

A Guide to Choosing The Right Marine Fish

By Katy Parry



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CHOOSING THE RIGHT MARINE FISH



As more marine fish species are being lost due to fishing and pollution, steps have been taken to protect these colorful fish. For instance, the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) passed in January 1999, opening a new era in the management and conservation of marine life in the state of California. The features of this Act include:

- Application to fish and shellfish taken by commercial and recreational fishermen
- Shifts the burden of proof toward demonstrating that fisheries and other activities are sustainable
- Legislature delegates greater management authority to the Fish and Game Commission and the Department of Fish and Game
- Focuses on an ecosystem perspective for the whole environment, not just single fisheries
- Strongly emphasizes science-based management developed with the aid of those interested in the states marine resources

This Act became the catalyst for additional laws being passed as a way of protecting and controlling the amount of marine life being destroyed. The goal is primarily on habitat conservation so that marine fish can be maintained, restored, or enhanced. Other goals of this Act and other acts are education for fishing communities and fisheries, non-consumptive values, and conservation of entire systems to include marine life, as well as all species and habitats that make up the ecosystem.

Because of the number of marine fish being lost, people are beginning to add these species to their own home aquariums. The result is a tank of gorgeous, lively fish unique to all others, and one more piece of conversation in saving lives. As you will discover in this bonus book, marine fish are absolutely, stunning, making any fish aquarium a more enjoyable part of the home or office.

As with all fish, marine fish come from different regions, each distinctive, as you will see from the examples below:



MASSACHUSETTS

In this state, the following are examples of the most commonly found marine fish species:

- Bluefish
- Blue Shark
- Bonito
- Dogfish
- Eel
- Grey Sole
- Mackerel
- Monkfish
- Redfish
- Scup
- Smelt
- Tautog
- Windowpane

NORTH CAROLINA

While in North Carolina, you would find the following species of marine fish:

- Blackdrum
- Butterfish
- Cobia
- Flounder
- Jumping Mullet
- Northern Puffer
- Pigfish
- Pompano
- Sheepshead
- Skate
- Tarpon

All across the country, each state has its own unique group of marine life, which is just one of the many aspects of these fish that we find so interesting. When keeping marine fish in your aquarium, you have the advantage of being able to add a little bit of each, creating your own special world of color, shapes, and behaviors.



MARINE FISH SPECIES

Below, we have put together information on the most popular choices for a fish tank so when you get ready to buy, you will have a better idea of what to look for and which fish cohabit best.

Angelfish (Pomacanthidae)

Of all marine fish, the Angelfish is probably one of the most beautiful. Similar in appearance to the Butterflyfish, the Angelfish is typically distinguished by the spine on the lower gill cover. Although Angelfish are commonly used in marine aquariums, you need to keep in mind that they tend to be territorial and will destroy reef. Therefore, if you want to keep Angelfish, we strongly recommend you keep just one.



The downside to the Angelfish is that they are considered a challenging fish to maintain. The problem is that Angelfish will feed on sponge and tunicate. Now, you can purchase specially prepared formulas that contain sponge but the other challenge is that Angelfish are fussy, which means introduction to new food is rarely successful. However, once you can establish their eating, they will live anywhere from 10 to 20 years in captivity.

The upside to keeping an Angelfish is that they come in such a wonderful array of colors and sizes. You will find some species just four inches while others can be eight inches or larger. However, Angelfish in the wild can easily grow to 24 inches. Both juvenile and adult fish have magnificent colors and patterns, making this a fun choice for any fish aquarium.

Almost all of the Angelfish species will eat sponge and tunicate with the exception of the Pygmies. For this reason, acclimating this species to food is somewhat challenging. To survive in captivity, the fish must be willing to adapt to a new diet, which is why you want to use special food designed only for Angelfish. Other types of Angelfish to consider for your aquarium include the following, although this is not a complete list.



