



ORNAMENTAL AQUATIC TRADE ASSOCIATION
LTD

"The voice of the ornamental fish industry"

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Dyed fish

Currently there is no legislation to make the import or ownership of dyed fish illegal in the UK. However, OATA has never offered support to the trade in dyed ornamental fish and we actively call on our members to stop importing and selling them.

It is a contradiction that it remains legal to import dyed fish even though the processes used to produce them (even if legal in the country of origin) would attract criminal sanctions over animal cruelty if performed in the UK.

Fish are, we believe, dyed by a variety of processes including injection, tattooing or interfering with the skin by using lasers or chemicals so dye is readily absorbed. Even the outermost layer of fish skin is, unlike in humans, a living sensitive layer and makes this practice completely unacceptable.

In the UK a procedure which 'involves interference with the sensitive tissues or bone structure of the animal, otherwise than for the purpose of its medical treatment' is defined as a mutilation. Some procedures regarded as mutilations are permitted by law in particular circumstances and for particular purposes eg fin clipping or tattooing which may be used to enable the identification of individuals in fisheries' work or scales may be removed for the purposes of ageing a fish. But none of these exemptions apply to colouring, clipping fins or the removal of scales from fish for ornamental or cosmetic purposes.

