

# Rawfeeding Rebels



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## A Guide To Raw feeding Your Pet Fish by Joanne Craig

Meet Ed, he is a *Pseudotropheus* "Williamsi North" Blue lips, a member of the mbuna family from Lake Malawi. He is totally raw fed and loving it!

### Where did it all begin?

I switched my dogs to raw food and noticed a massive difference, I was feeding the fish straight after and thought what's really in this stuff? So I researched into the fish flakes available and was disgusted by the ingredients.

For example a famous fish flake brand has the following ingredients: Fish Meal, Ground Brown Rice, Dried Yeast, Shrimp Meal, Wheat Gluten, Potato Protein, Feeding Oat Meal, Soybean Oil, Fish Oil, Algae Meal, Sorbitol, Lecithin, Ascorbic Acid, Inositol, Niacin, Riboflavin-5-Phosphate, A-Tocopherol-Acetate, D-Calcium-Pantothenate, L-Ascorbyl-2-Polyphosphate, Thiamine Mononitrate, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride,

Vitamin A Palmitate, Menadione Sodium Bisulfite Complex, Cyanocobalamin, Cholecalciferol, Blue 2 Lake, Canthaxanthin, Red 3 Dye, Yellow 5 Lake, Yellow 6 Lake, Ethoxyquin.

### How dreadful is that! Over half the ingredients are chemicals and colours.

So Ed and his friends eat a diet of raw vegetables peas, carrots, courgettes, cauliflower, romaine lettuce, broccoli, tomatoes, brussel sprouts, cabbage, kale, spinach, green beans, and marrow. They also get live brine shrimp once every two weeks as a treat. In addition to this I grow natural algae on the rocks in my aquarium which they graze of continually. I think you will agree he is a stunning looking fish. As for the benefits, my fish are bright coloured and healthy, I've never had a case of Malawi bloat (which is usually fatal) since I switched, never had an ill fish since, there is much less aggression in my aquarium and my fish grow very quickly compared to others who are fed on flake, my fish breed more and have more babies. Ed is tank boss, he is firm but gentle, he has a huge personality, he will feed from my hand. We all love Ed.



Would you like a fish who...

**Less fish waste which equals cleaner water and filters, in turn equaling more stable water parameters.**

**More active and colourful fish.**

**Higher breeding and growth rates.**

Yes your fish can survive on a diet of fish flakes or pellets, but wouldn't you rather they thrived?

### First rule of rawfeeding, research

Its vitally important you take some time to look up the wild diets of your aquarium or pond fish, this will help you decide what kind of diet to work with. For example, Ed's species are mainly herbivorous eating algae but they also eat tiny invertebrates contain within that algae. Therefore, I feed a diet of mainly vegetable matter with two feedings of higher protein a week.

### Fish Diet Suggestions

I've tried to give example diets for the three typical diets of fish, herbivores, omnivores and predators, it is vital you find out your fish species natural diet and match its characteristics.

### How Much?

I feed my fish twice a day to help reduce aggression. If I feed a large grazing item I will leave this in the tank for an hour or two. If I feed a more readily eaten item I will feed what they can eat in two minutes and remove any uneaten food after.

african cichlids with celery stick (photo by Phil and Kirsty Jones)



## Examples for Herbivores

What I feed my Mbuna from Lake Malawi. As with all herbivores its important to feed a diet rich in fiber with a lower protein content.

### example menu

- Mon AM: De-shelled peas  
PM: Broccoli tops
- Tues AM: Half courgette to graze.  
PM: Live Brine shrimp
- Wed AM: Steamed carrots  
PM: Romaine lettuce
- Thurs AM: Frozen Malawi Mix  
PM: Green beans
- Fri AM: Homemade mixed vegetable mush.  
PM: Cauliflower
- Sat AM: Spinach leaves  
PM: White mosquito larvae.
- Sun No food this is a rest day.

## Example foods for fish which are more omnivorous



Here you are looking for a diet with more balance between protein and fiber, also with any fish that has a more bulbous head make sure you are adding some fats

and carbohydrates. Fats are especially important for fish living outdoors in the winter.

Common live foods are brine shrimp, earthworms, tubifex worms, whiteworms, drosophila, daphnia, and bloodworms.



Diced clams, mussels, shrimp, lobster, crab, fish and oysters, ground beef. Adding in a good selection of vegetables e.g. peas, carrots, courgettes, cauliflower, romaine lettuce, broccoli, tomatoes, brussel sprouts, cabbage, kale, spinach, green beans, marrow.

Freeze dried foods, brine shrimp, krill, tubiflex worms, mosquito larvae, bloodworms and daphnia.

## Predatory fish

Do not be confused by here, the majority of fish are opppourtunistic predatory fish in that they will consume much smaller tankmates if given the chance, for example angelfish. To be truly considered a predatory fish though is a species which in the wild would survive off smaller fish. The example I am going to use here is the lung fish as I have been able to gather information from a friend who keeps lungfish herself.

It is a common misconception that predatory fish should only be fed live feeder fish and many health problems can be related to improper use of live feeder fish.

A good mixed diet of many protein types are what is key here, for example, any type of fish, crayfish, crabs and any other meat that isn't too fatty, e.g. beef and lamb. (Avoid pork)

## How do I know I am getting it right?

Just like with other animals the key is to watch their poo, excessive poo could mean you are feeding to much, white stringy poo can be a sign of constipation and in the case of tropical fish could be too much protein. Also it's vital to watch your water parameters, high nitrates or ammonia can be caused by overfeeding.

An excellent explanation into fish digestive systems and nutrients:

<http://www.aquaticcommunity.com/fishfood/understanding.php>