- Arabian Angel (*Pomacanthus asfur*)
- Bicolor Angel (*Centropyge bicolor*)
- Black Velvet Angelfish (*Chaetodontoplus melanosoma*)
- Blue Girdled Angel (*Pomacanthus navarchus*)
- Coral Beauty (*Centropyge bispinosa*)
- Crescent Angel (*Pomacanthus asfur*)
- Ear Spot Angel (*Pomacanthus chrysurus*)
- Emperor Angel (*Pomacanthus imperator*)
- Flame Angel (*Centropyge loricula*)
- Goldflake Angel (*Apothemichthys xanthopunctatus*)
- Half Moon Angel (*Pomacanthus maculosus*)
- Imperator Angel (*Pomacanthus imperator*)
- Indian Smoke Angel (*Apothemichthys xanthurus*)
- Japanese Pygmy Angel (*Centropyge interrupta*)
- Keyhole Angel (*Chaetodontoplus melanosoma*)
- Lemonpeel Angel (*Centropyge flavissima*)
- Ornate Angel (*Genicanthus bellus*)
- Phantom Angel (*Chaetodontoplus dimidiatus*)
- Queen Angel (*Holacanthus ciliaris*)
- Rusty Angel (*Centropyge ferrugata*)
- Singapore Angel (*Chaetodontoplus mesoleucus*)
- Tibicin Angel (*Centropyge tibicen*)
- Vermiculated Angel (*Chaetodontoplus mesoleucus*)

Butterflyfish (Chaetodontidae)



The Butterflyfish is a beautiful fish, especially when in an aquarium with an Angelfish. Although a little bit more challenging to maintain than an Angelfish due to the very, specialized diet consisting of live coral. Now, keep in mind that the Butterflyfish is not a good choice for a reef aquarium because they eat coral polyps. However, they would be a wonderful choice for other marine tanks.

The body of the Butterflyfish is oval shaped and thin. The mouth protrudes, which coupled with the design of the body allows them to slither freely amongst rocks on a natural coral reef, finding food in all the small crevices. While there are many species to consider, as shown below, the hardest for an aquarium include the Klein's Butterflyfish, Long-Nosed Butterflyfish, and the Heniochus Butterflyfish species.



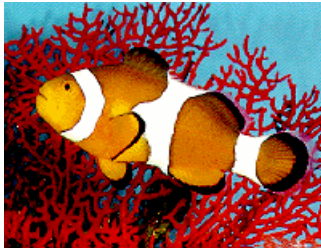
The species that you probably want to avoid include the Copper-Banded Butterflyfish, Pakistani Butterflyfish, Pearlscale Butterflyfish, Raccoon Butterflyfish, and the Threadfin Butterflyfish. The Butterflyfish as a whole likes to graze on sponges, live coral, and algae. However, this species is omnivorous, meaning they will eat small and planktonic animals.

When introducing small fish to your aquarium, you should feed them several times each day. Then once grown, the Butterflyfish needs a variety of foods such as flakes, live brine, and frozen foods. Some of the other species of Butterflyfish to consider are:

- Asian Butterflyfish (*Chaetodon argentatus*)
- Beaked Coralfish (*Chelmon rostratus*)
- Blacklip Butterfly (*Chaetodon kleinii*)
- Bluespot Butterfly (*Chaetodon plebius*)
- Chevroned Butterfly (*Chaetodon trifascialis*)
- Copper Banded Butterfly (*Chelmon rostratus*)
- Crosshatch Butterfly (*Chaetodon xanthurus*)
- Dot and Dash Butterfly (*Chaetodon pelewensis*)
- Eclipse Butterfly (*Chaetodon bennetti*)
- Exquisite Butterfly (*Chaetodon austriacus*)
- Forceps Fish (*Forcipiger flavissimus*)
- Golden Butterfly (*Chaetodon semilarvatus*)
- Hedgehog Butterfly (*Prognathodes dichrous*)
- Indian Double Saddle Butterfly (*Chaetodon falcula*)
- Klein's Butterfly (*Chaetodon kleinii*)
- Latticed Butterfly (*Chaetodon rafflesi*)
- Marquesan Butterfly (*Chaetodon declivis*)
- Orange Tail Butterfly (*Chaetodon xanthurus*)
- Oriental Butterfly (*Chaetodon auripes*)
- Pacific Red Fin Butterfly (*Chaetodon lunulatus*)
- Pakistani Butterfly (*Chaetodon collare*)
- Resting Butterfly (*Chaetodon sedentarius*)
- Saddle Back Butterfly (*Chaetodon ephippium*)
- Singular Bannerfish (*Heniochus singularius*)
- Teardrop Butterfly (*Chaetodon unimaculatus*)
- Tinker's Butterfly (*Chaetodon tinkeri*)
- White Face Butterfly (*Chaetodon mesoleucos*)



