

HETEROCHROMIS MULTIDENS: THE MOST PLESIO-  
MORPHIC AFRICAN CICHLID FISH? M. K.

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Heterochromis multidens (Pellegrin), from the cuvette centrale of the R. Congo (Zaire), differs from, and may be more primitive than all other African cichlids studied in having: (i) dermal splint of palatine long, overlapping edge of ectopterygoid anteriorly; (ii) axial palatine ridge distinct; (iii) insertion of m. adductor arcus palatini not extending onto palatine. It is seemingly more apomorphic than the Madagascan and Indian cichlids, and resembles the American and African genera, in having: (i) coronal lateralis pores of frontal united to form single opening, raised on a medial frontal ridge; (ii) widely diverging frontal ridges anterior to coronal pore; (iii) cranial roof musculature extending forward to coronal pore medially, anterior to this pore laterally; (iv) pseudobranch reduced, covered by buccal mucosa. It shares a supposed synapomorphy of American cichlids involving first epibranchial shape. It differs from all other cichlids except Cichla and the Madagascan-Indian genera in that the lachrymal appears subdivided posteriorly along a lateralis canal between neuromasts 3 and 4. Heterochromis may be the sister group of the other African cichlids, the American cichlids, or both.

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