



October 2020

**Response to the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission exotic pet enquiry/exotic pet keeping in Scotland enquiry**

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The Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association (OATA) is a UK-wide trade association representing more than 850 UK businesses which provide fish-keepers with everything they need to set up and maintain a successful home aquarium or garden pond, including retailers, breeders, importers and manufacturers, many of which are SMEs. OATA has 47 members in Scotland, the majority of which are retailers. We promote high welfare standards in the industry through a wide variety of initiatives, such as our Code of Conduct, our Primary Authority scheme for pet shops and providing staff training packages and customer care sheets.

**As a UK trade association the majority of the information we hold is UK-wide but where possible we have provided Scotland-specific data based on discussions with our Scottish members.**

Across the UK we estimate that:

- There are 3,000 pet shops of which more than two-thirds will sell fish. We estimate there are over 100 pet stores trading in ornamental fish in Scotland.
- 4 million households own fish (14% of the population).
- There are an estimated 100+ million fish kept in aquariums and ponds (making fish the most populous pet).
- Fish keepers spend an estimated £400 million a year on their hobby while pet owners in general spend around £6 billion a year on their pets (that's all pets) including feed, accessories and veterinary care, generating taxes of more than £2 billion annually.
- 50,000 people are employed by the pet industry within the UK. We estimate around 12,000 are employed by aquatic-related businesses.
- Pets are good for our health and are estimated to save the NHS at least £2.45 billion every year (which could be a conservative estimate). Therefore, the benefits of pet ownership in general, in terms of tax generated and NHS spending spared, is about £4.45 billion a year.
- During the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a pronounced increase in people seeking comfort in their pets for their mental wellbeing and an increase in the ownership of all types of pets.
- For further information (including sources) see: <https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/Positive-About-Pets-2.pdf>

Responses to questions raised by the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission:

### 1: The different taxa kept and sold in Scotland and approximate numbers of each.

The figures below are broad estimates of annual sales, based on limited data and should be treated as indicative only.

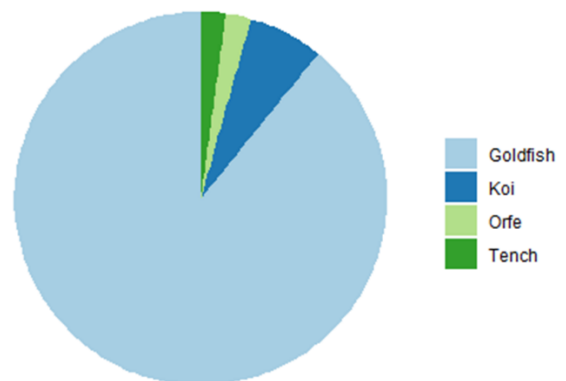
Broadly, ornamental fish can be grouped into three main categories – coldwater fish, tropical freshwater fish and tropical marine fish. Invertebrates (primarily corals but also for example clams and anemones) are also sold in the ornamental fish trade but as they are not included in the definition of animal in the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 we have not included information on them here. However, it should be noted that trade in invertebrates is estimated at over 50% of the trade by quantity, the majority being cultured/farmed (70-90% depending on origin).

**Coldwater fish** like goldfish and Koi are typically kept in garden ponds (with the exception of fancy goldfish varieties which need to be kept in indoor aquariums). There is a domestic UK breeding market for these fish with some smaller scale coldwater fisheries in Scotland. Coldwater fish also arrive from third countries such as Israel, Japan and Poland.

Based on discussions with Scottish members we believe the most common coldwater ornamental fish species in trade and estimated numbers sold in Scotland in 2019 are:

**Estimated sales of coldwater fish families sold in Scotland**

Quantity Sold	Family / Species type
410000	Goldfish
30000	Koi
10000	Orfe
10000	Tench