Clownfish - (*Pomacentridae*)



These very colorful fish are actually quite hardy when kept in captivity. The name comes from their waddling swim motion, along with the vibrant clown-like markings. Clown fish are in the same family as the Damselfish although each is somewhat distinct.

In an aquarium, the Clownfish lives in symbiosis with other anemones, meaning their existence together is beneficial to both in one way or another. However, you can keep Clownfish in an aquarium alone if you like but if you do so, you will need to pay attention to its special needs.

Typically, any fish that falls in this family have the tendency of becoming aggressive. This territorial nature is most often seen as the fish ages. The only exceptions to this behavior would be the Blue Reef Chromis, Green Chromis, and the Skunk Clown. Then, you should keep just one dominant female with the rest being male or one pair.

When keeping Clownfish in an aquarium, they will eat just about anything. Even so, you want to provide the fish with a healthy diet, consisting of live foods to include bring shrimp, as well as frozen foods, flakes, and even algae. All Anemones need a lot of light, typically two to five watts per gallon of water. When choosing light, lean toward the blue spectrum. Other types of Clownfish to consider for your fish tank include the following:

- Allard's Clownfish (*Amphiprion allardi*)
- Barrier Reef Anemonefish (*Amphiprion akindynos*)
- Cinnamon Clown (*Amphiprion melanopus*)
- False Clownfish (*Amphiprion ocellaris*)
- Ocellaris Clown (*Amphiprion ocellaris*)
- Orange Finned Clownfish (*Amphiprion chrysopterus*)
- Percula Clown (*Amphiprion percula*)
- Saddleback Clown - (*Amphiprion polymnus*)
- Skunk Clown (*Amphiprion perideraion*)
- Tomato Clown (*Amphiprion frenatus*) and (*Amphiprion melanopus*)
- White Bonnet Clown (*Amphiprion leucokranos*)



Damsels - Pomacentridae



Damsels are a wonderful species of marine fish, very colorful and hardy. Damsels are also an affordable fish, often used as a break-in fish to help establish the nitrification cycling process. Typically, you would use one Damsel for every 10 gallons of water during the cycling period.

In addition, the Damsel actually falls within the same family as the Clownfish. However, the difference is that Clownfish are separated into Anemonefish whereas Damsel fish are not. In many cases, Damsels will live in a unique situation known as a commensal relationship. With this, the Damsels live with their own kind along with other Anemones, one benefiting and the other not.

You can keep Damselfish in an aquarium with or without the presence of an Anemone but in doing so you will need to ensure any special needs are met. Most of the fish within the Pomacentridae family become aggressive with age. Just as with the Clownfish, the only exception to this territorial behavior would be the Blue Reef Chromis, Green Chromis, and the Skunk Clown.

