

Fish 'N' Chips

A Monthly Marine Newsletter
December 2004 Issue

Index

[From Liz](#)
[Critter](#)
[Corner](#)

[Caught In The Net](#)
[Chips...er...Tips](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)
[Newsletter](#)
[Disclaimer](#)

From Liz

By Elizabeth M. Lukan 12/07/04

Happy Holidays Everyone!

Tank Showcases Needed: I've had no submissions so I don't have a Tank Showcase this month. Please submit your tank photos via <http://www.marinefiends.com/submittank.html> (*updated 10/12/05*).

[Back to Top](#)

Critter Corner

Seahorses take to the World Stage

By Dr. Heather Koldewey, Zoological Society of London and Project Seahorse
Edited By Elizabeth M. Lukan, 9/23/04

Global trade negotiations are not normally the purview of the public aquarist. But some of the most charismatic and popular marine exhibits are now subject to regulations that affect their movement across national borders. The new rules for seahorses have generated debate as aquarists ponder the implications of listing all 34 known species by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Though they present some challenges to aquariums, the nuts and bolts of the treaty are relatively straightforward, and all personnel involved in keeping seahorses should become familiar with them. We believe aquarium professionals should support these conservation efforts through their acquisition and display strategies.



CITES is an international agreement between more than 160 nations that aims to ensure the international trade in plants and animals does not threaten their survival in the wild. Some 30,000 species are covered by CITES, which lists them in three Appendices. The first, covering species threatened with extinction, bans most trade. Appendix II species may become threatened if trade is not regulated, and Appendix III lists species at the request of countries needing help protecting local populations.

CITES agreed in 2002 to place all seahorses on Appendix II. The decision was built on careful analyses of the trade and the conservation status of wild populations, along with growing support among fishers and dealers. More than 24 million seahorses are traded annually among almost 80 nations, making them one of the world's largest wildlife management issues. The listing also opens the door to what many hope will be a new era for CITES, as commercially important fully marine fishes had never before been placed under binding international regulation.

The seahorse listing took effect on May 15, 2004. Countries wishing to export seahorses now have to prove their exports do not threaten existing wild populations. But many countries are

presently unable to adequately assess the sustainability of seahorse exports as data on populations, fisheries and trade are sparse or nonexistent. In the meantime, CITES believes a viable short-term solution is a minimum size limit.

A minimum size is a simple but powerful tool. Project Seahorse proposed, and CITES has agreed, that all seahorses in international trade should be at least 10 centimeters in height. Ten centimeters is not just a round, easy-to-work-with number. It is slightly greater than the maximum recorded height at first maturity for most species, and most seahorses of that size have already had a chance to reproduce. A minimum size is also the favored management option among those whose livelihoods depend on the trade. Countries are free to consider other options, such as no-take zones, closed seasons and gear restrictions, but in the near future the minimum size will likely be the tool of choice of most CITES signatories.

Trade in the smaller seahorses often favored by public aquariums is affected by the limit, but only in the case of imports of wild-caught species. Aquariums are under no obligation to dismantle existing exhibits and still have access to all captive-bred species and seahorses caught and sold within national borders. When it comes to planning future displays, however, the new regulations will have to be taken into account, particularly when seeking imports of exotic species. Fortunately, husbandry research conducted over the past decade at the John G. Shedd Aquarium in Chicago and elsewhere has significantly increased the supply of several species of captive-bred seahorses available to the global aquarium community. And in the event that captive-bred or domestically caught specimens prove unavailable, exceptions to the CITES rules for scientific research and formal display can be made, with the proper documentation.

We also strongly urge all public aquarium professionals to consider the conservation of seahorses when designing exhibits. For example, the status of each species on display, their origin, and information on the CITES listing could be included in explanatory signage. It is important that aquarium visitors be exposed to the ecology of seahorses, and not just their esthetic qualities.

There are currently many challenges facing those involved in the live trade, transportation and care of seahorses. The latest data show that the volume, scope and interconnectedness have grown since the first trade survey published in 1996. All sectors of the seahorse fishery have a role to play as we develop robust and flexible conservation plans. Improved husbandry, handling and transport practices are needed to better acclimatize wild-caught seahorses to captive conditions. The Marine Aquarium Council (<http://www.aquariumcouncil.org/>) and similar organizations may be useful in encouraging better management through certification. With a concerted effort on all our parts, seahorses will continue to amaze and fascinate for the foreseeable future.

