

EGYPTIAN MOUTHBROODER, *Pseudocrenilabrus multicolor*

By Chase Klinesteker SWAM, Sept/Oct 1984



Egyptian Mouthbrooder Pair, Female holding on left Photo by Darrell Ullisch

EASY TO SPAWN

When it comes to interesting and unusual breeding habits, the Egyptian Mouthbrooder is my favorite. The male is the most colorful with a red and blue spot pattern mostly in his fins, including a red area on the tip of the anal fin. This is a small and fairly peaceful cichlid. The male gets up to 3 inches long, with the female slightly smaller. They are easy to spawn and will even spawn in a community tank if hiding places are available. Temperature preferences are 75 to 80 degrees, with 80 better for spawning. If well fed, a pair may spawn once a month. The male will dig a depression in the gravel where the female will lay thirty to eighty eggs. After they are fertilized, the female will scoop the eggs into her mouth and hold them there. In 10 days they will hatch and later become free-swimming. The female will eat nothing during this period, and she will waste away to near starving. All this with a mouthful of fish eggs, a fishes prime food! After hatching and free-swimming, the fry will venture out of her mouth, but may return if danger threatens. When the fry can fend for themselves and no longer fit in her mouth, she may even turn on them and eat some.

FRY EASY TO RAISE

The fry are relatively large for this sized fish and will start on newly hatched brine shrimp right away. The undergravel filter seems to be fine for raising the fry. The Egyptian Mouthbrooder is colorful but not as popular as I feel it should be. I had not seen them in the fish stores for several years until about a month ago when I saw a mature pair and picked them up. They spawned for me within a week and before the month was over, the female had a second mouthful of eggs! I highly recommend this pretty, peaceful, and interesting fish, if only to watch maternal devotion at its' upmost!