The benefit of keeping Damsels is that they can easily live up to 10 years in captivity, although in the wild, they can live upwards to 20 years. Therefore, if you want to establish a fish aquarium with hardy, long-living marine fish, Damsels would make an excellent choice. Other species of Damsels include:

- Black Axil Chromis (*Chromis atripectoralis*)
- Black Velvet Damsel (*Neoglyphidodon oxyodon*)
- Blue Devil (*Chrysiptera cyanea*)
- Blue Star Damsel (*Chrysiptera taupou*)
- Borneo Damsel (*Pomacentrus armillatus*)
- Domino Damsel (*Dascyllus trimaculatus*)
- Dusty Damsel (*Dascyllus* sp)
- Electric Blue Damsel (*Chrysiptera cyanea*)
- Fire Damsel (*Neoglyphidodon crossi*)
- Garibaldi (*Hypsypops rubicunda*)
- Honey Damsel (*Pomacentrus armillatus*)
- Japanese Chromis (*Chromis mirationis*)



- Okinawa Chromis (*Chromis okamurai*)
- Pearl Damsel (*Amblyglyphidodon* sp)
- Sergeant Major Damsel (*Abudefduf saxatilis*)
- Starck's Damsel (*Chrysiptera starcki*)
- Three Striped Damsel (*Dascyllus melanurus*) and (*Dascyllus aruanus*)
- Yellow Tailed Damsel (*Chrysiptera parasema*) and (*Chrysiptera hemicyanea*)

Marine Eels (Muraenidae) and (Ophichthidae)

If you want a marine fish that is considered hardy, affordable, and easy to maintain, then marine Eels are ideal. Eels will grow to the size of the tank, meaning if you keep a 10-gallon tank, the fish will not grow overly large. However, if you have a 150-gallon tank, they could easily reach two to three feet in length. Typically, you would want to keep marine Eel for the larger aquarium size.



Eels will eat small fish, along with some types of invertebrates. The teeth of the Eel are sharp and strong, used to crush shells and carapaces of Mollusks and Crustaceans. Within this family are approximately 20 subspecies with the Moray being the most commonly kept in an aquarium. Interestingly, the Eel is a nocturnal creature, which means they sleep or hide during the day and then come out to play and eat at night. For this reason, you need to be sure to provide your Eels with caves and other hiding places.

When kept in captivity, Eels should be on a diet consisting of foods such as squid, shrimp, live fish, and chopped up fish. These fish have a powerful sense of smell but the eyesight is poor. Therefore, when feeding the Eel, you want to be careful with the fingers in that they will bite, thinking your waving finger is some type of delicacy.



Other types of Eels kept in aquariums include the following:

- Banded Snake Eel (*Myrichthys colubrinus*)
- Jewel Monkey (*Muraena lentiginosa*)
- Monkeyface Eel (*Cebidichthys violaceus*)
- Ribbon Eel (*Rhinomuraena quaesita*)
- Saddled Snake Eel (*Leiuranus semicinctus*)
- Snowflake Moray Eel (*Echidna nebulosa*)
- Spotted Garden Eel (*Heteroconger hassi*)
- Spotted Moray Eel (*Gymnothorax moringa*)
- Yellowmargin Moray (*Gymnothorax flavimarginatus*)

Goby, Blenny, Mandarinfish (Gobiidae, Blennidae, Callionymidae)

These species make fun additions to a fish aquarium, sharing common characteristics such as perching, which makes them appear as if they are completely still in the water. Depending on the species you choose, some are quite hardy while others are a bit more challenging.

- Gobies – These fish will dig deep into the sand or live in holes of caves. When they feel threatened, they bolt like lightning. Similar to Blennies, the Gobies have long, blunt shaped heads.



The difference is that Gobies are exceptionally colorful and the pelvic fins are connected as a means of providing suction so they can “perch” on the aquarium floor or rocks.

Determining the male from the female is very difficult with the exception of spawning time in which the male will change color and the fins become elongated. Primarily meat eaters, you would keep the Gobies on a diet of brine shrimp and chopped meat of fish.

- Blennies – This type of fish is actually quite active so if you enjoy an active aquarium, they would make a great choice. The Blennies also enjoy perching.



This fish will often swim from its hiding spot in search of food, which are typically smaller fish and algae. You will find that some species of Blennies are territorial so you should never put them in an aquarium with other fish less than 50% their size.



Just as with Gobies, Blennies have a long, blunt shaped head. The male species are typically longer with far more color than you would see on the female's body. In addition, before and after spawning season, the male will often change his colors, making him easy to identify.