What aquarium professionals can do:

- Familiarize yourself with CITES and your national and regional wildlife regulations. National regulations may be stricter (as in the EU) than CITES
- Determine the source of all new acquisitions
- Use informed and reliable retailers and suppliers
- Incorporate educational material on the CITES regulations into seahorse exhibits
- Support marine conservation organizations that use best-available science and respect the communities and groups that rely on those resources

Project Seahorse, an international and interdisciplinary marine conservation organization with offices in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, the Philippines, UK and USA, is available for consultation on the development of seahorse exhibits. Its website is <http://seahorse.fisheries.ubc.ca/> (*updated 10/07/05*). For more information on CITES, visit <http://www.cites.org/>. For information regarding EU wildlife trade regulations, go to <http://www.eu-wildlifetrade.org/>.

Editor's Comments:

The author, Dr. Heather Koldewey, is Senior Curator of the Aquarium at the Zoological Society of London and Associate Director of Project Seahorse. The article was submitted to Fish 'N' Chips for publication by Jean Marcus, PhD of Project Seahorse, Fisheries Centre, The University of British Columbia.

Photo Credits:

The seahorse, *Hippocampus histrix*, was photographed by Denise Tackett. Permission for it's use was granted by James Hrynyshyn, Communications Coordinator of Project Seahorse (<http://seahorse.fisheries.ubc.ca/> (*updated 10/07/05*)).

[Back to Top](#)

Caught In The Net

By Elizabeth M. Lukan 12/07/04

New Stuff Found

Advanced Aquarist's Online Magazine (<http://www.advancedaquarist.com/>):

- Volume III, Issue XI, November 2004 is now available.

On Reefs.org (<http://www.reefs.org/>):

- Talk: The Marine Aquarium Hobby Helps Build Coral Reefs by John Walch December 6th, 2004

SeaScope Magazine (http://www.marineland.com/news_seascope.asp):

- Volume 21, Issue 3, 2004 is now available.

Sanjay's Reef Lighting Info Pages

This site contains spectral and performance data for all the metal halide lamps Sanjay Joshi has tested over the last seven years, including the ability to compare two lamps. The site also contains all of Sanjay's reef related articles. Visit the site at <http://www.reeflightinginfo.arvix.com/>.

[Back to Top](#)

Chips...er...Tips

Aiptasia Removal Follow-Up

By Tom Duncan 8/24/02

Edited By Elizabeth M. Lukan, 9/20/04

The original Aiptasia Removal tip was published in the January 2002 issue and can be found at <http://www.marinefiends.com/issues/2002/fnc0102.html#tips>.

The question as posed by Mr. Mike George on 2/1/02:

"I read the article on aiptasia removal by Tom Duncan using a water pix, I was wondering if Tom could go into details on how he used this method. It might just work getting rid of other unwanted things growing in reef tanks."

The answer as provided by Mr. Tom Duncan on 8/24/02:

Take the tub part of the WaterPic (or other dental irrigation device) and fill it

with salt water from the tank. Unless you have a handy shelf at just the right height, this is a two-person job. Have your assistant hold the machine -- you should only hold the business end (the nozzle). It is important that you control the nozzle carefully at all times, since it can quickly kill corals, clams, fish and invertebrates if it gets too close.

What I do is to place the nozzle next to the rock with the aiptasia and ask my wife to press the "on" button. I direct the stream at the rock until I see the anemone (or parts thereof) blast away from the rock. This process works in most locations other than right around living animals. I have actually used it on the shell of a tridacna, being very careful not to hit the foot, siphon or mantle. As I run out of water in the machine, I simply replenish from the tank. Although you could use fresh water, it would very quickly dilute the salt water, and it is not that much more effective than using the tank's own water.

The peppermint shrimp makes short work of any wounded aiptasia survivors on the floor of the tank. Note, however, that peppermint shrimp (like other animals that eat aiptasia) do not distinguish between aiptasia and mushroom corals, etc. So, all you really need is one shrimp. They'll keep the aiptasia away, and they won't be able to do much damage to the mushroom anemones.

Hope this helps -- I'd be happy to elaborate further if needed.

Editor's Comments:

Editing was limited to spelling and grammar corrections and putting into the Fish 'N' Chips format.

