



**ORNAMENTAL AQUATIC TRADE ASSOCIATION LTD**

*"The voice of the ornamental fish industry"*

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Dear Sir Roger/Sir David/Mr Pollard

I have recently watched the parliamentary reception organised by the World Protection Agency about its coalition End Wildlife Trade campaign.

I wish to highlight the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association (OATA)'s concerns about such sweeping proposals for blanket bans that target both legal trade and illegal trafficking and dismiss valid arguments over the sustainable use of wildlife. Such campaigns could have serious implications for perfectly legitimate and sustainable hobbies such as tropical fishkeeping. Many of your constituents will have aquariums in their homes or ponds in their gardens and will keep tropical freshwater and marine fish, as well as invertebrates such as coral, the majority of which are imported into the UK and would be prohibited by such bans.

Whilst the vast majority of fish keepers enjoy living with tropical freshwater fish, which are mainly captive reared and supplied primarily from Asia, there is a significant part of the hobby that keep tropical marine (saltwater) fish which are caught in the wild from remote parts of the world, including many Small Island Nations and countries identified by the UN as 'low human development' and 'least developed countries'. These artisanal fisheries offer a sustainable livelihood to many of the world's poorest communities, relieving pressures on other natural resources where alternative and potentially more environmentally damaging livelihoods would be sought. This is a much misunderstood aspect of the wild caught tropical fish trade and we would urge you to read our [Wild Caught Ornamental Fish: the trade, the benefits, the facts](#) to understand a side of the story that is often misrepresented or dismissed entirely by campaigns such as this one. Sustainable use can demonstrably promote conservation - [Project Piaba](#) in the Brazilian rainforest (whose motto is "buy a fish, save a tree") being an excellent example. Many renowned scientific organisations recognise this important aspect of the trade and do not support sweeping bans, including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the Oxford Martin Programme on the Illegal Wildlife Trade.

Let me state categorically and clearly: OATA too wants to end the illegal trafficking of wildlife. Unsustainable and illegal practices are harmful to biodiversity and taint and demonise the reputation of the many people around the world who work sustainably and legitimately. That is why we strongly support increased enforcement action and more stringent penalties, necessary actions that are being side-lined by campaigns like this calling for ill-considered blanket bans.



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In supporting this campaign did you realise you were effectively supporting the decimation of a perfectly legitimate hobby enjoyed by many of your constituents and millions of households across the UK? Your support for a ban on wildlife imports into the UK would effectively stop this hobby in its tracks because it targets wildlife whether captive reared or wild caught. I would be very interested to hear why you endorse such poorly evidenced calls to ban all wildlife trade and what it would mean for your constituents that keep tropical fish.

Yours sincerely

Pauline Davey  
PR & Parliamentary Officer  
Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association