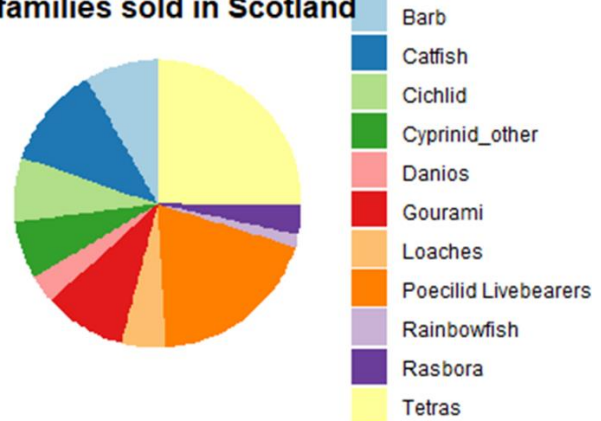
Goldfish are by far the most popular species constituting 89% of the coldwater market.

**Tropical freshwater fish** such as tetras, guppies and danios form the largest section of fishkeeping. They are the category most popular for beginners and most commonly kept in general because they are hardy in nature, adapting well to the varying water types across the UK, and because of their ability to live well together in 'community' tanks. They are often shoaling fish so need to be sold/kept in small groups which means people will often have quite a number of pet fish, unlike most other types of pet. Within this category there are more specialised species such as cichlids or discus which require more targeted knowledge and aquarium set ups. Across the UK, the vast majority (over 90%) of these fish species are captive reared and supplied mainly from Asia (Singapore and Malaysia) with some from the Czech Republic. We estimate that less than 5% of tropical freshwater fish sold in Scotland are wild caught.

The most common tropical freshwater ornamental fish species in trade and estimated numbers sold in Scotland in 2019 are:

Quantity Sold	Family / Species type
180000	Barb
250000	Catfish
160000	Cichlid
140000	Cyprinid other
70000	Danios
200000	Gourami
110000	Loaches
420000	Poeciliid Livebearers
30000	Rainbowfish
70000	Rasbora
550000	Tetras

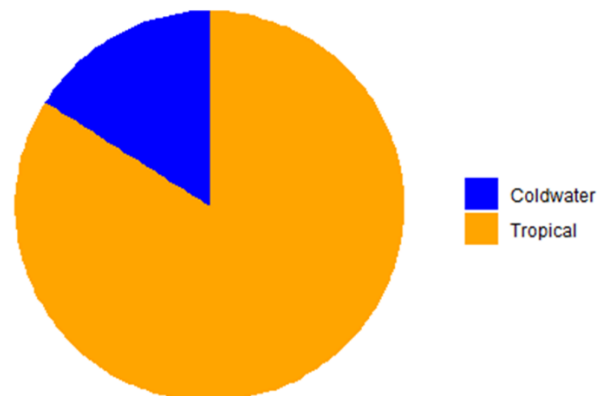
Estimated sales of tropical fish families sold in Scotland



Within these families, the most common species traded are Neon tetras (170,000 individuals), guppies (170,000) and zebra danios (70,000).

Estimated sales of tropical freshwater vs coldwater fish sold in Scotland

Quantity Sold	Temperature Class
460000	Coldwater
2180000	Tropical



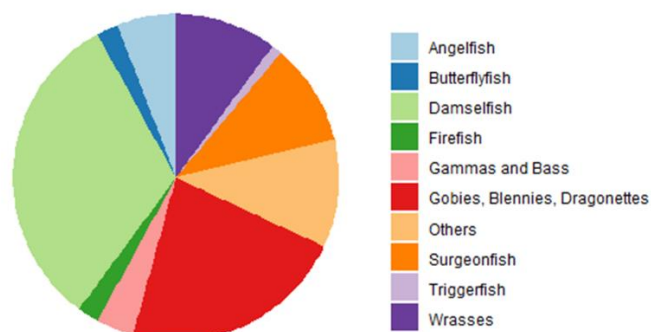
Tropical freshwater ornamental fish constitute 82% of sales compared to coldwater fish.

**Tropical marine fish.** This category represents the more specialised end of the hobby, requiring more knowledge and equipment. It is not common for people to start with a marine (saltwater) aquarium, unless it is set up and maintained by a specialist consultant business. There are estimated to be over 2000 species of marine ornamental fish in trade globally although the vast majority of the species are sold in small quantities and overall numbers in trade are much lower than tropical freshwater species, typically 20% of the UK ornamental fish trade by numbers of different species sold (though under 1% of volume (see below)).

