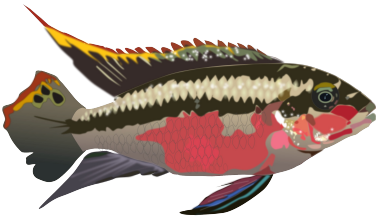


BREEDING PELVICACHROMIS PULCHER,THE KRIBENSIS

by Ben Gunn



Ever since I was introduced to fish keeping, my favourite species has always been that beautifully coloured dwarf Cichlid, the Kribensis or *Pelvicachromis pulcher*.

I obtained my first specimens at one of the Club's meetings, where I ended up with 4 males some 5 cm long and 2 females some 3 cm long. These were placed in a small community tank, along with some Guppies, *Corydoras* and various Barbs and immediately, the largest male staked out his territory around a large flat stone, lying almost horizontally against a piece of wood. It took a while for the other Kribs to work out that this area around the rock was his territory and that visitors weren't welcome, but after a lot of bullying they eventually got the picture.

The dominant male Kribensis then set about excavating a cave beneath his rock by removing the pieces of gravel, one by one, with his mouth. After completing his cave he set about the business of finding a mate and much to my delight, he paired up with the nicer of the 2 females. After a lot of displaying and jaw locking, the pair was formed.

I then moved the Kribs into a larger tank, which contained a rather large Jewel Cichlid and some other medium-sized occupants. The remaining 4 Kribs were sold to a friend and in their absence the pair set about breeding. Together they built two caves and there was much rivalry between them and the Jewel Cichlid but in the end, the large fish gave way.

Nothing much seemed to be happening until one day, I noticed the absence of the female Krib. With the aid of a torch I looked into one of the caves and there was the female gently fanning water over some 30 light brown eggs. After 5 days, my worst fears were confirmed: the mother had eaten all of the eggs.

The pair spawned another 3 times over the next 2 months and by this time I could sense when this was likely to occur but despite this, the same happened and I lost the lot each time. About 5 days after the fifth spawning, the female swam out of the cave with a trail of little young ones following her. Both parents did a good job of protecting and herding the little youngsters around and at the end of the day, the female would lead them back into the cave for the night.

All but 2 fry were removed into a raising tank, where they happily accepted a diet of live Brine shrimp and powdered fry food. The end result was some 25 young Kribensis, 20 breeding points and a great sense of achievement.

To sum it all up, the Kribensis is an easy fish to breed, even in a community tank with fairly large, aggressive Cichlids, and is a good species for earning those first breeding points.
