

African Butterfly Cichlid

Anomalochromis thomasi

Introduction

This very attractive and peaceful species is similar to the South American ramerizi, but it grows a little larger and is generally hardier. It has a distinctive compact shape and a pattern of brilliant blue reflective scales over the body and gill plate. The fact that *Anomalochromis thomasi* does not disturb plants has made it a favourite small cichlid in Europe, where Dutch-style planted aquaria are very popular.

Habitat and Natural Range

Western Africa, Sierra Leone and Liberia

Maximum Size

Grows up to 7 – 8 cm.

Water Conditions

pH 5-6.5, General Hardness 100 – 300 ppm.

Temperature Range

25 - 28°C

Colouration

The base coloration is yellow-brown to brown. The body is marked with five faint, black bars that extend from the back to the mid-section of the body. The body has many rows of iridescent spots ranging in color from purple to blue to green to yellow. These spots usually are lightly shaded (yellow, green, turquoise) that develop into darker shades (blue, purple) and then back into lighter shades near the caudal peduncle.

Tank Set-Up

A tank with a capacity of 75-100 Litres is sufficient. The tank should be arranged in dark colors with a gravel/pebble substrate. The tank should be heavily planted with roots, rocks, wood, and over-turned flow-erpots to serve as hiding places. Use flat stones as resting places and potential spawning sites. Leave open swimming areas.



Feeding

A variety of live feed, flake-foods, bloodworms and addition of some vegetable matter to the diet, fed two-three small portions per day instead of one large feed will see your fish excel.

Breeding

Water maintenance must be kept up in order for the fish to get in a spawning condition. The species is a substrate spawner, preferring to lay eggs on flat rocks and in is in fact relatively easy to breed. Sexes are difficult to distinguish. As many as 500 eggs are laid on a previously cleaned stone or plant leaf. These are carefully guarded by the parents. The eggs hatch in 3 -5 days and the fry are moved to a previously-dug pit. The fry can be fed on live Artemia and dry foods. The parents will continue their brood care.

Compatibility

The African Butterfly Cichlid will not chase or harm other species and makes a wonderful community fish. Of course it should not be mixed with fish much smaller or much larger than itself. It is not a shy species; roaming all about the aquarium displaying itself quite freely. Peaceful.

