

Breeding Geophagus SP "Tapajos Red Heads"

By Kevin Reimer (KWA) – March 2007
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I was the lucky winner of two Geophagus SP "Tapajos Red Heads" at the December 2005 KWA meeting. At barely three inches, the pair was relatively 'drab'. However, the pelvic and tail fins were showing some subtle colour.



Geophagus also known as 'earth eaters' spend most of their time sifting through the substrate to feed. Sand or very small substrate in the aquarium is best. The females colour up like the males, unlike a lot of African cichlids I was keeping. I read that these easily adapt to different water conditions.

Geophagus SP "Tapajos Red Heads" are a South American Cichlid from the Rio Tapajós (river), Pará, Brazil. They grow as large as 25 cm / 10 inches; prefer lower pH, a temperature of 25-28 c / 78 f, and they're a substrate spawner / mouth brooder.

To increase my pair to a group of six, I purchased four more. These earth eaters were in a 60 gallon (the lowest

pH of all my tanks) heavily planted tank with lots of driftwood.

After 11 months in this tank, they were about four and half inches. I decided to move the group up in the world to a 75 gallon tank. I was no longer concerned with water parameters for spawning because I wanted to see these nice fish.

Filtration is supplied with an under gravel filter (using small gravel) and a 304 canister filter. I'm using very hard water (Waterloo tap) and the pH measures at 8.1. I thought they might have been brooding on a couple of occasions but wasn't convinced. An albino rainbow shark accommodates the tank along with two medium sized clown loaches for coned snail control. To my surprise a pair successfully guarded eggs on a piece slate for three days before mouth brooding. Both parents shared the brooding and also took turns allowing the other to feed.

Due to the presence of loaches and lack of extra tank space, I decided to strip the fish. Once the fry was free swimming I fed micro worms and then gradually shifted to de-capsulated brine shrimp eggs.

At 60 days these juveniles are about a quarter inch and I feed mostly flake food now.

This is my opinion as I learned through my experiences. Give some South American earth eaters a try!

...Kevin