Data on number of species in trade is difficult to ascertain (see response to question 2 below) but discussions with our Scottish members indicate that the most common marine ornamental fish species in trade suitable for domestic aquaria are:

Quantity Sold	Family
6000	Damselfish
4200	Gobies, Blennies, Dragonettes
2000	Others
1900	Surgeonfish
1900	Wrasses
1100	Angelfish
700	Gammas and Bass
400	Butterflyfish
400	Firefish
200	Triggerfish

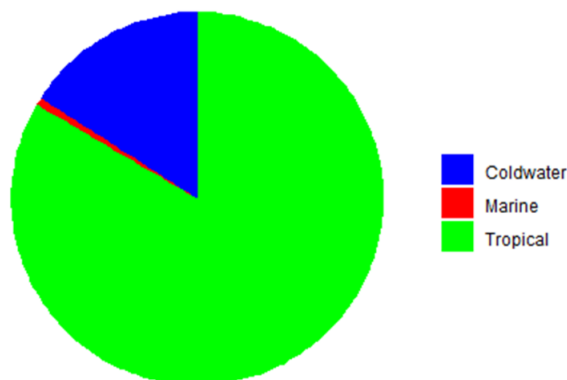
Estimated sales of tropical marine fish families



Included within the “Other” category are species that are individually popular in the trade, such as Anthias (1.3% of annual sales) and Boxfish and Pufferfish species (1.3%).

Estimated sales of tropical freshwater, tropical marine, and coldwater fish sold in Scotland

Quantity Sold	Trade Classification
460000	Coldwater
2180000	Tropical
18800	Marine



Although figures are indicative, as can be seen, marine ornamental fish constitute a very small proportion of the trade in Scotland.

It is estimated that approximately 90% of marine ornamental fish are wild caught due to the complexity of replicating conditions required for successful captive breeding. However, in recent years advances in technology and breeding techniques have seen an increase in the number of species being captive bred. For example, approximately 90% of clownfish in trade are now captive bred. This is a trend we expect to continue providing they remain available to hobbyists and other specialists. Trade in some of these species is already controlled internationally by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the wider trade in

wild caught marine ornamental fish is currently subject to examination by the Convention (see [AC31 Doc.36 on marine ornamental fishes](#)). We hope this will build on previous studies of the marine ornamental trade such as by UNEP-WCMC ([From Ocean to Aquarium](#)) and other actions taken by the industry to ensure its sustainability (e.g. engagement with initiatives such as [Sedex](#) and the Marine Aquarium Council (MAC)) in addressing any outlying issues.

Marine ornamental fish are commonly sourced from remote parts of the world, such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Fiji, where the artisanal fisheries offer a sustainable livelihood in many of the world's poorest communities, relieving pressures on other natural resources where alternative livelihoods would be sought. This is a much misunderstood aspect of the wild caught ornamental fish trade and we would urge Commission members to read our [Wild Caught Ornamental Fish: the trade, the benefits, the facts](#) to understand a side of the story that is often unrepresented. The report also outlines the extensive rules applied to the trade and how the welfare of these species is maintained along the entire supply chain.

## **2: Number of species imported to Scotland (or UK if need be) from outside UK and also outside the EU**

Accurately determining the number of species imported into Scotland or the UK is very difficult due to the limited reporting nature of the harmonised commodity codes used by trade databases and official recording systems such as the Trade Control and Experts System (TRACES) which records live animal imports into the UK. The limitations in official recording systems means there is no mechanism to accurately record either the species or numbers of them being imported.

There are only two commodity codes which cover live ornamental fish.

- Live ornamental freshwater fish (03011100)
- Live ornamental fish (excluding freshwater) (03011900)

Live food fish come in under a different code although we believe that some live food fish are mis-recorded under the second code above.

Other tariff codes commonly used by our sector include:

- Invertebrates (03089010)
- Crustaceans (03069990)
- Molluscs (03079100)

It should be noted that these codes also encompass species imported for human consumption.

