

FEBRUARY NEWS

from **NIELSEN'S MARINE MATES**

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL FISH KEEPERS

*Changes in Quarantine procedures from March 1, 2015 will significantly impact on the aquarium industry and may result in your pet fish costing up to four times more! This is the dire warning from Dr Rob Jones ('The Aquarium Vet'), Director of Pet Services for the Pet Industry Association of Australia. **Please see Pages 4 & 5 for details.** Whether you keep marines, tropicals, gold fish, cichlids or any type of aquarium life, **this change will have an impact on all areas of the aquarium industry**, so please give your support. Also check out the details of our new Rewards Program on Page 4. As always until next month ... good fishkeeping!*

FRESHWATER PLANT OF THE MONTH – LUDWIGIA



Ludwigia is a natural aquatic plant, most varieties of which originate from North or South America. It is a favourite of aquarists as it is a hardy, fast growing plant with the pink underside of the leaves contrasting nicely with the bright green upper side. Dosing with iron based aquatic fertilizers will increase the pink/red colouration. Ludwigia is sold in bunches. This plant has the potential to become invasive in our waterways, so, as with all aquarium plants, do not dispose of unwanted plants into creeks, rivers, dams etc. Regular price \$6.50.

NOW \$5.50 PER BUNCH.

SUPER SPECIAL – CORAL PRO SALT WITH REEF ENERGY BONUS

What a great offer for marine aquarists! This month you can buy a 22kg bucket of Red Sea



Coral Pro Salt at the special price of **\$130** and, in addition, you will receive a pack of Reef Energy A and B, **absolutely free!** Reef Energy is a two part nutritional supplement for corals which provide all the energy, amino acids and vitamins needed for coral growth and colouration. This great special is available for a short time only, so get yours now!

MARINE FISH OF THE MONTH – PYJAMA WRASSE



Pyjama Wrasse, also known as Six Line Wrasse are a great addition to the marine aquarium.

Although they do not eat coral they will prey upon some inverts, particularly small shrimp and molluscs. They are a hardy, active fish, very colourful and are not fussy feeders. In the ocean they are said to grow to 10cm but are rarely seen that size in the aquarium. They are generally compatible with similar sized or larger fish and compete well for food. They are however, inclined to jump so cover the tank. Normally \$35. **FEBRUARY SPECIAL \$30**

**BACK IN STOCK -
NITRA-GUARD &
NITRA-GUARD TITANIUM**

We are pleased to advise that we now have good stocks of Nitra-Guard and Nitra-Guard Titanium. These products are a biological way to reduce nitrates and phosphates.

Why reduce these levels? Both nitrates and phosphates are the results of a build up of waste in fresh water and marine aquariums and are major contributors to poor water quality and undesirable algae blooms.

Nitra-Guard comes in two types - Nitra-Guard Bio Cube Original to remove both nitrates and phosphates and Nitra-Guard Bio-Cube Titanium for use where there are extremely low or non-existent phosphate levels.

Titanium is a 'world-first' product as, in the past, other nitrate removers have required some level of phosphates to be able to remove nitrates.

Many of you will be familiar with the concept of filtering using plastic cubes or balls as a medium to grow bacteria to break down biological waste. Nitra-Guard is different in that it is a foam-like material made from 100% biologically degradable polymer with a very high surface area and containing a carbohydrate food source to encourage the formation of bacteria. It can be used in filter bags (supplied) in almost any type of filter or sump. The manufacturers recommend using a filter 'bomb' made by placing an airstone inside the filter bag before packing Nitra-Guard around it. This ensures sufficient oxygenation and



encourages optimum growth of bacteria. Placing Nitra-Guard close to the intake of a protein skimmer will also speed up the removal of nitrates. Soaking Nitra-Guard in freshwater for 24 hours prior to use will usually prevent skimmers from foaming excessively. However, if the skimmer is over-active, turn it off for a few hours before restarting, at which time normal output should resume, at most, in 24 hours. Using either product should significantly reduce the frequency of water changes and vastly improve water quality. Results should be seen as soon as 10 to 14 days.

The amount required to be used will vary according to tank load but as a guideline use the following:

For tanks with a phosphate level:

Use Nitra-Guard Original at the rate of 3mls to every 1 litre of aquarium water for heavily stocked tanks and 1 ml to every 1 litre of aquarium water for tanks with lighter loads.

