

Julidochromis transcriptus “Gombi”

By: Dave Gauthier

These fish are torpedo-shaped fish with a mainly white underside with black vertical stripes offsetting the white. They also have a bluish tint in the dorsal, pectoral fins and tail. The females of this species are larger than the males and also seen to have a more rounded underside. With this exception, there really aren't any other features that would allow a person to know the sex of the fish. It is best to start with a group of these fish and let them pair off naturally. I purchased a group of five small (2") Tanganyikan cave spawners from a club member about a year and a half ago and placed them in a 10 gallon at 80 degrees F with a power filter and a combination of gravel and crushed coral for the substrate.



It wasn't long before two had paired off. This was made quite apparent by the remaining three fish being pushed to one side of the tank and constantly being chased by the male of the pair. Within a day, the paired male had succeeded in pushing one of the other fish out of the tank. My wife told me about it. Apparently it jumped into the clothes hamper (parked next to the tank) and she found it while doing laundry. Oops. A piece of PVC tubing was added for the pair to use as a “cave”. Anyhow, at the time I did not have any tank space available to move the remaining two into a different tank, so they were sold to a friend. The pair did begin to spawn and multiple generations of fry were in the tank but it appeared that the larger fry were eating the newly hatched ones. I figured that was because of the small tank size and lack of cover.

I moved the pair into a 20 gallon with an undergravel filter (gravel/crushed coral substrate) with a small power head and heated to 80 degrees and a pH of 8.2. A big piece of java moss was put in to provide cover for the fry (providing the adults would cooperate). I also placed some 1 ½” PVC about 6” long in the tank to provide the adults with some cover. Since then I have placed an egg-shaped spawning cave (pictured above) in the tank for them. They quickly gave up the PVC for the cave.

They were fed a couple different kinds of flake food with a majority of their diet being spirulina-based. I also do a 50% water change weekly. Within a week I had noticed a clutch of 20-some eggs attached to the ceiling of the cave. It took about two and a half weeks for the fry to fully hatch and swim on their own. The java moss proved successful in providing enough cover for the newly hatched fry to find adequate shelter as the pair started laying eggs about every three to four weeks. There are currently five or six different generations in the tank living among each other just fine.