ATA has analysed Eurostat trade data in relation to UK and EU imports for over a decade as a guide to market trends for our members. These analyses have demonstrated further weaknesses in the official recording systems, identifying notable anomalies and discrepancies. We suspect this is the result of food fish being imported/exported under incorrect commodity codes.

Our latest UK trade report for 2019 shows that the total value of ornamental fish imported into the UK in 2019 was £16.2 million. This equates to 1,244 metric tonnes of live ornamental fish which is probably a better measure of the trade due to variations in currency conversions - as noted below, this includes packing water, in which case it should be noted here as well, as the weight of actual fish will be considerably less. Around three quarters of that weight relates to freshwater fish (both coldwater and tropical) with about a quarter being marine fish. It should be noted that such volumes are miniscule when compared to the significantly larger food fish trade, as the ornamental fish trade is considered to be low volume but high value.

Most live ornamental fish (freshwater and marine) enter the UK from outside the EU. The top five countries exporting ornamental fish to the UK in 2019 were:

1. Singapore
2. Israel
3. Indonesia
4. Sri Lanka
5. The Netherlands

These five countries constituted 70% of all live ornamental fish imported to the UK. In 2019, the UK imported ornamental fish from 47 countries across the globe, with 28 countries exporting marine ornamental fish to the UK. These fish may be entering the UK for reasons other than the pet trade, e.g. for research purposes.

In our annual analysis, we have tracked freight weights for over a decade and it shows a consistent decline, particularly when compared to the highest value recorded of 2,271 metric tonnes in 2005, representing a percentage decrease of 45% between the 2005 and 2019 figures. This is probably a combination of falling market demand (and therefore fewer fish) but also improved ways of transporting fish (most of the freight weight comprises the water rather than live fish).

**3: Number of animals of each species imported to Scotland (or UK if need be) from outside the UK and also outside the EU, with information on the countries of origin and main routes to the UK.**

For third country imports (i.e. from countries other than EU Member States) London Heathrow is the main point of entry for live ornamental fish imported into the UK accounting for approximately 80% of third country imports due to flight availability. In normal circumstances (i.e. pre Covid-19, as the pandemic has severely affected flight availability) fish would be cargoed on scheduled passenger flights. Following Heathrow, Manchester airport is the second main entry point for live ornamental fish. Manchester is a key port of entry for ornamental fish imports traded into Scotland. Other airports which are also able to accept live ornamental fish imports are Gatwick and Birmingham but in minimal quantities. All live animal imports (such as fish) from third countries that arrive in the UK must go through a Border Control Post that can inspect live animals (not all ports of entry have this facility) where their health and welfare is checked by veterinary officers from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) as part of UK border entry requirements. Dover and the Channel Tunnel are often used by independent retailers sourcing fish direct from Europe.

The table below shows a breakdown of the source countries for freshwater and marine ornamental fish as recorded for 2019:

COUNTRY	FRESHWATER	MARINE
Australia		✓
Belize		✓
Brazil	✓	✓
China	✓	
Colombia	✓	
Congo Dem. Rep. (Zaire)	✓	
Congo Republic	✓	
Costa Rica		✓
Djibouti		✓
Dominican Republic		✓
Fiji		✓
French Polynesia		✓

Ghana		✓
Guinea	✓	
Hong Kong	✓	
India	✓	✓
Indonesia	✓	✓
Israel	✓	✓
Japan	✓	✓
Kenya		✓
Madagascar		✓
Malawi	✓	
Malaysia	✓	
Maldives		✓
Mauritius		✓
New Caledonia		✓
Nicaragua		✓
Nigeria	✓	
Paraguay	✓	
Peru	✓	
Philippines		✓
Singapore	✓	✓
Sri Lanka	✓	✓
Taiwan	✓	✓
Tanzania	✓	
Thailand	✓	✓
U.S.A.	✓	✓
Uganda	✓	
Vietnam	✓	
<i>Intra-EU</i>		
Czech Republic	✓	
France	✓	✓
Germany	✓	
Irish Republic	✓	
Netherlands	✓	✓
Poland	✓	
Portugal	✓	✓
Sweden	✓	

It should be noted that there is a notable cross-border movement of ornamental fish between Scotland and England. In some cases fish wholesalers handle the importation, acclimatizing fish before distributing them to retailers.

