeding method: maternal mouthbrooder

Husbandry requirements

Minimum tank size: standard 3ft for a small colony with one male

Sex ratio: 1 male with at least 3 females. A larger tank (i.e. 6ft tank) is able to maintain a ratio of 2 male with at least 6 females. Rock work on eith end of the tank with an open section in the middle will allow both males to have their own territory.



Male hajomaylandi

Photo by Gerard Delany

Tolerance of conspecifics: aggressive towards other males of its kind.

Tolerance of heterospecifics: they not aggressive towards other cichlids as long as they know who the boss is. The males will defend their territory whilst breeding.

Water chemistry in aquaria: quite tolerant of a range of conditions so long as pH is above neutral. pH 7.0-8.6, carbonate hardness 4-12 dKH

Temperature range: 25-28 degrees Celsius.

Foods accepted: Main diet should include good quality vegetable based flakes and/or pellets. Avoid any food that contains high

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level of protein such as tubifex, blood worms, etc.

Special requirements: none other than water chemistry.

Notes: It is a pity that these fishes are not more popular. Females have a nice yellow colouration without any markings whilst the males are also strongly coloured in yellow with blue along the body and yellow-brownish vertical barring. This is more evident when the males are fully coloured during breeding. The males possess egg spots whilst it is uncommon for the females to possess them.



Female hajomaylandi

Photo by Gerard Delany

M. hajomaylandi can be kept with other Mbuna species of a similar temperament. I keep them in a species tank now that are breeding but have kept *Pseudotropheus* sp. "acei" (Msuli Point) juveniles in with them to act as dither fish. I would not keep them in with *Metriaclima aurora* due to the similarity between the two, in particular the males.

Finally *M. hajomaylandi* are active fishes and they are fun to watch. They will greet you when you walk into the room by swimming to the front of the tank.

The males will secure a small cave amongst the rock work close the substrate. He will then go about enlarging this cave by digging and then will try entice ripe females to join him in this spawning site. Once the female has spawned she will then seek refuge in amongst other caves provided. Males tend not to harass females once they are holding. The females will hold for up to a month producing approximately 40 fry and then return to breeding condition quickly.

■ *Gerard Delany*