

**BREEDING PSEUDOTROPHEUS ZEBRA**

by Toni Kinnane

*Pseudotropheus zebra*, commonly called the Zebra or the Malawi Blue Cichlid, is an mbuna from Lake Malawi and is known to have over a dozen colour varieties. It is probably the best known of all mbuna.

Lake Malawi is the southernmost of the great Rift Lakes, extending from about 9° S to 14° S, at about 34° E. It covers an area of 11 000 square miles and has a maximum depth of about 2 600 feet. Its surface waters vary the year round, between 23.5 and 27.5° C, which is about the normal range of room temperatures. The water is alkaline and ranges in pH from 7.7 to 8.6.

My beautiful pair of *p. zebra* comprise an OB (orange/black) male from Canberra, whom I named Zac, and a pink female called Zukie, from Sydney. Their first spawning was not successful, as often happens with mouth-brooders, when the female either swallows the eggs or spits them out. The second spawning occurred about a month later, with Zukie appearing one morning with a very full buccal pouch, this being the area below the lower jaw. The water conditions at the time were: pH, 7.5 and temperature, 29° C.

During the following three weeks Zukie ate very little. I had assumed that she would keep the fry in her mouth for four weeks but was mistaken, for she already had her babies in the rock area of the tank after three. I found the survivors a couple of days later, when doing a water change. After two hours of stripping the tank, removing all rocks and separating fish, I found 10 small fry.

When the fry were 8 weeks old, they took on the colours of their parents, five being like the male and the other five resembling the female.

Now 90% of my fish are Zebras and I will enjoy keeping them for many years to come.

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