

MARCH NEWS

from **NIELSEN'S MARINE MATES**

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Hopefully the very hot weather is behind us – the chillers and air conditioners have been working hard to maintain the temperature in many aquariums. Sadly, the hot weather and storms have also brought blackouts and resulting loss of fish for many, so check out our article on battery operated air pumps. These can really be the difference between life and death of your fish during a prolonged blackout.

Changes in temperature can also be one of the many causes of white spot disease in both marine and fresh water tanks so our article on white spot diseases may be of interest.

As always, we have some good specials for the month including the beautiful Red Bay Snook cichlid. These 11cm sized fish are just starting to colour up and are worth a look. We hope to see you in store soon.

Until next month ... good fishkeeping.

BATTERY OPERATED AIR PUMPS DON'T BE CAUGHT OUT BY SUMMER STORMS!



With all the storms and subsequent power loss over the last few weeks many customers have reported fish losses, and in some cases complete

tank wipe outs, as a result.

At the risk of repeating ourselves, battery operated air pumps are available which can mean the difference between life and death of your fish if, or when, you lose power. Although fish will survive for short periods without any water movement in the tank, the hotter the temperature, the more heavily the tank is stocked and the longer the power outage, the higher the risk.



Take the stress out of storms and power cuts by having a battery-operated air pump handy. Ridiculous not to have one when you consider the value of your fish and corals. Get one for each aquarium. Also handy for transporting fish and inverts. Comes complete with airline and air stone for only **\$19.99**.

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SPECIALS IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE AVAILABLE ONLY FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH UNLESS SOONER SOLD OUT.

NEW! RED SEA REEFER 170

These beautifully finished set ups come in two styles – basic and deluxe. The basic is designed for the aquarist who would like to add his choice of lighting, chiller and ancillary filtration such as a return pump and protein skimmer and so comes with a 60cm Long x 50cm High x 50cm Wide, 165lt aquarium and sump (complete with an auto top up system) and a marine laminated cabinet, available in either black or white. This allows the hobbyist to create a truly customized setup. The deluxe version is the same but, in addition, comes with a 90W Hydra 26 light.

The Reefer water management system provides the base for excellent water quality.

Surface water from all sides of the aquarium is fed to the sump through the silent-flow downpipe. Removable surface



skimming combs surround the top of the centrally located overflow box that houses the downpipe, sump return pipe and the return outlet nozzle. In the event of a blockage in the downpipe, an additional emergency overflow pipe provides unrestricted free flow of aquarium water directly to the sump. Water enters the sump through a 225 micron mechanical pre filter and returns via a water cascade which helps eliminate bubbles from returning to the aquarium, especially

if a skimmer is used. The auto top up unit adds freshwater as necessary and keeps the pump compartment at a constant water level. All piping is ready to assemble and no gluing is required.

Red Sea Reefer 170 units are available as follows:

White (as pictured) Basic \$1499.00
Deluxe (with light) \$2490.00

Black Basic \$1450.00
Deluxe (with light) \$2350.00

CICHLID OF THE MONTH – RED BAY SNOOK

These cichlids come from the rivers and lakes of southern Mexico and northern Central America. In the wild they grow to around 50cm although in tanks they rarely reach more than 40cm. Because of this large size, Red Bay Snooks require a large tank with very heavy filtration.



Although they are not particularly aggressive (as cichlids go) they have a huge mouth which they can project forward to roughly a quarter of their body length and will suck in small fish and eat anything, really, that will fit in their mouth. Deep bodied fish, at least half the body length of the Snook are their best tank mates. In the aquarium they will feed on most large cichlid sticks or pellets and large frozen foods.

Currently we have 11cm size Red Bay Snooks – regularly \$39.00

THIS MONTH \$29.00.

