



ORNAMENTAL
AQUATIC TRADE
ASSOCIATION

Speaking up for *your* business



What has OATA ever done for the industry?

Thanks to the work of OATA over the years, your business can still sell:

- Coldwater fish such as sturgeon, koi and goldfish
- Soft corals
- Live rock
- Banggai cardinal fish
- Tropical fish from Singapore and Malaysia
- Fish medicines
- Aquatic plants like oxygenators, water hyacinth and water lettuce
- Barley straw extracts for ponds



By keeping these fish, plants and products on sale we estimate we've saved the industry more than £250 million in the past 24 years.

Well worth the price of membership...



Directors' Report



It's been another diverse year for OATA and the Board of Directors – made up of 18 people who represent a wide cross section of our industry – who have been looking at a whole variety of issues facing us all.

A small sub-group was formed to look at how online trading is affecting our members, which led to the creation of our guide to distance selling. We can't stop internet trading which we know is affecting many bricks and mortar businesses. But we can focus on welfare standards to try to make sure fish don't suffer from poor practises.

We often hear that companies don't join 'because we don't know what

you do'. We think we've got a lot better at shouting about what we do for the industry – and this report should help with that. Things like our Hands Off My Hobby campaign for example. Campaigns against exotic pet keeping are only going to get stronger and if your business isn't supporting OATA then you might find yourself without a business. Our five month campaign as we approached the UK election in 2015 should hopefully have reached not

just your ears but those of politicians as well and we'll be calling on your help in 2016 during the devolved elections across the UK.

So thank you to the forward-thinking businesses which have joined OATA. And if you haven't then perhaps it's time you did. Think of the member's fee as a form of investment in protecting your business for the future.

Chief Executive's Report

There are two truisms that apply to our industry: "without pets there is no pet industry" and "if people never see pets they will never be interested in keeping pets".

The footfall through pet shops is probably equivalent to the UK population. So, for the time being, pets are both available and people can see them.

But what if shops could no longer sell pets because of a change in legislation or social pressures? These are external problems over which we have limited control but still fight our corner. But if shops shut because they're no longer profitable, how much responsibility would lie at the industry's own door?

I've been told many times the price of live animals has changed little in decades, the retailer's profit lies in dry goods' sales. But equally I hear about the imperative to shorten supply chains, in practice leaving some dry goods no longer available to pet shops. We surely then have to worry if the bricks and mortar shop can survive? Are pet shops being sacrificed for a greater margin on sales?

Perhaps it is the unique position of a trade association to see how an industry works as a whole. What we see is that whether you're an importer, dry goods manufacturer,

wholesaler or pond/aquarium consultant we're all cogs individually doing our bit to feed people's passion for fishkeeping. But the lynchpin is the retail shop. Without thriving pet shops offering live fish to engage, enthuse and inspire people will this industry survive for much longer?

We all need to ask ourselves what we're doing to support this vital part of the industry. Because if we just focus on ourselves and fail to see the bigger picture then this industry will inevitably dwindle and die.

Keith Davenport





Pet fish get political

The General Election in 2015 was a great opportunity to get UK MPs thinking about ornamental fish, so we relaunched our #handsoffmyhobby campaign.

We're concerned about the clamour coming from animal rights groups which seem to be successfully getting the ear of politicians. We wanted the powers-that-be to hear the other side, in particular that keeping ornamental fish is just as acceptable as having a dog, cat or other small furry as a pet. So we relaunched our #handsoffmyhobby campaign in January 2015 to let all UK political parties know that fish make good pets too.

We created a logo, built a standalone website explaining the campaign and came up with a list of simple ideas for people working in the industry – and hobbyists – to put into action to drive our message home, including a petition on Change.org which thousands of people signed. We wanted would-be politicians to hear that keeping fish was important to the

people and businesses they wanted to represent in the House of Commons.

As the campaign progressed we gathered responses from MPs after constituents wrote to them about our campaign. We wanted politicians to pledge that they would oppose any future wholesale ban on exotic and wild caught species that would affect the ornamental fish-keeping hobby. And certainly from the responses we saw from Conservative MPs – the party that went on to form the government – they seemed against any ban without good reason on wild caught animals at least.

Animal rights groups have deep pockets and were out campaigning themselves, successfully it seems. In February 2015, the Scottish Government announced its intention to review the exotic pet trade in

Scotland, following meetings with animal campaign group OneKind. We protested to Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead, who made the announcement, at the lack of engagement with the trade. While he refused to meet with us he did suggest sitting down with the Chief Veterinary Officer in Scotland Sheila Voas which at least gave us the chance to make our points ahead of the planned consultation.

