

# ORANGE LYRETAIL KILLIEFISH, *Aphyosemion australe*

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**Male Orange Lyretail**

## **DESCRIPTION**

The Orange Lyretail Killiefish, *Aphyosemion australe*, is one of the most stunningly colorful fish I have ever kept. It is a color variant of the more common Chocolate Australe. It is not often seen in fish shops likely because it is a jumper, shy in nature, and requires close attention to water quality. It is easily bred and lays eggs in nylon mops, although hatching and rearing the fry can be a challenge. It was one of the first killiefish to become popular in the aquarium hobby and comes from shallow slow-flowing streams in coastal West Africa where there is heavy aquatic vegetation. They will eat a variety of foods including frozen, live, and flake. Soft, acid water seems to work best, and I bred and began raising the fry in rainwater with good results. Once the fry reach a month or so in age, they can be transferred to tap water to grow larger. They are susceptible to velvet disease, so frequent water changes are necessary, as well as the addition of a teaspoon of salt per gallon to their water as a preventative. If you see clamped fins, they are not healthy, and a salt treatment of 2-3 teaspoon per gallon or a peat moss filter is recommended. Maximum size is about 2 ½ inches. Sexing is easy---males are much more brilliantly colored and slightly larger than females. Their lifespan is longer than many killiefish, about 3 years. Rainwater or a peat moss box filter should keep them healthy and happy.

## **BREEDING**

A pair can be bred in a small 2 or 3 gallon tank with light aeration or a sponge filter in a low light area. Males do not seem to be overly aggressive, so the female will be fine if there is some cover available. A dark colored nylon mop is used for them to lay their eggs in, although their eggs are not very adhesive, and I have collected more eggs by siphoning out the debris on the bottom and checking it. Their eggs could be put in moist peat moss for 3-6 weeks to hatch, but I prefer to pick the eggs from the mop and hatch them in water and a drop of

methylene blue. Light aeration will keep them viable, and they hatch in around 2 weeks. Feed the fry infusoria for the first couple of days, then newly hatched baby brine shrimp. It is thought that the temperature that these fish are kept and raised could be a factor in their health. Ideally, 70-75 degrees is recommended and they may be susceptible to higher temperatures, which could cause stunting, weakness, or poor color development.



Pair of Orange Lyretail Killifish, female above