#### 4: How many of each species are captive-bred versus wild-caught?

We estimate that between 5-10% of tropical freshwater fish entering the UK ornamental fish trade are wild caught, the remainder being captive bred. For marine ornamental fish we estimate that approximately 90% are wild caught, although as previously indicated the proportion of species being captive bred has increased in recent years due to a growing interest in the marine hobby and advances in aquarium technology and breeding techniques that are allowing more marine ornamental fish species to be captive bred.

By far the largest proportion of fish kept as pets in the UK are tropical freshwater fish, the majority of which are not taken from the wild. They are intended for closed systems and as such have low

zoonotic and biosecurity risks because they are kept in home aquariums, handled rarely, and have low invasion risk due to the physiological need for consistently high temperatures year round.

There are many misconceptions that have arisen around wild caught ornamental fish that have led to an increasingly negative rhetoric. Ours is an industry that is wholly dependent on the provision of live and healthy aquatic animals so must operate to good welfare standards. The capture of wild ornamental fish for home aquariums is typically done by hand (or other low impact traditional techniques) and often to order. It is a trade which is considered low volume and high value (compared to, for example the food fish trade), where fishermen can take fewer fish for higher returns. Artisanal fishers are often trained in handling techniques to minimise welfare impacts or mortalities - they won't get paid for fish in poor condition and it is imperative that fish arrive at their destination in good health. Businesses in both source countries and importing countries that operate to poor welfare standards and sell fish in poor health would be boycotted so it is imperative that high welfare standards are maintained throughout the supply chain from point of origin through to the end user.

There is a wide range of animal health, biosecurity and welfare legislation and regulations which governs the transportation and importation of ornamental fish into the UK. The Heathrow Animal Reception Centre (HARC) and the Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI) report mortalities on arrival are close to zero demonstrating the effectiveness of these measures in ensuring welfare standards are met.

Our industry gives people living in Small Island Developing states, Least Developed Countries and countries classified by the UN as 'countries of low human development' the chance to develop a sustainable livelihood from the marine or freshwater resources on their doorstep, helping to meet UN Sustainable Development Target 14.7 which says: "By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism." This in turn encourages communities to preserve their local environment because it protects their livelihood. If these communities do not receive an income from these low volume, high value sustainable fisheries they are likely to turn to more environmentally damaging activities such as food fishing, slash and burn agriculture, logging or even mining. This is more fully explained in our [Wild Caught Ornamental Fish: the trade, the benefits, the facts report](#) which is based on work by the Durrell Institute of Conservation Ecology at the University of Kent which can be found [here](#). You can also find a range of case studies and videos exploring these issues [here](#).

##### **5: Number of breeders of different species in Scotland, with information about the size of operations – e.g. domestic/hobby breeders or commercial breeders**

We are not aware of any sizeable commercial breeding of ornamental fish in Scotland although there are some smaller scale coldwater fisheries. There are some larger fisheries in England which supply coldwater fish but the vast majority of fish sold commercially are imported from outside the UK.

Occasionally, some hobby breeders will supply fish shops but this is often an informal arrangement between shops and customers. We are aware that there is a growing market of potentially unregulated sales (or at least unenforced) by private sellers via online platforms.

Creating a tank set up that encourages fish to breed, particularly certain species of fish, becomes part of the thrill and interest of this fascinating hobby for many fishkeepers. A feature of fishkeeping is the fishkeeping hobby groups which meet and exchange information, an excellent way to spread



knowledge and passion for particular types of fish. Examples of these groups include British Cichlid Association, British Killifish Association, British Koi Keepers Society, Anabantoid Association of Great Britain, British Livebearers Association, Fancy Guppies UK and Tropical Fishkeeping UK. It is also worth noting that members of many of these organisations keep and breed fish that are endangered in their natural habitats due to habitat destruction, providing a biological reservoir of some of the world's most endangered species.