For tanks with very low or non-existent phosphate levels:

Use Nitra-Guard Titanium at these rates:

Nitrates over 60ppm 4mls per 1 litre
Nitrates 30-60ppm 3mls per 1 litre
Nitrates 15-30ppm 2mls per 1 litre
Nitrates up to 15ppm 1 ml per 1 lt.

Please remember to provide plenty of oxygenation to assist Nitra-Guard to perform correctly; soak Nitra-Guard in fresh water for 24 hours before use and check Nitra-Guard three to four months after installation and top up to the original amount if required.

REGISTER FOR OUR NEWSLETTER either
in store or email us at:

nielsensmarinemates@bigpond.com

Check out our **Facebook** page which is regularly updated with lots of photos of new livestock and products as they arrive. 'Like us' to receive notification of updates.



CICHLID OF THE MONTH – LABEOTROPHEUS FUELLEBORNI

This month we are offering these lovely Lake Malawi (African) cichlids. In nature they come from rocky areas with high oxygen levels and alkaline pH. In tanks they will grow to around 12 – 15cm, sometimes larger. Females are an orange colour with some darker blotching and males are dark blue, developing red finnage when mature. This is the standard colouration although other colour forms are sometimes available.



Fuelleborni Male (top),
Females (below).

Fuelleborni have an underslung jaw to facilitate algae grazing and thus should have foods high in vegetable content in the aquarium. If fed diets high in meat content, they are prone to bloat.

Fuelleborni males are quite territorial towards other males of their own species and also closely related species such as *L. trewavasae*. The ideal configuration for keeping fuelleborni in the aquarium is 1 male to 3 females. In very large tanks with lots of rocky cover, it may be possible to mix the males more successfully. Generally fuelleborni tolerate cichlids which are not closely related fairly well.

These fish are maternal mouth brooders and are considered quite easy to breed, producing broods of relatively large size fry.

Fuelleborni are normally \$19.99

FEBRUARY SPECIAL \$15.00.

LED LIGHTS – NEW MODEL NOW AVAILABLE

One of our most popular LED lights now comes with new features in this brand new model. Many of you will have seen the original light hanging over our acro tank. That model was improved by adding dimmers in the subsequent model. Now, the third upgraded model comes with a phone app which allows the user to control sunrise, sunset, lightning and cloud cover effects, timer and, of course, brightness, all from a smart phone. The app can be downloaded from the manufacturer's website or from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Each light will cover a 60cm square area and is well priced at \$419.00.

FRESHWATER FISH OF THE MONTH - RED TAIL BLACK SHARK



Originating from Thailand, Red Tail Black Sharks are in no way related to the shark family. It is easy to see, however,

where the name comes from, as their body shape and high dorsal fin certainly makes them look like miniature sharks. Usually they grow to no more than 10cm in an aquarium.

They are perhaps best kept singly as they can be aggressive towards other sharks, including the very similar looking Rainbow Shark. They are primarily bottom dwellers and should be provided with plenty of rock crevices or caves as resting and hiding places. Red Tail Sharks usually mix well with other medium to large species of fish.

Red Tail Black Sharks are not fussy feeders – they will do well on good quality flake food and fine granules. As an algae eater in nature, a high amount of vegetable matter is desired in their food.

Usually \$9.25 **THIS MONTH \$7.50**

ANNOUNCING OUR NEW REWARDS PROGRAM

Following input from our customers, we have immediately discontinued the Lyonesse program and decided to reinstate a rewards program, similar to our original plan. Following are the details:

There is no joining fee to be in the Rewards Scheme. For every \$40.00 spent you receive a stamp i.e.

\$38.00 spent - no stamp;

\$40.00 - \$79.00 = 1 stamp;

\$80.00 - \$119.00 = 2 stamps etc.

You must exceed a multiple of \$40.00 to receive your additional stamp.

Seven stamps have to be accumulated (i.e. \$280.00 spent) within 4 months of the first purchase to receive 1 x \$20.00 voucher which can be used in the store on any future visits within the next 12 weeks. The voucher is not redeemable for cash and when redeeming the \$20.00 voucher it does not count towards your next \$40.00 stamp.

We have listened to you, our customers, who have generally showed a preference for this type of scheme and hope you will benefit from the rewards offered.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE AQUARIUM INDUSTRY.