To Submit Your Tip: Visit <http://www.marinefiends.com/submit.html>.

[Back to Top](#)

Upcoming Events

By Elizabeth M. Lukan 12/07/04

| Event | Start Date / Time | End Date / Time | Location | Event Details, Notes, and For More Info |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------|----------|---|
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|--|-------------------------|---------------|---|--|
| Fan Shell Survey | now | unknown | | Marine Conservation Society: http://www.mcsuk.org/action/fanshell.htm (<i>url dead 10/07/05</i>) |
| Jellyfish Survey 2004 | now | unknown | | Marine Conservation Society: http://www.mcsuk.org/turtles/turtles.php?title=jellyfish%20survey (<i>updated 10/07/05</i>) |
| Lighting Survey | now | unknown | | Reefs.org: http://www.reefs.org/ |
| Marine Aquarist Profile Survey | now | unknown | | Reefs.org: http://www.reefs.org/ |
| Overflows Survey | now | unknown | | Reefs.org: http://www.reefs.org/ |
| RIO Aquarium Pump Failures Survey | now | unknown | | Reefs.org: http://www.reefs.org/ |
| Salinity Survey | now | unknown | | Reefs.org: http://www.reefs.org/ |
| Salt Mix Survey | now | unknown | | Reefs.org: http://www.reefs.org/ |
| Sandbed Survey | now | unknown | | Reefs.org: http://www.reefs.org/ |
| Temperature Survey | now | unknown | | Reefs.org: http://www.reefs.org/ |
| 6th International Aquarium Congress | Dec. 5, 2004 | Dec. 10, 2004 | Monterey, California, USA | http://www.iac2004.org/ |
| MASLAC Meeting: Holiday Party Cabrillo Aquarium, San Pedro; Speaker Daniel Knop | Dec. 11, 2004 6:30pm | | Denny's Restaurant, 3060 San Fernando Rd, LA, CA, USA | Marine Aquarium Society of Los Angeles County: http://www.maslac.org/ |
| MASLAC Meeting: Speakers Tom Barr on Planted Marine Tanks and Adam Cesnales on Soft Corals | Jan. 8, 2005 6:30pm | | Denny's Restaurant, 3060 San Fernando Rd, LA, CA, USA | Marine Aquarium Society of Los Angeles County: http://www.maslac.org/ |

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|---|------------------------|----------------|--|--|
| Aquaculture America 2005 | Jan. 17, 2005 | Jan. 20, 2005 | Marriott New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA | http://www.was.org/ |
| MASLAC Meeting: Photo Contest; Speaker Carl Demetropoulos on Macroalgae Biofilter; Member's Tank: Bryan Green | Feb. 2, 2005 6:30pm | | Denny's Restaurant, 3060 San Fernando Rd, LA, CA, USA | Marine Aquarium Society of Los Angeles County: http://www.maslac.org/ |
| Global Pet Expo | Mar. 13, 2005 | Mar. 15, 2005 | Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL, USA | http://www.globalpetexpo.org/ |
| Backer's 17th Annual Pet Industry Spring Trade Show & Educational Conference | Apr. 1, 2005 | Apr. 3, 2005 | The New Atlantic City Convention Center, Atlantic City, NJ, USA | http://www.hhbacker.com/ |
| International Coral Reefs Conference of Paris (CIRCOP 2005) | Apr. 2, 2005 | Apr. 3, 2005 | Congres Center of the City of Sciences of La Villette, Paris, France | http://www.circop.com/ |
| 4th International Days of Saltwater Aquaristic | May 7, 2005 | May 8, 2005 | Strasbourg, France | http://www.recif-france.com/ |
| World Aquaculture 2005 | May 9, 2005 | May 13, 2005 | Bali International Convention Center, Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia | http://www.was.org/ |
| IMAC 2005 | June 24, 2005 | June 26, 2005 | Chicago, Illinois, USA | http://www.theimac.org/ |
| National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) 2005 Conference | Jul. 9, 2005 | Jul. 18, 2005 | Kahului, Maui, Hawaii, USA | http://www.hawaii.edu/mcc/oceania/NMEA05.html |
| MACNA XVII | Sept. 16, 2005 | Sept. 18, 2005 | Washington DC, USA | http://www.macnaxvii.com/ |

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

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