But it shows that the #handsoffmyhobby campaign needs to continue and we'll be asking for more support as Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland go to the polls in 2016 for the devolved government elections.

Find out more at
www.handsoffmyhobby.org



If we don't start to educate politicians that wild and exotic pet-keeping also includes ornamental fish and reptiles it will be much harder to get them to see sense if legislation is ever proposed about banning the sale of exotic species in the UK.

What's next for the campaign?



Build relations
with MPs/Peers



Lobby politicians in
2016 Scottish, Welsh
and Northern Irish
elections



Mobilise Scottish
support for exotic
pet trade review
consultation



Build awareness
through the 'I love
my fish' logo

ProPets

OATA is also part of ProPets, a coalition of seven pet trade associations. Before the election, we worked with the ProPets partners to come up with a five point call to action to political parties, asking them to recognise the benefit that pets bring to UK society in their manifestos. It asked MPs to:

1. Recognise the value of pets to society
2. Introduce secondary legislation under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to ensure good consistent countrywide inspection regimes based on good husbandry practise, for pet shops and other relevant activities eg breeders and re-homing centres, where pet welfare might otherwise be compromised
3. Integrate pets into the National Curriculum and encourage pupils to care for and interact with them and learn their welfare needs
4. Ensure the Crown Prosecution Service approve all animal welfare and cruelty prosecutions
5. Give greater recognition to the role of trade associations in developing government policy and achieving consistency across a broad range of policy areas.

We helped ProPets create and distribute a new leaflet outlining the social, health and economic benefits of pets which was sent to all MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates prior to the May election.

Find the documents on our website at www.ornamentalfish.org/conservation-welfare/welfare/propets



Trafficking not trade is the issue

Throughout this year we've used every opportunity we can to highlight our message that not all wildlife trade is illegal.



DEFRA minister Lord De Mauley acknowledged the role of legal trade and welcomed that trade bodies like us are part of the discussions at a follow-up meeting to the 2014 London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade.

We wrote to HRH The Duke of Cambridge to express our dismay after a quote from the royal prince was included in a Born Free Foundation report that claimed a 'significant proportion' of the exotic pet trade is illegal'.

MEP Catherine Bearder was challenged by OATA over disparaging remarks she made about the ornamental fish industry at an EU press conference on wildlife crime. She failed to respond.

We helped to organise a visit by top DEFRA officials to Tropical Marine Centre to see the reality of trading in wild caught fish.

We need to confront sweeping statements by organisations like Born Free, and groups like ENDCAP, because they can impact on legitimate businesses.

Global group looks at home aquarium industry

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Freshwater Fish Specialist Group has created a new Home Aquarium Fish Sub-group and we were very pleased to be invited to join its steering committee. The group is chaired by Scott Dowd, a senior aquarist at the New England Aquarium in the US who also helped spearhead Project Piaba in Brazil building a sustainable industry in cardinal tetra fish. It plans to launch a White Paper to include global case studies showing how the home aquarium industry provides environmental and socioeconomic benefits to the communities that catch fish. And it has ambitions to work with public aquariums around the world to develop a programme to educate and inspire the visiting public to keep a home aquarium and choose fish that support communities involved in sustainable management.

Playing our part to stop the invaders

We have played our part in two major reviews looking at non-native species. In the UK, a review of the Wildlife and Countryside Act looked at restricting the sale of certain plants because of their invasive nature. The EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation has also drawn up a list of species of EU wide concern which includes four pond/aquarium plants worth several millions of pounds to the UK industry. We have put our case to DEFRA for these to be removed from the list because they prove no danger to the UK. But it's vital our industry does all we can to stop customers from spreading non-native plants into the countryside. So we encourage all businesses to prominently display Be Plant Wise information and promote our code of practice for responsible pet ownership.



Are you displaying *Be Plant Wise* information?

Making the case for wild caught fish

Laudable and high-profile campaigns about illegal wildlife trafficking are bringing the issue of wild taken animals ever more into the spotlight.

The success of OneKind in persuading the Scottish government to review the exotic pet trade north of the border shows there's an increasing appetite to question whether wild caught animals have a place in our homes.

