

Species Profile: *Pundamilia nyererei* "Red"

The first Victorian species I even kept was a variant of the well known *Pundamilia nyererei*. Its beautiful red, yellow and black body instantly attracted me to the species. It's not often that the color red can be added to a cichlid tank and a small group of *P. nyererei* "Makobe Island" works perfectly. This variant grew quickly and attained a very large size compared to other *nyererei*. Unfortunately since tank space was limited and my tastes changed, they had to go. Over time, I began regretting my decision and as soon as a suitable tank was available I began searching for some "Makobe Island" *nyererei*.

After a year of searching I found myself questioning whether or not I would ever have them in my tank again. I considered going with another variant, but decided to keep looking. While visiting Armke's with Greg Steeves, we found ourselves looking at a tank full of *P. nyererei* "red". Greg told me that he believed this was the Makobe Is. variant I had been searching for. After some personal deliberation I decided to give them a shot. I purchased six and hoped for the best.

As they grew, I looked for signs that they are the variant I was hoping for. I watched their growth rate and their coloration. A couple things I noticed were that they weren't growing as fast as my previous *nyererei* and they developed their colors at a smaller size. Despite this, I kept my hopes up.



Pundamilia nyererei "Makobe Island"
Photo By Robert De Leon



It wasn't long before they started breeding (something I was never able to do with my Makobes). They breed in the typical *nyererei* fashion. The male puts on his breeding dress and does his best to entice a female to follow him. Before long I had multiple females holding. The dominant male's aggressiveness is targeted at other males and unwilling females, especially when he is in the "mood". Other species in the tank are also targeted by the male, but usually not more than an occasional bite or chase.

As it stands now, I am still not sure whether the "reds" are Makobes or not, but I can keep my fingers crossed. Males are still small at about 2". Thinking back to my old Makobes, they still need a couple more inches to go. Hopefully they will continue to grow.

P. nyererei make a great addition to both mbuna and Hap/peacock tanks. I would not recommend they be kept with some of the docile peacocks since *nyererei* can be somewhat rough.

— by Robert De Leon



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