## Africa's Lake Victoria Haplochromine Cichlids

Paul Loiselle, 2024





Astatotilapia cronus (male).

Astatotilapia latifasciata (male).

Astatotilapia cronus was a morphologically generalized paedophage. It is now extinct. Native to Lake Nawampasa, a Kyoga satellite lake, Astatotilapia latifasciata is not, strictly speaking, a Lake Victoria endemic. It does belong to the Victorian superflock, however. It's status in the wild is uncertain, but it is well established in the aquarium hobby.



Haplochromis lividus (territorial male).

*Haplochromis lividus* is a Lazarus species. Thought to be extinct, a visiting aquarium hobbyist discovered a relict population and collected juveniles. This species is found in low oxygen peripheral

biotopes hostile to the Nile perch, so for the moment, it conservation status seems reasonably secure.



Xystichromis phytophagus (male).



Yssichromis perrieri (courting male).



Yssichromis piceata (displaying male).



Yssichromis argens (male).

*Xystichromis phytophagus* is a periphyton feeder that remains abundant in the Yala Swamp satellite lakes. It is well established in the aquarium hobby.

*Yssichromis perrieri* is an inshore-dwelling micropredator originally thought to be a representative of the piscivorous genus *Harpagochromis*. In subsequent genetic analysis, it was found to cluster with *Yssichromis* species. *Yssichromis piceata* and *Y. argens* are pelagic plankton feeders. All three *Yssichromis* populations appear to be Extinct in the Wild, but managed populations exist *ex situ*.



Pundailia azurea (male).

Pundailia nyererei (aggressive male). Pundailia pundailia (courting male).

*Pundamilia* is a small genus of haplochromine cichlids endemic to East Africa. They are midwater plankton feeders. All three species remain widely distributed in the southern portion of the

lake. These three species are more (*P. nyererei* and *P. pundamila*) or less (*P. azurea*) well established in the aquarium hobby.



Mbipia lutia (dominant male).



Mbipia mbipi (sexually quiescent male).



Lithochromis rubipinnis (dominant male).



Neochromis rufocaudalis (male).

*Mbipia lutia, Mbipia mbipi, Lithochromis rubipinnis* and *Neochromis rufocaudalis* are all rockdwelling plant and algae eaters. They remain reasonably abundant in the lake and managed populations exist *ex situ.* 



Macropleurodus bicolor (OB female).



Macropleurodus bicolor (male).



Platytaeniodus degeni (male).

Ptyochromis xenognathus (male).

*Macropleurodus bicolor, Platytaeniodus degeni* and *Ptyochromis xenognathus* are all malacophages that use their oral dentition to extract snails from their shells. As of 1996, the formerly widely distributed *Macropleurodus bicolor* was known to persist in two isolated localities. If not Extinct, it is certainly Critically Endangered. The (above) photos were taken in Jinja, Uganda around fifty years ago. *Platytaeniodus degeni* and *Ptyoxhromis xenognatus* are Extinct in the Wild but managed populations exist *ex situ*.



Labrochromis ishmaeli (courting male).





Paralabidochromis plagiodon (territorial male).

*Labrochromis ishmaeli* is a malacophagous that crushes the shells of its prey with its pharyngeal jaws. It is Extinct in the Wild but a managed population exists *ex situ*. *Paralabidochromis chromogynos* is a rock-dwelling insectivore. It is unusual in than both sexes share a distinctive "piebald" color pattern. It is well established in the aquarium hobby. *Paralabidochromis plagiodon* is another insectivore. It remains widely distributed in the southern portion of Lake Victoria.

(male).



Lipochromis maxillaris (male).





Lipochromis obesus (male).

*Lipochromis maxillaris* is a paedophage that appears to prey selectively on ovigerous females of Lake Victoria's endemic *Oreochromis* species. A relict population occurs in Lake Kanyeboli, a Nile

(displaying male).

perch-free satellite lake. It should be considered Critically Endangered. *Lipochromis melanopterus* is another paedophage. It's status in the wild is uncertain, but a managed *ex situ* population exists. The photograph of *Lipochromis obesus* was taken in Jinja, Uganda fifty years ago. This robust paedophage is now Extinct.



Gaurochromis hiatus (sexually active male).

Haplochromis pyrrhocephalus and Gaurochromis hiatus are both benthic detritivores that occurred over open sandy bottoms. Managed populations exist *ex situ* but they are Extinct in the Wild.

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