- Mandarinfish (Dragonets) are typically bottom dwellers, burying themselves deep in the sand during the daylight hours and then searching for food at night. They will also commonly jolt from rock to rock, again searching for smaller fish to eat. However, the diet is primarily Crustaceans or other live organisms.



You should always introduce Mandarinfish to an established aquarium, making sure there are lots of microorganisms and animals. Other diet supplements would include live brine and rotifers. The male fish have long dorsal and anal fin extensions, and much brighter colors than the female has. With this species, never keep two males in the same aquarium.

Species of Gobies that you might consider include:

- Bar Goby (*Ptereleotris zebra*)
- Blue Cheek Goby (*Valenciennea strigata*)
- Catalina Goby (*Lythrypnus dalli*)
- Dartfish Goby (*Tryssogobius colini*)
- Dracula Goby (*Stonogobiops dracula*)
- Fire Goby (*Nemateleotris magnifica*)
- Golden Head Jawfish (*Opistognathus aurifrons*)
- Lemon Coralgoby (*Gobiodon citrinus*)
- Morrison's Dragonet (*Synchiropus morrisoni*)
- Neon Goby (*Gobiosoma oceanops*)
- Ocellated Dragonet (*Synchiropus ocellatus*)
- Peppermint Goby (*Coryphopterus lipernes*)
- Purple Fire Goby (*Nemateleotris decora*)
- Redhead Goby (*Paragobiodon echinocephalus*)
- Scissor Tail Goby (*Ptereleotris evides*)
- Shadow Goby (*Yongeichthys nebulosus*)
- Yellow Watchmann Goby (*Cryptocentrus cinctus*)
- Yellowhead Sleeper Goby (*Valenciennea strigata*)
- Zebra Goby (*Ptereleotris zebra*)



Species of Blennies to consider include:

- Algae Blenny (*Salarias fasciatus*)
- Bicolor Blenny (*Ecsenius bicolor*)
- Diamond Blenny (*Malacoctenus boehlkei*)
- Lawnmower Blenny (*Salarias fasciatus*)
- Scooter Blenny (*Neosynchiropus ocellatus*)

Groupers (Serranidae)



Groupers are a larger fish but with unique personalities. Although they are a solitary type fish, they are exciting and fun to watch. Groupers are also very hardy, although there are a few species a little more challenging to maintain. Noted as a predatory fish, they need to be on a diet of live brine, squid, clams, shrimp, and even an occasional treat of Goldfish.

Various species of Groupers to think about for your aquarium include:

- Blue Spotted Grouper (*Cephalopholis argus*)
- Clown Grouper (Bearded Grouper) (*Pogonoperca punctata*)
- Dampiera Grouper (*Labracinus cyclophthalmus*)
- Golden Stripe Grouper (*Grammistes sexlineatus*)
- Marine Betta (*Calloplelesiopt altivelis*)
- Miniatus Grouper (Coral Trout) (*Cephalopholis miniatus*)
- Panther Grouper (*Cromileptis altivelis*)
- White Spotted Grouper (*Epinephalus* sp)

Hawkfish (Cirrhitidae)



This predatory fish spends the majority of its time resting on coral blocks or reef branches. The name comes from “hunting like a hawk”, which is exactly the behavior you would see. Using the pectoral fins, they actually sit up to watch for prey. Then once the prey has been spotted, the Hawkfish will swoop down quickly and devour.

If you keep Hawkfish in a fish tank, you will likely be entertained. This very alert and active fish brings life to any aquarium. In addition, this marine fish is very hardy. With just 35 species, you will find them in a variety of sizes, ranging from four inches all the way to 40 inches. Obviously, the length would depend on the size of the aquarium.



