

Aquarium Fish

Aquarium fish can be quite enjoyable and relatively easy to care for. Marine or saltwater fish can be more challenging, in part because some are still obtained from the wild and water quality issues are even more important.

Water quality

This is so important. Less than "perfect" water quality is the most common direct cause of fish disease and losses. While there are many fine biological type filter systems, the most important thing is water changes. Water changes should be a minimum of 1/3 of tank volume per month all the way to many times that amount. The more fish per gallon, the more wasted food, the warmer the room temperature and the less efficient the filter system, the higher the rate of water change is necessary.

Of course new water should be dechlorinated with commercial products or by standing overnight. When a large percentage of the water is being changed at once, try to bring the temperature of the new water up the level of the aquarium. Marine/saltwater tanks-be sure to mix the correct quantity of marine premix. Replace evaporative loss with freshwater.

Home aquarists should monitor water chemistry to make sure that the water quality is up to par. This means a minimum of nitrite in freshwater tanks plus ammonia in marine/saltwater tanks.

Quarantine

There is no magic time interval that works for all situations, but new fish should NOT be introduced into a community tank immediately after purchase. The newcomers can carry disease that can have disastrous consequences for the current tank inhabitants.

Medication

Veterinarians who treat fish make every effort to avoid using products that are dumped into the water system. Many of these are ineffective, non-specific, harmful to the fish or can damage the biological filter.

While there are specific exceptions to this rule, we often focus on fish injections for some problems. Please do not dump formalin or formaldehyde into water systems these chemicals are very poisonous.

Diagnosis

When you are experiencing multiple losses, a complete laboratory post-mortem can provide valuable information. When examining individual fish- microscopic examination of external lesions, blood samples, or internal needle biopsies can provide very useful information.