

Neolamprologus Leleupi - Firecracker, Dutch Orange

By Mike Dunagan

Neolamprologus leleupi or Firecracker, Dutch Orange, is a cave spawner native to Lake Tanganyika occurring among rocks and stones of the lake. The fish seldom strays more than a few centimeters from the substratum, but always moves in close contact with the rocks with the rocks and immediately withdraws into crevices when disturbed. The climate is sub-tropical with temperatures in the mid 70's to 80's and native waters for this fish are pH of 8.6. I obtained a pair 3-4 inches long fish from MCA member Nugs . Males achieve a size of 5 inches and are yellow torpedo bodied with black lips. Females achieve a size of 4 inches and are similar to male but smaller.

The fish bred in a 120 gallon tank which contained Pool Filter Sand. The tank was filtered by a 40 gallon long custom sump and had a pH of pH of 8.8 and temperature of 78 F. I performed weekly water changes equal to 50% of the tank volume. I used fluorescent lighting for duration of 12 hours each day. I fed the fish NLS 1mm cichlid mix.



N. Leleupi male guarding cave with female in background

When spawning they moved into a small open area under some Texas Holey rock, cleared an area to the bare bottom of the tank. Laid the eggs and then the male fertilized them.

The pair laid approximately 40+ pure white eggs. After spawning, the female and male took turns protecting the fry. The father would retreat to the cave even when water changing and they would

attack the tube. I left the eggs and fish a lone to care for the young fry themselves. I move the fry after a few weeks. The fry were colorless at first, but as they grew they picked up the color of the yellow like the parents.

The fry didn't require any special care on my part. I left them in the large tank with a sump, and then moved weeks later into a tank with sponge filter for filtration. The parents took turns caring for the fry. Not letting them out of the cave. I started the fry off on NLS Growth Formula. The fry grew slowly.

These fish are secretive when breeding. I did not see the entire act. I was so happy when they spawned this time. I only had one fry make it from the first spawn and they refused to spawn again. After the tank move, they started right after the first water change. This is a great fish for any Tang tank. I would not keep more than a pair as they pair off and

become aggressive. Be careful when stocking the tank as other Lamprologus may become targets for attacks.

I hope they will breed again. I would not do a thing differently!