We all care about animal welfare, not least the passionate fishkeepers who are saying #handsoffmyhobby. But there’s also a human story behind the ornamental fish industry. If you want to see the bigger picture about exotic pets – and why many people love them as pets – then please get in touch.

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Produced by the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association – the ‘voice’ of the ornamental fish industry in the United Kingdom

Good news for everyone
Many of the world’s least developed countries export live ornamental fish. Income from catching ornamental fish is vital for remote river & coastal communities. It offers a more valuable livelihood to alternatives like food fishing or farming.

Maldivian fishermen get $500 a kilo for supplying live marine fish for the aquarium trade. They would get just $6 a kilo for the same fish if destined for the dinner table. Supplying the aquarium trade is a high value but low volume industry.

Nearly 3 billion tonnes of carbon are fixed in areas of the Amazonas forest where cardinal tetra fish are collected. This captured carbon could otherwise be lost through logging, clearing land for farming or gold panning. These freshwater fish need pristine habitats, so fishermen know how important it is to preserve the rainforest.

It costs around £1,000 to set up a basic marine aquarium at home. It then costs up to £250 a month to run this type of set-up. Investing in a marine tank is not a cheap hobby, so demand for wild caught fish will always be limited.

10,000 people work in the UK ornamental fish industry. UK hobbyists spend around £400m on the hobby each year but just a tiny percentage is spent on fish. Without fish there’s no need for a tank, pumps, filters, food, plants, medicines etc so any ban on exotic/wild taken fish could jeopardise jobs.

More than 9 million homes across the EU have a fish tank. OATA estimates there are between 117m to 134m fish kept in the UK alone. Any EU ban on importing wild caught or exotic species, like ornamental fish, could see our most popular pets banned from sale.

Trade not Aid

Limited demand

High value v low volume

No fish, no trade

Carbon, climate change & cardinal tetras

Popular pets