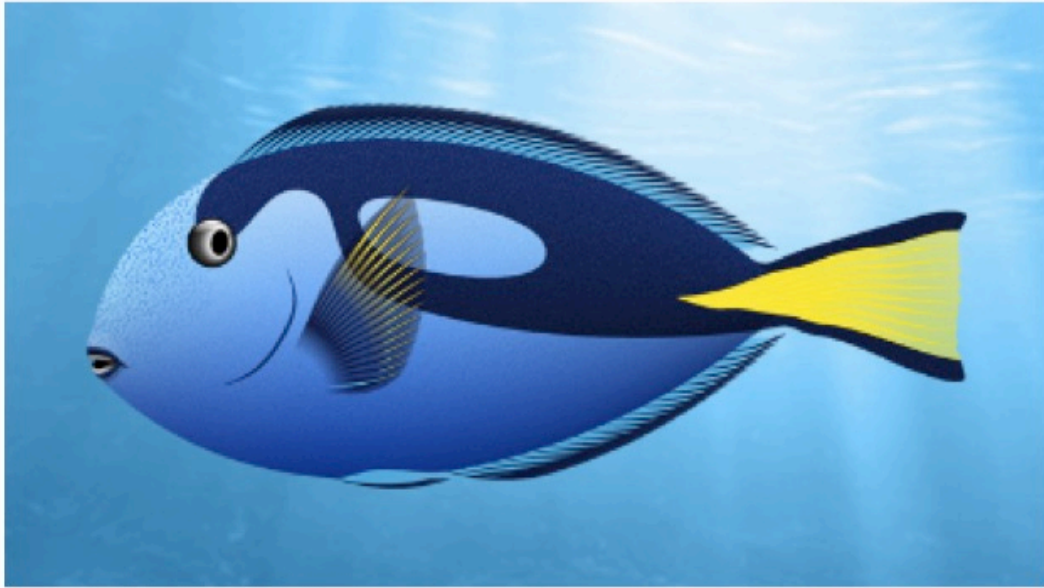


## All Eyes on Dory!



### SAIA campaign warns against overfishing of palette surgeonfish

The Sustainable Aquarium Industry Association (SAIA) has launched an extensive campaign to protect the palette surgeonfish on the occasion of the release of Disney's animated feature film *Finding Dory* on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016. *Finding Dory* features this species as the main character, and the Disney Corporation wants to build on its 2003 success with *Finding Nemo*, and even surpass it. SAIA warns, however: Should aquarists' demand for the palette surgeonfish rise similarly to that for clownfish in 2003, local populations are threatened by overfishing.

### Learning from Nemo

The blockbuster animated movie featuring the cute clownfish, Nemo, woke, especially among children, the desire to get a "Nemo" into the home aquarium. The demand for clownfish (*Amphiprion*) jumped by 25 percent<sup>1</sup> and was satisfied by increased captive-bred and wild-caught supply. However, few hobbyists could provide appropriate conditions to the species, so many animals did not survive long. In the movie, Nemo escapes life in captivity through a drain, because supposedly all drains would lead to the sea. Countless children tried to free Nemo in the same way and, because the presumption is false, led the clownfish gradually, albeit unintentionally, to certain death.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Oceans, Reefs & Aquariums (ORA) in: Prosek, James (2010): Beautiful Friendship. <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/01/clownfish/prosek-text>.

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finding\\_Nemo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finding_Nemo)

## **Palette surgeonfish not easy to breed**

With its large-scale educational campaign, the SAIA project (organized by ESAIA e.V.) wants to prevent palette surgeonfish (*Paracanthurus hepatus*) from suffering a similar or even worse fate. “Palette surgeonfish known in Indonesia as “Letter 6” are demanding animals that can be kept only by experienced aquarists and under optimal conditions,” states marine biologist and SAIA Project Manager Christiane Schmidt. “Unlike clownfish, palette surgeonfish can not be bred commercially. All fish sold would thus come from the wild. In the countries of origin, such as Indonesia, the stocks of aquarium fish are already depleted. This species could not sustain a Nemo-like onslaught.”

## **Movies, interviews, online workshops**

The yearlong SAIA campaign in advance of the Dory movie premiere is not directed against the film itself. Rather, it focuses on promoting the responsible, sustainable sourcing of aquarium fish beyond the beautiful, colourful world of cinema. The campaign kicks off with SAIA’s film *Searching for “Letter 6”*, documenting the laborious process of tracking down tropical fish and the long, grueling journey the animals make from the reef to the aquarium. Throughout the year, renowned scientists and aquarists will conduct online seminars and publish articles; breeders and dealers will have their say. The organization also stands ready to advise stakeholders from industry, government, and associations, as well as hobby aquarists and all others interested in this issue.

## **About ESAIA e.V.**

As the only organisation of its kind, ESAIA e.V. with its Sustainable Aquarium Industry Association project ([www.saia-online.eu](http://www.saia-online.eu)) works for sustainable and ethical trade in marine organisms. We are encouraging a shift toward a more ecologically sound and fair trade and engage all stakeholders—the industry as well as the hobbyist. The focus is on scientific, ecological, biological, and social aspects of marine aquarium keeping, trade, and fisheries. The Chairman and Project Manager of ESAIA e.V. is trained marine biologist Christiane Schmidt, MSc.

## **Contact**

ESAIA e.V.  
Christiane Schmidt  
Marquardsholz D10  
91161 Hilpoltstein, Germany  
ph: +49 (0)9174.78.36.798  
E-mail: [vorstand@esaia.net](mailto:vorstand@esaia.net)  
Internet: [www.saia-online.eu](http://www.saia-online.eu)