**6: What are the main methods of sale and transfer in Scotland (e.g. shops/retail outlets, wholesale supply/online classifieds, public/private social media (Facebook or specialist forums), specialist events?)**

It is difficult to answer this question specifically but we do know that fish are the most populous pet sold in pet shops. Pet shops that sell live vertebrate animals must be licensed by their local authority and the licence will show the types of animals it is licensed to sell. The last [UK wide report we compiled looking at pet shop licensing across the UK](#) was in 2016 and this revealed that more than 77% of licensed UK pet shops sold fish (47% sold reptiles, 56% sold small mammals, 41% sold birds, 4% sold dogs and 1.5% sold primates). A breakdown of that report showed that for Scotland, 156 pet shops were licensed to sell animals and 71% sold fish, over 100 stores (44% sold reptiles, 57% sold small mammals, 41% sold birds, 3% sold dogs and none sold primates).

In England, there has been a major revamp of pet shop licensing by the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018. The accompanying guidance places detailed obligations on pet shops and others (including commercial online sellers) to ensure the welfare of animals in trade and to ensure customers are made aware of the welfare needs of the animals they buy. We are aware that the Scottish Government is also updating its pet shop licensing regime, which we welcome.

It is our view that all facilities handling live animals across the UK, including online, home-based and rescue/rehoming centres, should be licensed to ensure customers can be confident they work to high animal welfare standards. Staff dealing with live animals should also be suitably trained in the species they are handling and should always ensure that new owners are provided with quality care information – OATA has more than [40 free care sheets available on our website](#) covering a wide range of aquatic animal species and information on appropriate set ups.

We believe educating people to pick the right pet for their lifestyle and care for it properly is the key to happy and healthy pets. The importance of pet ownership of all types of animals for people's mental wellbeing during the Covid-19 outbreak emphasises the benefits of pet keeping. Rather than imposing pet bans via positive lists or other mechanisms, we should look at ways to educate and support people to successfully keep their pets throughout their natural life. Not every pet is for everyone and if we restrict the range of pet animals that inevitably means many people may not enjoy the love and joy a pet can bring or end up picking the wrong pet for their lifestyle which could actually contribute to poorer care or even abandonment. Rather than seeking simplistic, restrictive approaches we strongly support and endorse any efforts to improve peoples' understanding of the welfare needs of the animals they keep and believe that we should be looking at ways to help make pet ownership easier for everyone, for example by introducing pet positive policies in rented accommodation.

Thousands of people across Scotland and the UK already successfully keep pet fish supported by the right guidance and information from reputable sellers such as OATA members. Fishkeeping can be the start of a lifelong hobby and passion which can transcend into other areas, such as careers in biology, animal husbandry, public aquaria. Pet shops are great places to buy fish offering a unique

environment for people to learn about the care needs of the animals they are taking on and an opportunity to build long term relationships through which to share high quality advice on their pet's ongoing needs.

Annexed is a selection of some of the activities OATA has been involved in to improve welfare standards for pet fish and to educate fish keepers.

A recent statement by the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW) <http://www.fao.org/3/cb1163en/cb1163en.pdf>, a group of international organisations (including UN bodies) that have a shared interest in a pragmatic, science-based approach for developing, monitoring, and guiding joint initiatives for the sustainable, legal and safe use of wildlife and conservation of biodiversity outlines the importance of an integrated approach that works across disciplines, sectors, value chains and spatial scales.

It also highlights that bans may have negative consequences for wildlife when they lead to reductions of the perceived value of wildlife and may create perverse incentives for land conversion, and disincentives for local communities to conserve and manage wild animals, discouraging conservation, noting that poorly considered or simplistic responses may aggravate the crisis and lead to significant land conversion, undermine food security and livelihoods for many communities, including indigenous peoples and local communities, benefit criminal syndicates and damage those national economies that are already under pressure from global recession.

Restrictions on commercial trade and pet keeping, such as would be created by positive lists, can be expected to result in similar negative consequences to those identified by CPW. They also have the potential to undermine coordinated policies aimed at tackling future pandemics and introducing a One Health approach across Governments and the international community.