The body of the Hawkfish is stout and the head is long. A unique characteristic of this marine fish is that it has tufts of hair known as Cirri, growing on the tips of the dorsal spine. Species to consider include:

- Falco Hawkfish (*Cirrhichthys falco*)
- Flame Hawkfish (Brilliant Red Hawkfish) (*Neocirrhites armatus*)
- Longnose Hawkfish (*Oxycirrhites typus*)

Wrasse (*Labridae*)



Wrasse is available in many different shapes, sizes, and colors, being one of the most beautiful and active of marine fish. Most Wrasse is hardy and non-territorial although some can be if too crowded and in with their own kind. In all, you will discover some 400 species of Wrasses, which make great aquarium fish.

The pectoral fins of this fish are used for movement but to gain bursts of speed in emergencies, they will use the caudal fin. Most often, this species of marine fish will bury deep in the sand so you want to ensure they have the right type of substrate. In addition, Wrasse will often eat small Crustaceans. However, the exact diet depends on the type of species you have, including Mollusks as well along with brine shrimp.

Again, there are literally hundreds of these marine fish but below are just a few that would make great choices for your aquarium:

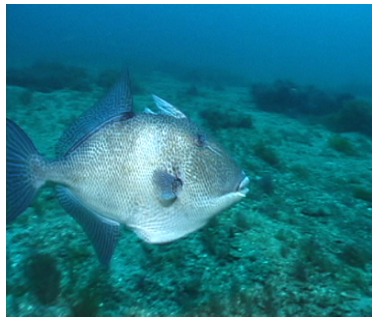
- Axilspot Hogfish (*Bodianus axillaris*)
- Blue Sided Fairy Wrasse (*Cirrhilabrus cyanopleura*)
- Checkerboard Wrasse (*Halichoeres hortulanus*)
- Cuban Hogfish (*Bodianus puchellus*)
- Dragon Wrasse (*Novaculichthys taeniourus*)
- Filamented Flasher (*Cirrhilabrus exquisitus*)
- Green Bird Wrasse (*Gomphosus varius*)
- Ladder Wrasse (*Thalassoma trilobatum*)
- Orangeback Fairy Wrasse (*Cirrhilabrus aurantidorsalis*)
- Rockmover Wrasse (*Novaculichthys taeniourus*)
- Six Line Wrasse (*Pseudochelinus hexataenia*)
- Tono's Fairy Wrasse (*Cirrhilabrus tonozukai*)
- Yellow Tail Wrasse (*Coris gaimard*)



Triggerfish (Balistidae)

In the wild, the Triggerfish typically lives as a solitary species, not being tolerant of other like species. For this reason, you see few people adding them to fish aquariums. However, with special care, they can be maintained in captivity.

The name “Triggerfish” comes from their ability to lock and unlock the first dorsal fin. This fin is usually positioned in a flat groove on the top of the back but when locked, it is in an upright position, allowing the Triggerfish to squeeze into small nooks and crannies to hide.



Interestingly, the Triggerfish is not a very good swimmer. Most of the movement you would see comes from the anal and dorsal fins, used only for escaping predators. However, the Triggerfish have extremely strong teeth that stick out, making it easy for them to eat shelled invertebrates and sea urchins. Therefore, make sure that if you keep Triggerfish that your aquarium has no invertebrates or they will be dinner.

The diet of the Triggerfish is varied. In fact, they eat just about anything but the diet should include live foods such as brine shrimp, along with flakes, frozen foods, squid, shrimp, and chopped up earthworms. Some of the species you might add to your aquarium include:

- Bursa Trigger (*Rhinecanthus verrucosus*)
- Humu Humu Trigger (*Rhinecanthus aculeatus*)
- Peach Faced Trigger (*Xanthichthys mento*)
- Picasso Trigger (*Rhinecanthus aculeatus*)
- Redtooth Trigger (*Odonus niger*)
- Spotted Trigger (*Pervagor spilosoma*)
- Undulated Trigger (*Balistapus undulatus*)
- White Tail Trigger (*Sufflamen* sp)

Lionfish (Scorpaenidae)

Lionfish are predators that usually hunt prey in groups. This particular species will appear quite lazy, hanging around the crest of the reed motionless, just waiting for food to swim by. When kept in captivity, you would feed the Lionfish live food or frozen food to include Lancefish or Silversides.



