

The Breeding of the Clown Fish

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Amphiprion adult

species, such as the clown fish. The goal is to eventually, through this process be able to cover all needs by proposing a quality product that would replace the way it is done now.

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Future Events and Conferences

AQUALITY – The 1st International Symposium of Water Quality and Treatment in Aquaria and Zoological Parks. April 1-6, 2004. Lisbon, Portugal. More information at www.oceanario.pt

IMAC 2004. June 4-6, 2004. Chicago, IL. More information at www.themac.org

MACNA XVI. Sept. 10-12, 2004. Boston, MA. More information at www.masna.org

The Powder Blue Tang, *Acanthurus leucosternon*, Not Easily Kept

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Some "flashing" or scratching is to be expected of all specimens, but this should not be excessive. Nor should respiration be labored or too frequent. About sixty gill movements per minute are what you are looking for.

Newly arrived specimens are better to sort amongst other than longer-on-hand ones. Like most marine livestock, and particularly Acanthurids, Powder Blues are "starved out" for a few days ahead of shipping to reduce in-transit pollution in their shipping bags. Unfortunately, this starvation can be persistent once the animals are received and shipped through wholesalers, jobbers to your LFS or retailing supplier. Buy or special order "fresh" *A. leucosternon* and promptly take them home, quarantine and place them.

Quarantine

Powder Blues are one of the notorious "ich magnet" species of Surgeonfishes, and should definitely be quarantined for at least a two-week period of time before being introduced to the main/display tank. Even then, they will be amongst the first to show signs of pathogenic or environmental disease should something be amiss.

If you'd like, do consider adding a prophylactic freshwater dip/bath (of a few minutes duration) to the acclimation to quarantine process. It's advisable to add Methylene Blue to the pH-adjusted freshwater to both increase its capacity for oxygen holding as well as calming the dipped specimen.

Aquariums: Size, Type and Time

This is a wide-ranging, fast-swimming vigorous fish that needs plenty of room. The smallest tank I recommend for their keeping is one hundred gallons. At full potential size of about a foot in length, this would only be six times the length of the fish... not too much to ask for.

Acanthurus species do best in reef aquariums, or at least ones with plenty of healthy live rock. Powder Blues will not survive in a sterile "fish only" setting. About tank shape; less "show" and more "standard" tank dimensions are preferable. Lots of rock to graze on and lateral space to zoom about is of more use than the room to swim up and down.

The age of the system is important on two principal counts, maybe three. More aged systems are best because they will be more stable chemically and physically, as well as likely having more filamentous algae to graze on. By waiting for six or more months before introducing your Powder Blue, you are likely placing it as your last fish, the proper order of introduction.

Water Quality

Organics should not be allowed to accumulate in this fish's tank. Amongst reef fishes that "show" signs of nitrate et. al. concentration, Powder Blues rate up near the top. Oversized filtration, circulation, aeration and skimming, along with the use of quality salt-mix (e.g. Instant Ocean, Reef Crystals) and regular water changes are necessary. Nitrates should not exceed any more than 10 ppm; pH should not be allowed to drop below 8.2.

Temperature can play a pivotal role in Powder Blue health. They are happiest in warm water, something in the low 80 degrees F. If your's shows signs of disinterest in feeding, consider elevating the tank temperature.

Foods/Feeding

Nutrition or should I state, a lack of nutrition is likely the principal cause of loss of this species in captivity. Too often specimens arrive too starved to recover and/or are placed in circumstances where they cannot sustain themselves. It may seem counterintuitive but there is reason to believe that supplying a "fully nutritional" staple food is of at

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A school of *Acanthurus leucosternon* grazing on the reef