This does have an impact on our industry because many ornamental fish species, particularly in the marine trade, are wild caught. That's why an important part of the revived #handsoffmyhobby campaign was to educate politicians that not all wild caught pets are 'bad' and that the legal trade in these animals – for example ornamental fish – can

actually bring economic and environmental benefits to poorer communities across the world.

And it's vital people start to understand the human story behind this issue. Animal welfare and sustainability are important, and where poor practice is found we need to address this. But the people involved in catching these fish are also important and we need to find better ways to highlight this. After all, what alternative industries would there be for these remote communities and are we so sure the alternatives are 'better'?

So we commissioned the University of Kent's Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), part of the School of Anthropology and Conservation, to investigate the positive benefits of the trade. The report from DICE pulls together relevant research and associated papers from governments and NGOs that demonstrate the economic, social and environmental benefits that wild taken fish can bring to indigenous communities, and includes two case studies to illustrate the human story behind the trade.

A ban on wild caught fish would remove many benefits to poor communities. Alternative industries – like logging or mining – that might replace that lost income are much more destructive to the environment.



“Partnerships of this kind can make a valuable contribution to improving animal welfare. We are pleased this particular industry is working closely with local authorities, and the City of London specifically, to improve the quality of inspections and look forward to seeing welfare improvements as a consequence.” DEFRA minister George Eustice

Setting standards for our members

All pet shops that sell animals should be inspected yearly by their local council before a licence can be issued. But licensing standards vary considerably across the UK, leading to worries about animal welfare.

We have worked with other pet industry bodies and the veterinary profession, licensing authorities and welfare charities for 35 years to try to achieve consistent UK-wide pet shop licence standards – but with limited effect. Despite endorsing the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health (CIEH) Model Guidelines for Pet Vending Licensing in 2013, which unfortunately were not mandatory, we were disappointed to find in a survey a year later that only about a quarter of councils were using the guidance.

So we were delighted when we discovered a government initiative designed to help cut red tape. The Primary Authority scheme offers a mechanism to enable one set of rules to dominate across multiple local authority areas. It offered us the chance to lead the way in trying to work towards a consistent set of animal welfare standards for aquatic shops across the UK, and improve safety within the shops.

In 2014 we entered into a co-ordinated partnership with the City of London Corporation (CLC) to

offer a scheme for pet shop licensing, and health and safety guidance, to OATA members. Since its launch 121 shops have signed up, with 102 licensing authorities (about a third of all authorities) now obliged to follow the scheme’s inspection plan, which is based on the CIEH’s 2013 guidance.

We were also very pleased when our partnership made the finals of the Better Regulation Delivery Office’s Primary Authority Awards in 2015.

The scheme in action:

Dedicated live animals’ sales register

We sought assured advice from CLC after one local authority demanded a shop ask for customer information every time a fish was sold (not legally required) before it would reissue a pet shop licence. The small father and son shop estimated they would spend half a working day a week taking customer information for which they had no purpose and could lose 30 percent of their sales. The assured advice confirmed they did not need this information and the local authority backed down and issued the pet shop licence.

PATS testing

We also asked for assured advice for a chain of aquatic stores over which electrical equipment it needed to PATS test. This advice is now saving the company more than £13,000 a year because each store has a definitive piece of guidance to show to electrical testers over the items to be included in the annual test.

Find out more at www.ornamentalfish.org/primary-authority

Spotlight on OATA training

Well-qualified and knowledgeable staff are the backbone of any successful business. And it's also an important requirement of a pet shop licence to have appropriately trained staff.

Anyone opening a new aquatics store must apply for a pet shop licence and they usually have two years to complete a qualification that is City & Guilds or Level 3 equivalent and appropriate to the species kept.

Licence conditions also state that “staff members must be able to provide suitable advice to purchasers and answer questions as required by them. No animal should be stocked or sold unless the staff or at least one member of staff on call is familiar with the care and welfare of the animals stocked and has a recognised qualification and/or suitable experience/training”.

General pet shop management qualifications aren't always right for shops that sell fish so OATA established a training package nearly

20 years ago to help retailers satisfy this element of their pet shop licence. Our Certificate and Advanced Diploma courses are highly respected across the industry and are recognised by many licensing authorities as proof of training for a pet shop licence.

Even if you have an established business each shop will need to satisfy this licence condition every year so training at least one member of staff to Advanced Diploma level is an excellent way for shops to demonstrate they are fulfilling this condition – and investing in staff and customer service at the same time. Everyone who passes all elements gets both a certificate to display in the shop and a gold or silver pin badge for their uniform.

