small marine fish
care sheet

Small marine fish are favorites with marine aquarists and include a wide range of species.

facts

average adult size:	depends on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	omnivore
minimum aquarium size:	29+ gallons, Depending on species
water temperature:	72 to 78°F
specific gravity:	1.020 to 1.025

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small marine fish

includes dwarf angelfish, damsels, grammas, dotty-backs, gobies, blennies, fairy wrasse and hawkfish

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Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

diet

A well-balanced small Marine Fish diet consists of:
- Commercial algae sheets.
- Flakes, pellets, frozen or freeze-dried.
- Mysis and brine shrimp (frozen).

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your small marine fish:
- Feed small amounts 1 to 2 times daily, no more than fish will eat in 1 to 2 minutes.
- Some species require algae or algae sheets to be present at all times.
- Thaw frozen food before feeding.

housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium; provide rock and décor for hiding places and plenty of room for movement.
- **Stable water quality and parameters are critical to the health of aquatic life. If you are unsure of your water quality, Petco provides free water testing.**

normal behavior

- Some species are solitary and territorial.
- Tend to inhabit all levels of the aquarium.
- May eat coral polyps and nip at clam mantles.

habitat maintenance

- **Daily:** Check filter, water temperature, specific gravity and other equipment.
- **Weekly:** Check water quality at least once a week.
- **Monthly:** Change 10 to 25% of the total volume of water every 2 to 4 weeks, or as needed.

  Introduce new inhabitants to the aquarium gradually.

compatibility

- Check Petco's Marine Compatibility Care Sheet for more information regarding your specific species.

signs of a healthy fish

- Clear eyes
- Healthy appetite
- Bright, even coloring
- Fins completely intact and undamaged
- **Avoid overcrowded conditions, which are a major cause of stress and disease. Maintain good water quality with regular water changes and adequate filtration.**

red flags

- Loss of color or appetite
- Spots or fungus on body or mouth
- Erratic swimming
- Labored respiration
- Weight loss
- Cloudy eyes

If you notice any of these signs, test water quality and improve as necessary.

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Fin rot	Frayed or disintegrating fins; the base of the fins usually reddens.	Improve water quality; consult aquatic veterinarian for treatment.
Marine ich	Cysts on fins, gills and skin; labored respiration, excess skin mucus or pale skin.	Treat entire aquarium with a commercial parasite remedy and improve water quality; freshwater dips can dislodge the parasites.

shopping list for needed supplies

- ❑ Appropriately size aquarium
- ❑ Appropriate food, dry and frozen
- ❑ Décor
- ❑ Water conditioner
- ❑ Marine aquarium salt
- ❑ Filter
- ❑ Water test kit
- ❑ Full spectrum lighting
- ❑ Net
- ❑ Thermometer
- ❑ Protein skimmer (recommended)
- ❑ Marine substrate
- ❑ Heater
- ❑ Hydrometer
- ❑ Book about small marine fish

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on small marine fish and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all aquatic life are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as Atypical *Mycobacterium* and *Salmonella*, always wash your hands before and after handling your aquatic life or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for aquatic life and should consider not having aquatic life as a pet.

Go to **cdc.gov/healthypets** and **petco.com/caresheet** for more information about aquatic life and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the needs of other species. Go to **petco.com** for more information.