

TEN Power-Saving TIPS

By Scott Vallembois

By carefully selecting what equipment we use in our tanks, the monthly power costs of our system can be reduced significantly. One aquarist I'm familiar with followed these steps and reduced his power costs by 70 percent!

1 Do not use more lighting than your system needs. Many aquarists unnecessarily over-light their tanks.

2 Choose the type of lighting carefully. Do you really need metal halides, or will T5s do?

3 Look at the power consumption on your prospective return pumps. Many pumps use three times the electricity other pumps do to pump the same amount of water. This can have a huge impact on your power bill.

4 How much is a closed loop system worth to you? By using high flow powerheads instead of a closed loop with a large pump, your power bill can be cut drastically.

5 Open up your tank top and add a fan. Let evaporative cooling work for you. Not only will it allow your chiller to run less; you may find you don't need a chiller at all by doing just this.

6 Look at the power consumption among protein skimmers. Much like return pumps, protein skimmers can vary widely in the amount of power they consume to get the same job done.

7 Get yourself a meter to assess what equipment is using too much power. Meters that read the amount of watts a device is consuming are commonly available. Not only is it great to see where power gets wasted in your tank, but around the house too.

8 Look at the flow charts on your return pump. Many people are fooled into buying pressure-rated pumps for various reasons. One of the more common reasons given is, "I am pumping through a chiller." Pressure-rated pumps are used to pump against great back pressure. Most aquariums will never see this kind of backpressure unless the system requires the aquarist to pump water out of a basement up a floor or even two.

9 If you need a chiller, properly size it. Manufacturers give recommendations based on tank size and pull down (how much you need to cool the tank). Many will buy larger chillers than needed. Chillers sized too large tend to shut on and off more often, shortening the life of the chiller. Also, the larger

chillers use more power.

10 Keep an eye on things. When a piece of electrical equipment is malfunctioning, it can use more power than it should. If your power bill inexplicably jumps up, ask and look for what has caused the change.