What do the courses cover?

Water Quality – this module looks at ammonia, nitrate, nitrite, pH, hardness, reverse alkalinity, buffering, density, dissolved gasses, temperature, water sources and medication of water types.

Filtration – this module examines mechanical, biological, chemical, sterilizing filters and filter use and design.

Fish biology – this module focuses on fish identification, external anatomy, internal anatomy, gill function, physiology, hazardous aquatic species, reproduction, transport, and ecology.

Fish health – this module concentrates on the health/disease balance, stress and handling, the physical environment, the chemical environment, pathogens, viruses, bacteria, fungus, tumours and fish treatments.

Who would benefit?

The courses are great for people who work in the industry – and not just retailers. They will also appeal to fishkeeping fanatics who want to extend their knowledge of how to keep fish at home.



OATA
members get
a discount on
training fees

Our recommendation is that at least one staff member has passed our Advanced Diploma qualification.

How long does it take?

That's up to the student. Because the courses are studied at home the student takes the decision when to apply for the final assessments. Generally the Certificate course can be completed within three months while the Advanced Diploma, which includes both a written paper and a telephone assessment, would take between 12 to 18 months.

Find out more at
www.ornamentalfish.org/training

Watch this space!



Here's what we think is on the horizon for the next year...

Pet shop licences

There's a growing appetite to review pet shop licensing, which we support. We see a real opportunity to push for consistent legislation that sets high animal welfare standards. We'll certainly push for that and we'll expect local authorities to enforce those high standards. In our view, pet shops with poor standards have no place in our industry. But equally it could offer animal rights organisations a chance to push their agenda, particularly around exotic pets.

Bans on species

The EU Alien Invasive Species Regulation has four plants and one terrapin species on its banned list. By January 2016 it could be illegal to import, own or sell *Cabomba caroliniana* (Carolina Fanwort), *Eichornia crassipes* (Water hyacinth), *Lagarosiphon major* (African elodea or curly waterweed) and *Lysichiton americanus* (skunk cabbage) and pond slider terrapin *Trachemys scripta*. Brace yourself for lost revenue if we aren't successful in getting these removed.

Primary Authority

We think there are more opportunities to use Primary Authority schemes to help our members manage other parts of their business. Signing up for these group schemes helps businesses set better and more consistent standards.

What you can do

OATA can't work alone. We need you to be talking to your local MP, MEP, MSP, Welsh and Northern Irish Assembly member and local councillors. Let them know how these issues will affect your business in their constituency.

Exotic pet review in Scotland

The Scottish Government's proposed review of exotic pets could have a huge impact on the species that can be sold. And our view is it won't end up just being limited to Scotland. This type of review is likely to trickle down across the UK as animal campaign groups push other devolved assemblies to follow suit.

More EU regulation

This time it's the Animal Health Regulation coming out of Europe. This Regulation is likely to take five years to come into force because it's so complex. But that complexity worries us. We're a tiny industry and these big regulations can have sweeping issues that have big consequences for our industry.

Downsizing government

There's an understandable drive for government departments to save money, not least by reducing staff. But will smaller departments have bigger consequences, such as unintended delays at airports processing live fish imports or less help and advice over critical issues like CITES permits?

Hidden economy

The government's recent consultation on this area of internet trading was interesting. Will we see more informal traders being made to pay tax on their income, helping to level the playing field for bona-fide businesses?



Join OATA – and feel the benefit

Strength in numbers

We make the voices of our members heard at local, European and even global levels because we represent a broad range of businesses involved in the industry. So membership support is vital to our continued success.

By joining OATA
businesses are helping to
keep the industry alive

What does OATA do for the aquatic industry?

- ▶ We lobby and challenge UK, European and world bodies/governments to make sure fish/plants/invertebrates/dry goods/medications remain available for sale
- ▶ We offer high quality training/qualification packages on fish-keeping for staff and individuals which are recognised by local authorities
- ▶ We help our members to keep up-to-date with the latest news that could affect their business through our monthly e-newsletter and the broad range of information on our website
- ▶ We seek to promote high standards of husbandry and welfare within the industry with our Code of Conduct and Primary Authority schemes
- ▶ We promote the hobby of fishkeeping through our online videos, social media and our work with the press

As a member, you benefit from:

- ▶ Practical help and information to help you stay ahead of the competition, including a monthly email newsletter and regular updates on the big issues that could affect your business
- ▶ Free legal help at the end of a phone line when businesses need some advice fast
- ▶ A free audit of insurance arrangements to take the hassle out of getting the best cover
- ▶ Discounts on our fishkeeping courses to give businesses the best-trained staff
- ▶ Safeguarding the future of the industry and your business

Find out more about becoming a member

Visit www.ornamentalfish.org

Give us a call on 01373 301352

Did you know?



