

SHOULD I BUY AN AQUARIUM FISH?

Colorful fishes are truly captivating! While owning an aquarium with fish can be a fun way to see these animals up-close, there can also be serious environmental consequences and harm to wild fish populations from unsustainable collection.

Our choices matter. It's important for every one of us know our options before we make big decisions like buying an aquarium fish.

Before you make a decision on whether or not to buy an aquarium fish, make sure you educate yourself: where did the fish come from - was it raised in captivity or taken from the wild - what kind of fish is it and what is the level of care, attention and money required to keep it happy and healthy? Our choices have the power to protect or harm natural systems. **Let's choose to protect the ocean!**

AQUARIUM TRADE



The aquarium trade is a worldwide, multi-million dollar industry with no centralized system to monitor what species are being taken and how many fish are being bought and sold globally. As consumers, we must make sure we know our options and make the best economic and environmental choices.

WHERE DO AQUARIUM FISH COME FROM?

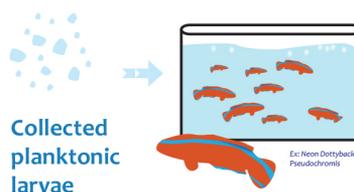
Just because you can buy a fish at a store doesn't mean that is where the fish originally came from. There are various sources aquarium fish come from, and each have their own natural and social impacts.

1. WILD CAUGHT



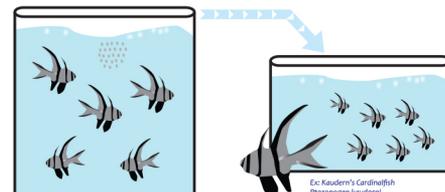
Taking fish from the ocean by fishermen or collectors in countries with less strict regulations can cause serious damage to coral reefs by over-collecting fish and using destructive methods like cyanide poisoning and dynamite fishing that kills corals many other species.

2. TANK RAISED



The eggs, sperm, or larvae of wild fish are caught from the ocean and then raised in captive environments. This practice has less environmental impact since young are taken in their planktonic stage. However, there can be environmental concerns as it still puts pressure on wild populations.

3. CAPTIVE BRED



Fish that have been born and raised in captive environments are best suited for life in aquariums. They are often more resilient to disease, are easier to feed and maintain, and reduce pressure on wild populations. By choosing captive bred, you encourage sustainable aquarium practices.

Potential environmental impacts on wild populations decrease when species are tank-raised or captive-bred

SUPPORT AQUARIUM FISHERIES THAT ARE SUSTAINABLY CAUGHT OR CAPTIVE BRED, learn more

ARE ALL FISH THE SAME?

Of course not! Fish can be extraordinarily different, but most can be classified into **TWO** groups based on where they naturally live:

FRESHWATER FISH



Includes species such as Platies, Neon tetras, Danios, Guppies, Betta, Sword tails, Cherry barb, etc.

SALTWATER FISH

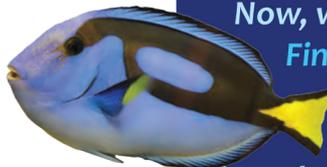


Includes species such as Yellow tang, Goldstring surgeon, Forceps fish, Moorish idol, Butterfly fish, Potter's angel, etc.

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90% of freshwater fish can be bred and raised in captivity, which lessens the pressures of unsustainable wild caught fisheries.

While less than **5%** of saltwater fish can be bred in captivity. Majority are taken from the ocean.



IMPACT OF MEDIA

Watching funny animated fish on the big screen makes many people want to go out and buy tropical fish. After the release of the 2003 film, *Finding Nemo*, demand for clownfish rose and wild populations fell.

Now, with the release of *Finding Dory*, scientists are concerned for Blue Tang fish since they cannot be raised in captivity. An increase in demand for blue tangs for aquariums could harm wild populations and coral reefs around the world.

HOW CAN I PROTECT THE OCEAN?

Educate yourself. It's important to decide if buying a fish is the right choice for you. All fish require time, attention, and money so deciding to get a fish or not depends on your level of commitment to research the right type of fish and ensure your choices are sustainable for both local people and the environment.

KNOWLEDGE ON WILD CAUGHT FISH

- Each year, **11 million** reef inhabitants are taken from coral reefs to fulfill the **demands of 700,000 US aquariums**
- Wild fish in captivity have low survival rates - **9 fish die for every 1 survivor**
- **20-40%** of captured fish die in transport
- Experts estimate that actual fish takes are at **least double** the official reports
- Properly managed wild-caught fisheries may be beneficial to local communities, **but it must be done sustainably.**

Fish are a critical to the health of the oceans. Know the environmental consequences before you buy a fish!

“When you Protect the Ocean, you Protect Yourself”
-Jean-Michel Cousteau