This article is a condensed version of Dr. Rob Jones' article on the Pet Industry Association of Australia website. For more information and to read the full article please go to <http://piaa.net.au/news/why-many-of-your-pet-fish-will-cost-up-to-four-tim/>

At this time, new quarantine regulations will only apply to some freshwater fish. However due to the import costs involved, this will impact on every aquarium store and wholesaler. There is also a serious issue of animal (fish) welfare here, so if you are a marine fish keeper please lend your support as well as

all the freshwater fish keepers out there.

Due to insufficient local breeding of aquarium fish, it is necessary to import fish into Australia to meet the demand. This importation is highly regulated by the Federal Government via the Department of Agriculture. Only species on the National Allowable Permit List can be imported and these fish then enter a Quarantine Approved Premises, where they are held for 7, 14 or 21 days depending on species. Only after the fish have been inspected by Australian Quarantine Inspection Services and found healthy at the end of this period are they released from quarantine.

In 2003 there was an outbreak of Iridovirus in aquacultured Murray Cod. (Iridovirus is a family of viruses, one member of which is commonly called gourami iridovirus.) The outbreak of the disease was linked to the illegal feeding of gourami fish to Murray Cod in conjunction with stress from higher than desirable water temperatures. It should be noted that the disease problem went away with NO Government intervention, did NOT escape into the wild and has NOT been seen since in Murray Cod or any other native Australian fish since 2003. Another important point is that **there has never been a serious disease outbreak in Australian native fish in our waterways due to the importation of aquarium fish into Australia.**

In 2008 the Australian Government undertook a Risk Assessment for potential native fish which could be affected by iridovirus and the final results were released in September 2014. As a consequence the Government is demanding off-shore

batch laboratory testing that will result in the killing of thousands of healthy fish. This means that every consignment of fish to be exported will need to be tested before being sent. There is no test available without killing fish and collecting their internal organs. The testing regime is all based upon statistics. For example, import 20 fish type X then 19 will be killed. If they test negative, then the remaining one fish can be safely imported into Australia! Similarly 50 fish type Y, kill 35 of them, remaining 15 can be imported after negative testing. 2000 fish type Z, kill 58 of them, the remaining 1942 can be imported after negative testing. As so it goes on – imagine how many fish will be killed unnecessarily to justify this testing requirement. These measures will drastically increase the cost of bringing the remaining fish into Australia. For some importers it will no longer be economical to import some species and it is estimated that costs could increase up to four times for some species.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

First, please visit the website listed at the beginning of this article to read all of the information.

Talk about this proposal on Facebook, Twitter, any social media and spread the word.

Dear xxxx

I have been keeping fish for xx years. I talked to my local pet/aquarium shop and they say they will need to close down some of their fish tanks as the cost of aquarium fish will increase substantially after March 1st, 2015, due to unreasonable changes to the quarantine situation.

I understand that it may become impossible for me to obtain some rarer types of cichlids and Bettas (Siamese fighting fish) due to financial considerations of these new import restrictions. I understand that despite the aquarium industry importing many millions of fish into Australia for over 40 years, that there has never been a serious disease outbreak in Australian native fish in our waterways due to the aquarium fish.

The current quarantine system is effective and does not need to be changed. There are many health benefits to Australians who own fish and so this change may actually increase the medical expense budget for the Government.

I therefore urge you to investigate these changes, which appear to be totally unnecessary.

Yours sincerely,

Contact the following (a suggested draft follows)

The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP, Minister for Agriculture, B.Joyce.MP@aph.gov.au ;

The Hon. Bruce Billson, MP, Minister for Small Business, B.Billson.MP@aph.gov.au;

The Hon. Andrew Robb AO, MP, Minister for Trade and Investment, Andrew.Robb.MP@aph.gov.au;

The Hon. Ian Mcfarlane MP, Minister for Industry and Science, Ian.Macfarlane.MP@aph.gov.au;

The Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP, Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Joel.fitzgibbon.MP@aph.gov.au;

Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment,

Penny.Wong.MP@aph.gov.au;

The Hon. Julie Owens, MP, Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business,

Julie.Owens.MP@aph.gov.au.

You may also be able to post on the Facebook or Twitter pages of these politicians and, of course, you can contact your local Federal member.

Whilst the increased cost to the industry and the hobby is an important consideration, so, too, is the loss of life of thousands of fish which certainly deserve better.

PLEASE DO YOUR BIT TO HELP!