

Aquacultured Marine Tank

Next time you establish a marine reef with fish, consider using only aquacultured fishes, invertebrates, corals and even live rock when stocking it.

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“No wild-caught anything? You’re joking, right?” Actually, I’m serious.

While currently many wild ornamental fishes and invertebrates are not adversely impacted by their collection for the aquarium trade, some definitely are. Both Floridian cleaner animals as well as Banggai cardinalfish have received much press of late that has reflected badly on the marine hobby. In the not so distant future, marine aquarists could be legislated and regulated right out of the hobby. As demand by aquarists increases and more pressure is put on wild-caught stocks of fishes, corals and other invertebrates, can legislative course corrections be far behind?

“Seeded” Terrestrial Rock

Imagine a beautiful reef tank replete with LPS, SPS and soft corals, a myriad of reef-safe fishes, motile invertebrates and several pounds of live rock and sand -- with none of it taken from wild reefs but produced “in-house,” so to speak, through captive propagation. Even the live rock can be eco-friendly and doesn’t have to be mined from a reef. Some countries have put a stop to the mining of their reefs and the resulting exportation of “pieces of their countries” to aquarists’ fish tanks.

One Florida company I found online offers eco-sensitive live rock. Here’s their sales pitch:

Rock from an upland site is deposited on our 5-acre lease [an off-shore site], allowed to grow for a number of years, and is then harvested for use in your reef tank. Our aquacultured live rock is absolutely beautiful, colonized by five different species of hard corals, tunicates, clams, feather dusters, coralines, sponges, algae, invertebrates, plants and other life!

Why Aquacultured Fishes?

Besides taking the pressure off of certain reef species as well as the ecosystems they frequent, purchasing aquacultured reef livestock has many other benefits too.

- 1) Long-term sustainability for the hobby
- 2) Sustainable employment opportunities
- 3) Healthier livestock
- 4) Less stressed livestock
- 5) Already conditioned to life in aquaria
- 6) Genetic ark for species that could become extinct in the wild
- 7) Used to aquarium foods
- 8) Mortality rates upon introduction are much reduced
- 9) Selection continues to increase

Captive-Propagated Livestock

I took a cursory look online to see what’s out there as far as aquacultured marine livestock is concerned, and I found an amazing array of aquacultured animals that are colorful, healthy, guaranteed, many reef-safe, conditioned to aquarium living and not that expensive. I found five LPS corals (there are many more available), 66 species of marine fishes (this doesn’t even scratch the surface of all of the “marine breeding projects” currently going on in aquarists’ tanks), 17 noncoral invertebrates, seven kinds of macroalgae and other marine plants, 14 SPS corals and 24 species of soft corals.

Take a look for yourself. Still think you can’t put together a 100-percent environmentally friendly reef tank with fish stocked entirely with aquacultured livestock? Think again.

LPS

Acanthastrea lordhowensis
Blastomussa wellsi
Caulastrea furcata
Duncanopsammia axifuga

Echinophyllia aspera

Marine Fishes

Assessors: Yellow assessor (*Assessor flavissimus*)

Blennies: *Enchelyurus flavipes*, *Meiacanthus atrodorsalis*, *M. bundoon*, *M. grammistes*, *M. mossambicus*, black line fang (*M. nigrolineatus*), canary (*M. ovalaunensis*), *M. smithi*, *M. tongaensis*

Cardinalfish: Blue-eye (*Apogon compressus*), blue-streak (*A. leptacanthus*), Banggai, or Kaudern's, cardinal (*Pterapogon kauderni*), pajama (*Sphaeramia nematoptera*)

Clownfish: *Amphiprion bicinctus*, Clark's clownfish (*A. clarkii*), fire (*A. ephippium*), tomato clown (*A. frenatus*), cinnamon (*A. melanopus*), ocellaris (*A. ocellaris*), percula (*A. percula*), pink skunk (*A. periderion*), saddleback (*A. polymnus*), *A. rubrocinctus*, orange skunk (*A. sandaracinos*), *sebae* (*A. sebae*), three band (*A. tricinctus*), maroon (*Premnas biaculeatus*)

Cleaner gobies: *Elacatinus chancei*, *E. evelynae*, *E. multifasciatus*, neon (*E. oceanops*), *E. punctulatus*, yellow line (*E. randalli*), citron (*Gobiodon citrinus*), yellow clown (*G. okinawae*), green banded (*Gobiosoma multifasciatum*), red head (*G. punctulatus*)

Cobia: *Rachycentron canadum*

Dottybacks: Neon (*Pseudochromis aldabraensis*), *P. diadema*, sunrise (*P. flavivertix*), orchid (*P. fridmani*), *P. fuscus*, striped (*P. sankeyi*), splendid (*P. splendens*), Springer's (*P. springeri*), flamehead (*P. steenei*)

Drums: Black drum (*Pogonias cromis*)

Indigo dotyback: *Pseudochromis fridmani* x *P. sankeyi*

Pompano: Florida pompano (*Trachinotus carolinus*)

Redfish: *Sciaenops ocellatus*

Royal gramma: *Gramma loreto*

Seahorses: *Hippocampus barbouri*, *H. breviceps*, *H. comes*, *H. erectus*, *H. kelloggi*, *H. kuda*, *H. reidi*, *H. zosterae*

Sharks: Marbled cat shark (*Chiloscyllium plagiosum*)

Seatrout: Spotted seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*)

Watchman gobies: *Cryptocentrus cinctus*, *C. leptocephalus*, *C. lutheri*

Marine Invertebrates

Albalone: Green (*Haliotis fulgens*)

Cleaner shrimp: Peppermint shrimp (*Lysmata rathbunae*)

Conches: Florida fighting conch (*Strombus alatus*), queen (*S. gigas*)

Clams: *Hippopus hippopus*, sandbed clams (*Tapes* spp.), *Tridacna crocea*, *T. derasa*, *T. gigas*, *T. maxima*, *T. squamosa*

Nudibranch: *Berghia verrucicornis*

Snails: *Strombus maculatus*, *Trochus intextus*, *Turbo sandwicensis*

Worms: Bristleworms, spaghetti worms

Marine Plants

Agar: Agardheilla sp.

Chaetomorpha: Chaetomorpha spp.

Gracillaria: Red, green & brown gracillaria

Red mangrove: Rhizophora mangle propagule

Sea lettuce: Ulva lactuca

SPS

Acropora echinata, A. granulosa, A. kirstyae, A. loisetteae, A. millepora, A. tenuis, A. valida, A. yongei

Cotton candy pocillopora (Pocillopora verrucosa)

Canary porites (Porites cylindrica)

Heliopora coerulea

Montipora confusa

Pink birdsnest (Seriatopora stellata)

Stylophora pistillata

Soft Corals

Blue cespitularia (Cespitularia sp.)

Blue palythoa polyp (Protopalythoa sp.)

Eunicea sp.

Evergreen starburst polyp (Briareum sp.)

Gorgonians: Muricea laxa, Pseudopterogorgia sp., P. bipinnata

Heliopora coerulea

Heteroxenia sp.

Leather coral (Sarcophyton spp. & S. glauca)

Lemon tree (Stereonephthya sp.)

Lobophytum sp.

Montipora capricornis, M. digitata, M. Pettiformis

Neon pineapple tree coral (Capuella sp.)

Nephthea sp.

Octopus ink heteroxenia (Heteroxenia sp.)

Pavona maldivensis

Sinularia brassica

Stereonephtya sp.

Taro tree coral (Capuella sp.)

White pom pom xenia (Xenia sp.)

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