The name of the Lionfish (Scorpaenidae) comes from the poisonous spines located in the dorsal fins. When stung, it feels like a nasty bee sting that smarts. When Stonefish are stung by Lionfish, the sting will actually kill them. If you keep Lionfish and should be stung, run hot water over the area stung and then get medical attention.

This fish is nocturnal, preferring to live in caves and then coming out at night to play and feed. In all, you will find some 350 different species of Lionfish, some of which include:

- Antenna Lion (Pterois antennata)
- Clearfin Lionfish (Pterois radiata)
- Dwarf Lionfish (Dendrochirus brachypterus)
- Fu Manchu Lionfish (Dendrochirus biocellatus)
- Spotfin Lionfish (Pterois antennata)
- Volitan Lion (Pterois volitans)
- Zebra Lionfish (Dendrochirus zebra)



Puffers, Boxfish, and Porcupinefish (Tetraodontidae, Ostraciidae, Diodontidae)



These marine fish are all very hardy, meat eaters. All are fun to watch in that they enjoy eating, almost going into a frenzy. Another fascinating aspect of Puffers, Boxfish, and Porcupinefish is that they are so unusual in appearance. Using the pectoral fins for locomotion and the tail fin to move fast when needed, they actually swim awkwardly.

When kept in an aquarium, all of these marine fish eat just about anything although you should keep them on a diet of live food to include brine shrimp, along with frozen food and algae. These fish also have incredibly strong teeth that will continue to grow throughout life. Because of this, they should also be fed hard-shelled food on occasion to help wear the teeth down.



These fish live well in the same aquarium, making them a great combination. Some of the options you might add include:

- Balloonfish (*Diodon holacanthus*)
- Blue Line Toby (*Canthigaster bennetti*)
- Dogfaced Pufferfish (*Arothron nigropunctatus*)
- Jewel Puffer (*Canthigaster solandri*)
- Panda Puffer (*Arothron diadematus*)
- Sharpnose Puffer (*Canthigaster rostrata*)
- Spotted Toby (*Canthigaster solandri*)
- Striped Burrfish (*Chilomycterus* sp)
- Valentine Puffer (*Canthigaster valentini*)
- Yellow Boxfish (*Tetrosomus gibbosus*)

Sharks and Stingrays (Triakis semifasciatus)



Both Sharks and Stingrays are fun in aquariums, as long as the tank is large enough to accommodate their size and special needs. In fact, we recommend you choose a minimum of 180 gallons although larger is better. Sharks are considered in a suborder called Squalomorphii and Stingrays Raiomorphii.

Sharks and Stingrays should only be maintained by experts with years of experience because they are extremely challenging to keep. Although they can be hardy, they do require very special things. Therefore, Sharks and Rays are not for the beginner.

Most of these marine fish are meat eaters, growing up to 36 inches in length. However, some species such as the Leopard Shark can reach as long as six to seven feet. Those that grow to such lengths, and to be avoided include the Black Tip Reef Shark, up to six feet long, Cat Shark, up to seven feet, and the Nurse Shark, up to 14 feet long.

Depending on the species, some will move frequently in the water, searching for food while others tend to lie on the bottom of the tank waiting for the food to come to them. Most Sharks swim by moving the vertically tail fin from side to side and usually not kept well in captivity. Stingrays have flattened bodies.

In addition, these fish are known as bottom-dwellers. The shape of the Stingray's body allows them to blend in with the environment, burying themselves in the sand. For some species, the flattened body lets them remain afloat without much work. To swim, they move the enlarged pectoral fins, flapping to propel themselves.



Those that are best for aquariums include the Brownbanded Bamboo Shark (40 inches), Blue Spotted Stingray (10 inches), California Stingray (10 inches), Horned Shark (38 inches), and Marbled Cat Shark (24 inches). Remember, even small Sharks can be aggressive and they are carnivorous, meaning they eat anything, and often eat it whole.

