

Checklist

Before purchase make sure that:

- 1 You have the appropriate equipment and position for the aquarium.
- 2 You have researched all the species you are interested in and your final choices are all compatible.
- 3 You are familiar with how to transport and release your fish.
- 4 You are aware of the daily, weekly and monthly maintenance your aquarium will require.
- 5 You are prepared to look after your fish properly for the duration of their life.

Equipment

- 1 Glass or plastic aquarium
- 2 Gravel cleaner
- 3 Water testing kit
- 4 Marine salt
- 5 Marine substrate & live rock
- 6 Filter & protein skimmer
- 7 Food
- 8 Heater, thermometer & hydrometer
- 9 Reverse osmosis/de-ionised water or tap water conditioner

Before purchase make sure:

- 1 Water parameters are as advised in this leaflet.
- 2 The aquarium is large enough to house an adult fish
- 3 The fish are compatible with existing set-up



Never release your aquarium animals or plants into the wild

Never release an animal or plant bought for a home aquarium into the wild. It is illegal and for most fish species this will lead to an untimely and possibly lingering death because they are not native to this country. Any animals or plants that do survive might be harmful to the environment.

Important things to remember

Always buy...

test kits and regularly check the water for ammonia, nitrite, nitrate and pH. This will allow you to make sure the water in your aquarium is not causing welfare problems for your fish.

Establish a routine...

for testing the water in your aquarium. Record your results to enable you to highlight fluctuations quickly. Also check the temperature of the water.

Maintain...

the water in the aquarium within the accepted parameters highlighted in this leaflet. You may need to do regular water changes to achieve this.

Always wash your hands...

making sure to rinse off all soap residues, before putting them into your aquarium. Wash your hands again afterwards and certainly before eating, drinking or smoking.

Never siphon by mouth...

A fish tank can harbour bacteria which can be harmful if swallowed. Buy a specially designed aquarium gravel cleaner which can be started without the need to place the siphon in your mouth.



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If in doubt contact your OATA retail member for further information



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The voice of the ornamental fish industry

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How to care for...



Angelfish

74 Tropical marine fish



Introduction

This group of marine fish are brightly coloured and much larger than the dwarf angelfish. There are two genera which are commonly found in the aquarium trade, *Pomacanthus* and *Holocanthus*.

In the wild these fish can be found in the Western Atlantic (*Holocanthus*) and the western Indo-Pacific (*Pomacanthus*).

Water requirements

These fish do not tolerate any ammonia or nitrites in the aquarium, therefore they should be added to a well-established aquarium. The water parameters are recommended to be within the following, although these fish may acclimatise to different water over time:

Temperature: 23 to 28°C

pH: 8.0 to 8.4

Ammonia: 0mg/l (0.01mg/l may be tolerated for short periods)

Nitrite: 0mg/l (0.125mg/l may be tolerated for short periods)

S.G: 1.020 to 1.025 at 22 to 28°C

Biology

This group of fish are not recommended for beginners due to some difficulties in acclimatising them to the aquarium environment. They grow very large when mature and therefore require large tanks to thrive. They can grow to between 35 to 50cms as an adult fish.

Many of this group of fish show juvenile colourations and patterns different to the adult form. Transformation between these depends upon species but often occurs when the fish reach between 8 to 15cms.

All Angelfish are hermaphrodites and there is no colour or size differentiation between males and females. In the wild pairs may be seen swimming together.

There are reports of these fish living up to 15 years, and this could be possible in an aquarium with good water quality and without ailments.

These fish have an aggressive nature, although this varies between species.

Aquarium requirements

Due to the potential size of these fish, they require very large tanks. It is recommended a minimum of 150 gallons (680 litres) is needed for adults. It is not good practice to purchase a juvenile Angelfish for a smaller aquarium without being prepared to upgrade the aquarium as they grow quickly.

The tank will require good filtration as these large fish can produce a lot of waste and will not tolerate ammonia or nitrites. A protein skimmer would therefore be beneficial.

A heater, thermometer, hydrometer and secure lid with lighting will also be needed. It is reported some species are very sensitive to changes in pH, salinity and water quality so a testing kit should also be purchased. A UV steriliser is also recommended.

A large base of live rock will also be beneficial to provide these fish with a natural environment.

Maintenance

At least every two weeks, a partial water change of 25 to 30% is strongly recommended (a siphon device is also useful to remove waste from the gravel). This help to reduce the build-up of potentially harmful nitrates and other pollutants. Replacement water should be dechlorinated using strong aeration or a tap water conditioner (if not using reverse osmosis water). Ideally, replacement water should be heated and enough salt should be added to achieve the correct salinity.

Filters should be checked for clogging and blockages. If the filter needs cleaning, then do not wash it using tap water; any chlorine present may kill the beneficial bacteria that has established within the media. Instead, it can be rinsed in tank water which is removed during a partial water change. This should reduce the number of bacteria lost.

Good husbandry is essential as these fish can be stressed by even the smallest amounts of ammonia and nitrite. Test the water weekly to monitor ammonia, nitrite and nitrate, especially after initial set-up and after adding new fish. Do not forget to check the salinity because this may increase due to evaporation of water.

If live rock and invertebrates are present in the aquarium, never use copper based medications. Copper is highly toxic to invertebrate species, including those found within live rock.

Feeding

These fish are omnivores feeding upon a wide variety of foods in the wild including sponge, algae, bryozoans and tunicates.

Once in an aquarium they may take time to accept aquarium food, but once they do there should not be any problems offering a wide range of diet including flake, frozen, freeze dried and live foods. These fish should be fed what they can eat within a few minutes 2 to 3 times a day. Remove any uneaten food to reduce waste build-up.

Potential problems

A water quality problem will affect fish behaviour and can be shown by clamped fins, reduced feeding, erratic swimming and gasping at the surface. Immediately test the water if any of these symptoms are shown. If in doubt ask your OATA retailer for advice.

Compatibility

These fish are not reef safe. They eat corals, polyps and sponges in the wild and will quickly destroy them in an enclosed aquarium. They will also show aggression towards small invertebrates and therefore are best kept in large fish only aquariums.

Some of the species will show aggression towards same species and others will not tolerate any other angelfish. Ask your retailer for advice regarding your particular species.

An angelfish should be added to the aquarium last because they can show extreme territorial behaviour towards any new fish added to the aquarium, which often results in death.

The less aggressive can co-habit peacefully with clownfish, wrasse, tangs and butterflies as long as the tank is large enough.

Breeding

These fish have not been successfully bred in home aquariums, partly to do with the aggression they can show towards each other and also due to the difficulty identifying sexes. In the wild they scatter eggs across the reef. This helps to reduce the chances of interspecies competition between the juveniles.