

## *Nanochromis parilus*: A Small West African Cichlid

At the Norwalk Aquarium Society Auction in February 2000, I picked up five young (half inch) *Nanochromis parilus*. I always enjoy going to the Norwalk Auction as I usually find something unusual that we don't have in the Clubs around here.

*Nanochromis parilus* is a small West African cichlid related to the more familiar kribis. The old timers tell me it used to be *N. nudiceps* and the literature supports this as it was only described as a separate species in 1976. The fish is more elongated than the kribis and has a basic yellowish body color with pink and bluish green coloring on the abdomen. The female seems to be a bit more colorful than the male. The males grow to about three inches with the females slightly smaller. The fish were housed in a ten gallon bare bottom tank with spawning caves, Java moss, and hornwort. Filtration and circulation were provided by an air-driven box filter. They fed hungrily on live baby brine shrimp and a variety of flake foods once or twice a day. As they grew, most of them remained elongated and their dorsal fins started to elongate, but one seemed to be heavier bodied with a shorter dorsal fin. Looks like I ended up with four males and a female.

They seemed to be rather secretive fish with all of them keeping their distance from one another, hiding under the filter, in a cave, or in plants. In late June, while doing a water change, I saw a fry scoot along the bottom, and after a thorough search, I came up with two fry about a quarter inch in length. Okay, so they're spawning now. I then kept a close watch on the tank, and a few days later, saw the female in the mouth of a cave. I kept a watch on her, and a few days later, with the aid of a flashlight, I saw wrigglers in the bottom of the cave. Success! Not long-lived, however, as the wrigglers disappeared a few days later. Back to the literature. It seems that this species is known for devouring their fry if disturbed.

The next time I saw the female in a cave, I kept a close watch, and when I saw wrigglers, I removed the cave, female and all, to a gallon beaker where I dumped out

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the cave, netted the female, and put her back in the tank. I was left with 30 to 35 wrigglers in the beaker. I raised them for a while in the beaker with a small sponge filter and some Java moss for hiding as they are very skittish. They relished the baby brine shrimp I fed them as well as crushed flake food. When they reached 1/4 to 3/8 inch size, I moved them to a ten gallon tank, and eventually brought in about two dozen to various auctions for BAP Points. I showed a male at Rhode Island, but he didn't place as he was pretty paled-out in a bare tank. I tried again at the NEC Show in Norwalk, but he didn't show well as he didn't survive the trip. I still have the three adult males and one female. Maybe I'll take another few spawns and raise some up to sell at this summer's ACA convention.