Among-Species Variation in the Parental Care and Following Responses of Juvenile Cichlids in the Genus *Apistogramma*

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Fishes of the family Cichlidae are well known for their diversity and repeated adaptive radiations. Many species of cichlid fish reproduce in pairs in which one or both parents provide intensive parental care for their offspring. For many species of neotropical dwarf cichlids (Apistogramma), only females care for their young and, when they do, they take on a characteristic, striking ‘brooding’ colouration and perform specific behaviours that appear to be directed to their offspring. I asked whether these behaviours (i) elicit specific responses in offspring and (ii) whether juvenile responsiveness to them changes over time. I observed the mother-juvenile interactions of fish raised in aquaria with a naturalistic environment including vegetation. Juveniles showed either defensive (e.g. freezing) or foraging responses to specific maternal behaviours. Maternal displays that trigger defensive responses could reduce risk of mortality to predation by acting as warning and then, when the threat is gone, the all-clear signal apparently indicates when the offspring can return to foraging. These responses to the female declined with age; this could be a result of a declining risk of predation and, also, increasing independence as they developed.