Surgeonfish (Tangs) (Acanthuridae)

Surgeonfish are absolutely, beautiful and very hardy. In addition, these marine fish are great community fish, getting along well with others. The name is a reference to the erectable razor sharp spines located at the base of the body in front of the tailfin, which can cut just like a knife. The body of the Surgeonfish is oval, being able to compress laterally.



Although Surgeonfish can be a little territorial, most get along well. The key is to add them all at the same time. These fish can grow to 16 inches in length. They also experience color change when maturing with age. In all, four categories of Surgeonfish exist. These include Naso or Unicorn Tangs, Ctenochaetus, or Bristle Tooth, Zebrasoma, and Paracanthurus, the most popular.

Surgeonfish should be fed several times daily, being offered vegetable-based foods, brine shrimp, bloodworms, plankton, chopped clams, and krill. For grazing, spinach or lettuce leaves can be floated on the surface. Some of the options you have for Surgeonfish include:

- Achilles Tang (*Acanthurus achilles*)
- Blue Tang (*Acanthurus coeruleus*)
- Convict Tang (*Acanthurus triostegus*)
- Hippo Tang (*Paracanthurus hepatus*)
- Orange Shoulder Tang (*Acanthurus olivaceus*)
- Powder Blue Tang (*Acanthurus leucosternon*)
- Sailfin Tang (*Zebrasoma desjardini*)
- Sohal Tang (*Acanthurus sohal*)
- Unicorn Tang (*Naso unicornis*)
- Whitemargin Unicornfish (*Naso annulatus*)
- Yellow Mimic Tang (*Acanthurus pyroferus*)



Seahorses

One of the most fascinating marine fish you can add to your aquarium is the Seahorse. The dorsal fin is what moves the fish in a forward position while the pectoral fin controls its turning and steering. The eyes of the Seahorse move independently.

One of the most interesting things is that the male becomes pregnant with the female depositing the eggs into his pouch. This pregnancy will last two to three weeks at which time the male gives birth, then becomes pregnant immediately again.

The Seahorse is quite the eater, being able to consume up to 3,000 brine shrimp a day. Since this fish has no teeth, the food is simply swallowed whole. In all, more than 35 species of Seahorse exists and depending on the species, some are just one-quarter of an inch while others will grow to 12 inches or more. A few of the species to consider are as follows:

- Barbour's Seahorse (*Hippocampus barbouri*)
- Brazilian Seahorse (*Hippocampus reidi*)
- Knysna Seahorse (*Hippocampus capensis*)
- Leafy Sea Dragon (*Phycodurus eques*)
- Orange Spotted Pipefish (*Corythoichthys ocellatus*)
- Pot Bellied Seahorse (*Hippocampus abdominalis*)
- Sea Pony (*Hippocampus fuscus*)
- Weedy Sea Dragon (*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*)
- Yellow Seahorse (*Hippocampus barbouri*)



Miscellaneous

Other species of marine life that you might consider include:

- Arc Eye Hawkfish (*Paracirrhites arcatus*)
- Circular Spadefish (*Platax orbicularis*)
- Clown Sweetlips (*Plectorhinchus chaetodonoides*)
- Engineer Fish (*Pholidichthys leucotaenia*)
- Flame Hawk (*Neocirrhites armatus*)
- Foxface (*Siganus vulpinus*)
- Freckled Hawkfish (*Paracirrhites forsteri*)
- High Hat (*Equetus acuminatus*)
- Horrid Stonefish (*Synanceia horrida*)



- Manybar Goatfish (*Parupeneus multifasciatus*)
- Mexican Lookdown (*Selene brevoortii*)
- Moorish Idol (*Zanclus comutus*)
- Panther Grouper (*Cromileptes altivelis*)
- Parrotfish (*Scarus* sp)
- Rabbitfish (*Siganus* sp)
- Red Emperor Snapper (*Lutjanus sebae*)
- Slender Filefish (*Monacanthus tuckeri*)
- Striped Squirrel (*Holocentrus hastatus*)
- Weedy Scorpionfish (*Rhinopias frondosa*)

THE END