

## Keeping Aquarium Fish Alive

### **Tips to keep aquarium fish alive during a fire or other disaster.**

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With wildfires ravaging Southern California, fishkeepers are left wondering what they will do with their beloved fish. It's easy to put a collar and leash on the family dog and head out of Dodge; but what happens to the 20 aquarium fish in a 55-gallon, 1,000 lb., fish tank?

As the fires progress and the power ultimately goes out, there are a few things that may keep the fish alive.

The two main things the fish will need to survive will be oxygen and a stable temperature. Buying battery-operated pumps with airstones, and keeping a fresh supply of batteries on hand, can keep a steady level of dissolved oxygen for the fish.

The next thing is temperature. In an emergency, the 70 to 86 degree Fahrenheit range is acceptable for up to 48 hours. During a fire it will most likely be necessary to lower the water temperature. This can be achieved by placing ice cube trays or frozen water bottles in the aquarium water. Frozen food items can also be placed around the edges of the tank, or wrapped in plastic and dropped into the water.

Doing these two things may keep the fish alive long enough for the fishkeeper to return from an evacuation and/or for the power to return. If there is no other choice but to move the fish, then put the fish and their tank water in a large cooler and use the battery-operated pump and regulate the temperature with frozen items. This may buy enough time to get the fish to an alternate location. Keep any filters and other equipment submerged in the cooler to maintain the helpful organisms. This equipment can be hooked back up and the cooler used as temporary housing while at a hotel or friend's house.

It is important to have friends in and outside of the area and have plans to move fish between homes as needed. Friend's quarantine tanks can provide temporary housing. Just make sure to acclimate the fish first.