## ANNEX

### OATA activities aimed at improving welfare standards for pet fish

Welfare	
OATA care sheets <a href="https://ornamentalfish.org/fish-keeper/useful-information/">https://ornamentalfish.org/fish-keeper/useful-information/</a>	OATA has produced 45 different care sheets to cover all the main ornamental aquatic species on sale and how to set up different types of tanks, along with videos on how to set up and maintain an aquarium. These probably represent the most comprehensive selection of care sheets for aquatic animals, covering the majority of species that will be found in home aquariums. They have been prepared in consultations with specialists, including fish vets. They are available free of charge.
OATA fish keepers guide	In development. An advice note on the basic welfare needs of fish for people considering purchasing for the first time. We aim to develop an accompanying training course in partnership with a leading UK animal management college in due course.
Pet Portal	In development with The Pet Charity (TPC). A single source of online care advice and information for pet owners or people interested in getting one. Provides care sheets and codes of conduct prepared by experts on the care requirements of a significant variety of pet species, including fish. Further advice will be added over time.
Pet Know How <a href="http://212.48.95.67/petknowhow.com/">http://212.48.95.67/petknowhow.com/</a>	A project in development by the British Veterinary and Zoological Society (BVZS), the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) and TPC, linked to the Pet Portal. People interested in getting a new pet will be able to access the Pet Portal to develop an understanding of the care needs of the animal they are planning to purchase. They will then be able to take a test to check that they have understood the animal's care needs. On successful completion of the test a certificate will be issued for keeping/printing. Presentation of this certificate at a point of sale will demonstrate that the potential purchaser has undertaken their due diligence and understands the basic care requirements of the pet they wish to purchase.
OATA advice on introducing fish to a new aquarium or pond <a href="https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Introducing-New-Fish.pdf">https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Introducing-New-Fish.pdf</a>	Provides advice on steps to be taken to ensure fish are introduced to their new environment with minimal welfare impacts.
OATA advice on zoonotic diseases <a href="https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/ZOONOSES.pdf">https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/ZOONOSES.pdf</a>	Provides advice on hygiene standards to avoid the transmission of zoonotic diseases. Zoonotic transfer from ornamental fish is minimal as they are handled rarely and transmission risk can be mitigated easily by good hygiene practices. All OATA care sheets carry info on good

	hygiene advice, e.g. hand washing, not using mouth to start water siphon during water changes
<p>OATA advice on the transport of ornamental fish  <a href="https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/Transport-code-final.pdf">https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/Transport-code-final.pdf</a></p>	Covers legal requirements that must be adhered to in relation to transporting live ornamental fish, and advice on packing and unpacking, to ensure best welfare standards are maintained throughout the fishes' journey.
<p>OATA distance selling guidance  <a href="https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-the-responsible-distance-selling-of-livestock-Aug-16.pdf">https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-the-responsible-distance-selling-of-livestock-Aug-16.pdf</a></p>	Advice on legal requirements and welfare standards that need to be met if selling live fish via online platforms.
<p>OATA/REPTA Pet Code of Practice  <a href="https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/Pet-Code-of-Practice.pdf">https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/Pet-Code-of-Practice.pdf</a></p>	Provides advice and guidance on the responsible keeping of non-native pets, for people owning or keeping pets, including traders to help to prevent the spread of invasive non-native species.
<p>OATA Biosecurity guidance  <a href="https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Biosecurity.pdf">https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Biosecurity.pdf</a></p>	Provides comprehensive advice to businesses on measures they can adopt in order to make informed decisions on where to buy fish and how their management of those purchases can minimise the chances of either receiving or passing on disease or health problems.
Industry no release messaging	<p>No release messaging is included on the packaging of aquarium products by many of the industry's main manufacturers and retailers.</p> <p>OATA care sheets all include the advice: <i>"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"</i>.</p>
<p>OATA Code of Conduct  <a href="https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CODE-OF-CONDUCT-FINAL-OCT-2015.pdf">https://ornamentalfish.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CODE-OF-CONDUCT-FINAL-OCT-2015.pdf</a></p>	Provides requirements for OATA members on the welfare and other standards they must meet.