

Bolivian Butterfly Cichlid

Mikrogeophagus altispinosus



Common Names

Bolivian butterfly, Bolivian ram and Ruby crown cichlid

Natural Range

Amazon River basin, South America.

Maximum Size and Longevity

Maximum size 7- 8cm, with a life span of 5+ years.

Water Quality

- Temperature: 24°C - 28°C.
- pH: 6.0—7.5
- General Hardness: 50—180 ppm.

Feeding

Bolivian butterflies benefit from a varied diet. We recommend feeding foods high in beta-carotene to enhance colouration. They are bottom feeders, so feed good quality sinking foods. Supplement their diet with high quality frozen foods such as AI Naturals Range Brine Shrimp, and Tropical Mix. Brine Shrimp is naturally rich in beta-carotene, while the Mysis Shrimp in Naturals Range Tropical Mix also contains beta-carotene.

Compatibility

M. altispinosus are a shy and relatively peaceful cichlid which are well suited to being kept in small groups of 4-6 in a community tank. Tetras or similar mid-water species are recommended as tank mates, since the presence of small to medium sized fish appears to reduce their natural shyness. The addition of peaceful bottom dwellers such as Corydoras species and other catfish well help create an ideal community environment.

Colour and Varieties

Only slight variances between geographical locations occur, but most are not noted in the aquarium trade. Although *M. altispinosus* is less intense in colour to the similar *M. ramirezi*, it still a great looking cichlid. It has a gold belly and an iridescent bluish hue, accompanied by red highlights on the fins, a thin vertical black bar down through the face and a dark splotch in the middle of the body.

Sexing

Adult males grow larger than females and possess slightly more extended fins. They also are generally more intense in colour when compared to the female.

General Information

M. altispinosus is an undervalued species in the aquarium hobby. They are impressively coloured, will not grow too large, will eat most foods, and they can adapt to a diverse number of water conditions with ease. Since *M. altispinosus* is not as finicky as many other cichlids when it comes to these requirements it is definitely worth a look. If you want a colourful, peaceful dwarf cichlid for a planted community or, if you have had trouble keeping *M. ramirezi* in the past and would like something similar that is not as demanding, the Bolivian butterfly maybe just what you are after!

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