

Blue Flash – *Cyprichromis leptosoma* (Mpulungu)

By John Moyles

Cyprichromis leptosoma (Cyp) is a small and slender cichlid. They are sometimes called sardine cichlids because of their shape and habit of living in huge open water schools.

Cyps are not pretty docile and makes a great dither or target fish for other Tanganyikan cichlids. They have tiny mouths and pose almost no threat to the tankmates.



They do best in groups of at least twelve or more in the aquarium. In big groups like this, it is almost guaranteed that at least one male will be colored out. I think that they like showing off to each other as much as they like showing off to the females. Like most schooling fish the larger the group and the aquarium, the happier they will be.

Cyps can be kept in aquariums as small as 29 gallons but 55 gallons is really the smallest size aquarium recommended. The aquarium should have a rock ledge or two but the aquarium should be left mostly open for swimming. When cyps get spooked, they dive they should have smooth substrate for this reason. If the bottom is bare, you should make sure to paint the bottom on the outside. *Cyprichromis* species also jump so a tight-fitting lid is needed.

They will eat prepared foods readily. Make sure the morsels are small enough to fit in their tiny mouths. I feed a blend of pellets, flakes, and powdered foods as well as live blackworms and frozen foods.

Cyps are maternal mouthbrooders. They carry their eggs for around 4 weeks. Parents will not eat their babies. I let the parents spit their baby's right in the display tank. Other occupants are Julidochromis, Enantiopus, and mulis and I have only ever seen the multis eating baby cyps if they come down to the shell area.

The Blue Flash is the holotype for the species *Cyprichromis leptosoma*. It is found at the southern most end of the lake. They are collected at a few locations, including Kasanga, Kambwimba, Isanga, Chituta Bay, and Mpulungu. The blue flash is found in 2 distinct color morphs: blue-tailed males and yellow-tailed males.