OATA is...

the voice of the ornamental fish industry in the UK

OATA's got...

global reach by representing the UK industry at European and world meetings.

OATA saves...

the industry tens of millions of pounds by fighting to keep products and fish on sale or challenging costs to the industry, like fee structures.

OATA's on...

Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn where we share info about our work and the industry as a whole.

OATA's filmed...

seven 'How to' videos for people wanting some advice on how to set up freshwater and marine aquaria and to keep fish successfully.



OATA fights...

for its members by tackling local authorities about illegal pet traders

OATA offers...

two training courses to help people gain a specific fishkeeping qualification that's highly respected in the industry

OATA's written...

free care sheets and leaflets for retailers to give to customers with all the information they need to keep a wide range of fish, marine invertebrates, plants and reptiles as well as how to set up ponds and aquaria.

OATA's behind...

the successful AQUA show in Telford - the biggest trade show in the UK just for the aquatics industry.

OATA has...

more than 800 business members from shops and importers to dry goods manufacturers, wholesalers and pond consultants



OATA's created...

a Troubleshooting Fishkeeping android app for smartphones to help fishkeepers solve basic problems with their fish, aquarium or pond.

About OATA

We believe OATA is an organisation that punches above its weight. Our small staff of four can only achieve what they do with the support of our voluntary Board of Directors who each bring their particular industry expertise to our work.

Our Board meets four times a year and we have a programme of New Blood, offering others the chance to take a seat at the table. If this interests you then email or talk to our Office Manager Ray Valovec.

Staff

Keith Davenport
Chief Executive

Gabriela Solano
Assistant to the Chief Executive

Ray Valovec
Office Manager

Pauline Davey
PR & Marketing Executive
(part-time)

Directors (as at September 2015)

Mark Evenden
Chair
Devotedly Discus Ltd

Jane Flaherty
Vice Chair
JMC Aquatics Ltd

James Allison
Aquapic Solutions

Kevin Barton
ALF (Aquatic Distributors) Ltd

Pete Carey
Pets at Home Ltd

Robert Edgecock
Independent Aquatic Imports Ltd

Richard Hale
Berry Ring Herpetological and
Aquatic Supplies Ltd

Neil Hardy
Neil Hardy Aquatica Ltd

Simon Langdale
Maidenhead Aquatics

Philip Lawton
Kidsgrove Tropicals

Ruth Low
Gordon Low Products Ltd

David Pool
FishScience Ltd

Kevin Rose
Lynchford Aquatics Ltd

Andrew Stagg
NT Laboratories Ltd

Paul West
Tropical Marine Centre Ltd

Ben Windeatt
TETRA

Peter Wheeler
Aquajardin Ltd

Mark Winter
Aqua Pacific Ltd

New Blood (non-voting)

Barry Allday
The Goldfish Bowl

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM is being held on Wednesday 11 November 2015 at 12pm at The Littlebury Hotel, Kings End, Bicester, OX26 6DR. All OATA members are welcome.

Contact our office

By phone on 01373 301352

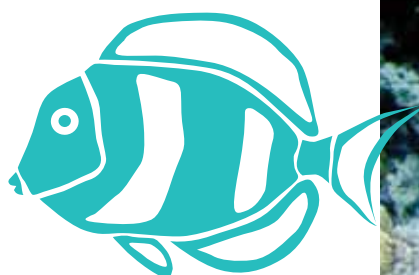
By email on info@ornamentalfish.org

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By writing to OATA, Wessex House,
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registered in England No. 2738119

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40 Station Road, Westbury, Wiltshire,
BA13 3JN



What has OATA ever done for the industry?

Without the work of OATA over the years, your business would be experiencing:

- 🐠 Higher CITES charges
- 🐠 More regulations on electrical equipment for ponds
- 🐠 The need for imported fish to be tested EUS free
- 🐠 More checks on courier vehicles carrying fish
- 🐠 Greater difficulties finding couriers to transport your fish
- 🐠 Added red tape over transport regulations
- 🐠 Higher border inspection charges at UK airports



By fighting to keep fees lower or red tape to the minimum we estimate we've saved the industry more than £250 million in the past 24 years.