MARINE WHITE SPOT DISEASE

Without doubt the most common disease in marine tanks is some form of white spot disease. Cryptocaryon (commonly white spot or marine ich) is possibly the easiest to recognize as it presents as pin-head sized white spots on the fish. These will usually first appear on the pectoral fins (those either side of the head of the fish) and can often be recognized, even before that, by looking at the behaviour of the fish. Fish which are scratching repeatedly against coral and rocks, particularly their gills, are exhibiting one of the signs of a possible white spot infection. Other symptoms include fish hanging at the water surface or sitting in the stream of water or air pumps or an increased breathing rate with pale gills. Cryptocaryon is a protozoan parasite which embeds itself under the skin of the fish and particularly attacks the gills. Its life cycle will vary in length of time according to the temperature and other factors. If there is no fish host present it will mostly die off, but some will also remain dormant in the tank waiting for the right time to re-emerge and attack the fish in the tank.

So, what is the right time? For fish to be infested with any type of white spot, their immunity needs to be low and the number one cause of this is STRESS.

What causes STRESS in fish? Obviously, they have not had a hard day at the office, but they may be having hard days in the aquarium. Changes in temperature commonly will bring on white spot. This can be either an upward or downward change and can occur when introducing new fish, during water changes and just from the weather, particularly if a chiller and/or heater is not in use in the tank.

Sudden changes in water quality, again common when introducing new fish are another cause of stress.

Being bullied by other fish is a major stress factor, again a real problem when introducing new fish.

All these things need to be constantly monitored to provide your tank inhabitants with the most stress-free environment possible.

So, what can you do if your fish succumb to white spot? Fortunately for invertebrates, they do not get white spot disease. However, many white spot cures include copper and it should be noted that this is toxic to invertebrates, including corals. Additionally, once a tank is treated with copper, traces of it may remain in the tank for a prolonged time and is quite hard to remove, so if this type of cure is used then it is best to remove fish to a quarantine tank for treatment.



The best cure we have used, which is safe for reef tanks, is MEDIC, which contains no copper. This can, of course, also be used in marine fish-only tanks. There are two dosages of Medic recommended and we generally use the higher dose as the lower one will often

stop the white spot from progressing but not cure it.

The other common white spot is Oodinium. This is harder to identify as the spots are much smaller and will mostly appear as cloudiness of the fins and eyes and greyish patches on the skin. Mortality is high with this disease and it is important to look for early signs such as scratching and treat immediately. Medic is also an effective treatment for this disease.

**FRESHWATER FISH
OF THE MONTH –
GOLD SUCKING CATFISH**

Sucking Catfish are great algae eaters and thus are a useful addition to the aquarium. The standard colour is brown which is possibly a little dull, but this gold colour version is a nice



highlight in the tank. For some unknown

reason the gold version seem to be very peaceful in comparison to the brown suckers which can be inclined to pester other fish.

Whilst Sucking Catfish eat algae, their food should be supplemented with sinking pellets and algae discs as they will rarely get enough nutrition from algae alone.

Though not a true cold water fish, Sucking Catfish will usually tolerate cooler temperatures than most tropical fish. Normally \$7.99

THIS MONTH ONLY \$6.50.

**FRESHWATER PLANT
OF THE MONTH –
CORKSCREW VALLISNERIA**

Commonly referred to by its shortened name, Corkscrew Val, this grass green, strappy leafed plant has an attractive spiral to the leaves and

does not grow as high as its larger cousins – thin val and giant val. It is usually planted as a mid ground plant although it can be used



as a background plant in smaller aquariums. This plant will appreciate some iron based fertilizer and adequate lighting. It is tough leafed and so is not an easy target for plant eating fish. The most important rule to maintain corkscrew val in a healthy condition is not to bury the crown (the lighter green area where the bottom of the plant meets the roots) in the gravel, as it will cause the plant to rot off and die. Individual leaves can be trimmed off with sharp scissors if they become damaged, without loss of the plant.

Regularly \$6.99

MARCH SPECIAL \$5.50.

**MARINE FISH OF THE MONTH
BANANA WRASSE**

The bright citrus yellow of this fish makes it a real standout in the marine aquarium.



Banana Wrasse tend to mind their own business in the tank so make a great community fish being compatible with most tank mates of suitable size. They are also compatible with other Banana Wrasse.

Almost all wrasse will bury in the substrate to rest and whilst Banana Wrasse will certainly do this at times, it is generally out and about and on display once it is settled in the tank. This fish is easy to feed on frozen marine foods, brine shrimp and dried foods. Usually \$45.00.

SPECIAL OFFER ONLY \$39.00.