

= Pelvicachromis pulcher =

Pelvicachromis pulcher is a freshwater fish of the cichlid family, endemic to Nigeria and Cameroon. The species is popular amongst aquarium hobbyists, and is most commonly sold under the name *kribensis*, although the species has other common names, including various derivatives and color morphs of the *kribensis*: krib, common krib, red krib, super @-@ red krib and rainbow krib, along with rainbow cichlid and purple cichlid. The species is a popular cichlid for the aquarium.

= Description =

In the wild, male *P. pulcher* grow to a maximum length of approximately 12 @.@ 5 centimetres (4 @.@ 9 in) and a maximum weight of 9 @.@ 5 grams (0 @.@ 34 oz). Females are smaller and deeper bodied, growing to a maximum length of 8 @.@ 1 cm (3 @.@ 2 in) and a maximum weight of 9 @.@ 4 g (0 @.@ 33 oz). Both sexes have a dark longitudinal stripe that runs from the caudal fin to the mouth and pink to red abdomens, the intensity of which changes during courtship and breeding. The dorsal and caudal fins also may bear gold @-@ ringed eye spots or ocelli. Males show colour polymorphisms in some populations collected at single localities. Juveniles are monomorphic until approximately six months of age.

= Distribution, habitat and predators =

Pelvicachromis pulcher is native to southern Nigeria and to coastal areas of Cameroon, where it occurs in warm (24 ? 26 ° C or 75 ? 79 ° F), acidic to neutral (pH 5 @.@ 6 ? 6 @.@ 2), soft water (12 ? 22 mg L ? 1 CaCO₃). Populations of *P. pulcher* also occur outside its natural range in Hawaii, USA as a by @-@ product of the ornamental fish trade.

The species inhabits both slow and fast @-@ moving water, though it is only found where patches of dense vegetation are available. Other fish that share the habitat of *P. pulcher* include other *Pelvicachromis* species (*Pelvicachromis taeniatus*), other cichlid species (*Chromidotilapia guntheri*, *Hemichromis cristatus* and *H. fasciatus*, *Tilapia mariae* and *T. zilli*) along with *Brycinus longipinnis* and *Aphyosemion* species. The species is prey for a number of rheophilic predators including *Hepsetus odoe*, *Hydrocynus forskahlii*, and *Lates niloticus* (Nile perch). In the natural habitat, *P. pulcher* have been observed excavating, defending, and sheltering in caves dug underneath plants, and these holes are also used for breeding. Not all *P. pulcher*, however, claim territories and many live in large, non @-@ reproductive aggregates.

= Diet =

Despite the suggestion in some aquarium literature that the species feeds on worms, crustaceans, and insects, analysis of the stomach contents of wild *P. pulcher* suggests this is incorrect. A study by Nwadiaro (1985) of 161 individuals showed that the main food items were diatoms, green algae, pieces of higher plants, along with blue @-@ green algae. Invertebrates, though consumed, were found to be relatively uncommon food items for wild fish.

= Sexual dimorphism and reproduction =

Like other *Pelvicachromis* species, *P. pulcher* is sexually dimorphic. Males have pointed pelvic, dorsal, and anal fins, while the female's pelvic, dorsal, and anal fins are more rounded in appearance. In addition, males are larger, lack the gold sheen to the dorsal fin and have a more elongated, spade @-@ shaped caudal fin. Despite the suggestion in the aquarium literature that the species forms monogamous pairs, the formation of polygynous harems is not uncommon in the natural habitat. The species are secretive cave spawners (speleophils) although detailed information on their reproductive biology in the wild is limited. In the wild, the species is known to breed in holes excavated beneath aquatic and semi @-@ aquatic plants. In captivity, artificial

caves are readily accepted as breeding sites , however , these too are excavated prior to egg @-@ laying . The eggs are adhesive and are frequently laid in rows of ca . 10 on the upper surface of the cave and produce a clutch that ranges in size from 40 to 100 . Both the male and female provide active brood care , typically lasting 21 ? 28 days , which includes guarding , herding , and feeding . It is noteworthy , however , that the female is predominantly responsible for fry care , while the male is primarily involved in territorial defence . As in all *Pelvicachromis* species , the gender ratio of female to male fry increases with pH . This ratio is also known to vary at different locales in the wild . Breeding pairs of *P. pulcher* have been known to adopt similarly aged fry from conspecifics in aquarium trials , and it has been suggested this may be an adaption to reduce predation on their own fry . Male colour polymorphism may be indicative of behavioural differences . For example , red males obtained from a single site were found to be more aggressive and more polygamous than yellow males obtained from the same site . In addition , the species has been demonstrated to engage in cooperative territorial defence where multiple males defend a single territory .

= = Taxonomy = =

Pelvicachromis pulcher was originally described as *Pelmatochromis pulcher* by George Boulenger in 1901 . Subsequently a number of junior synonyms (*Pelmatochromis aureocephalus* , *Pelmatochromis camerunensis*) and misidentifications (*Pelmatochromis kribensis* , *Pelmatochromis subocellatus* var. *kribensis* and *Pelmatochromis pulcher* var. *kribensis*) were brought into use . Some of these synonyms are still in use by aquarium hobbyists which complicates identification of this species . Many of the common and trade names used for this species , such as *kribensis* , *krib* , *rainbow krib* are derived from the erroneous binomial , *Pelmatochromis kribensis* .

The genus *Pelmatochromis* was revised by Thys van den Audenaerde in 1968 when the genus *Pelvicachromis* was erected with *P. pulcher* designated as the type species .

The etymology of this species is as follows :