Well worth the price of membership...



The voice of the ornamental fish industry

Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association Ltd

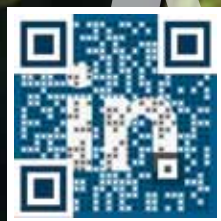
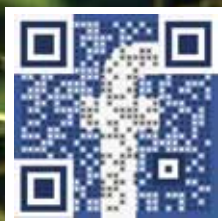
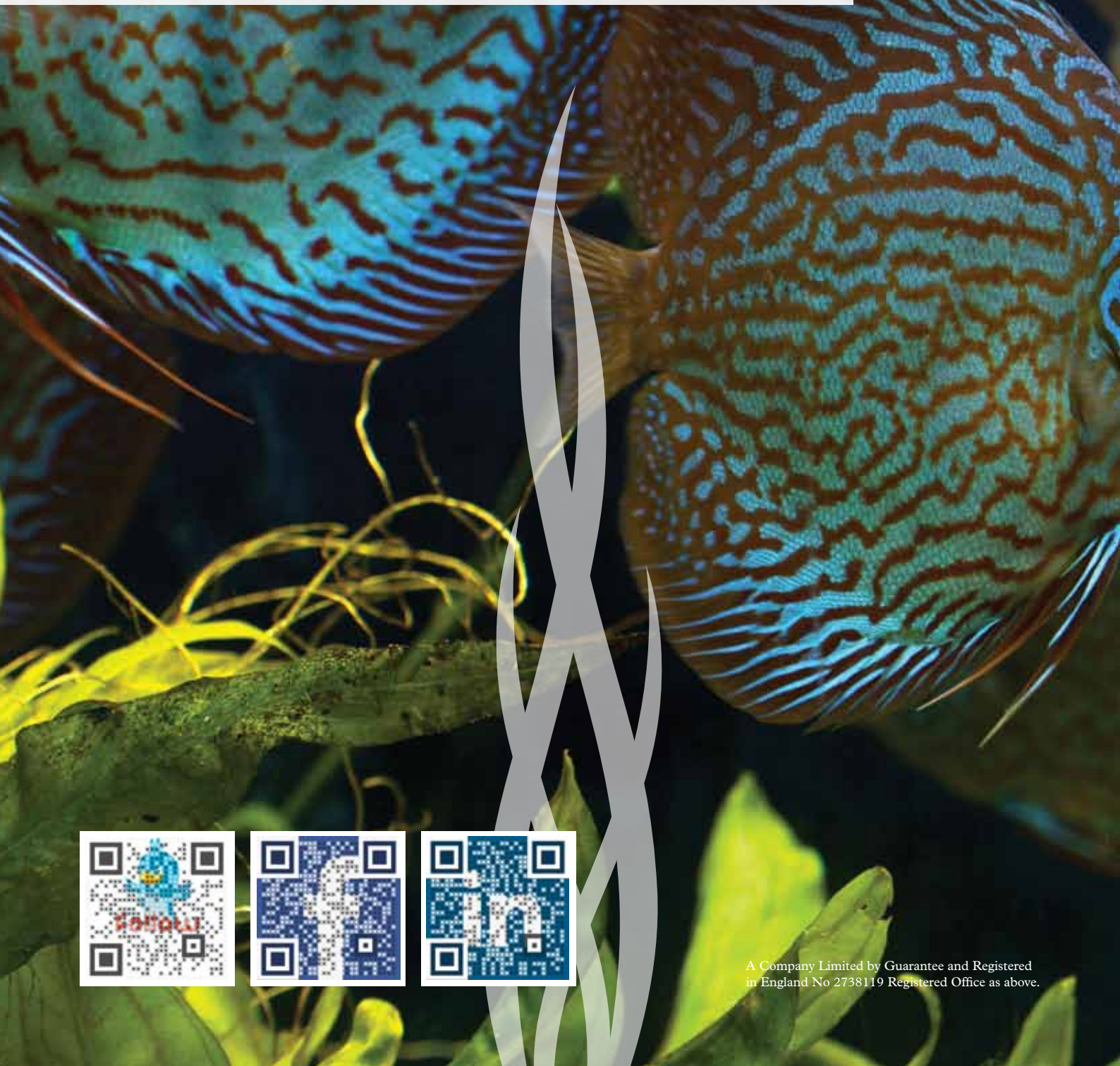
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