

SAIA Code of Best Practices

for Importers, Wholesalers, Retailers, Breeders and Culturists, Public Aquariums

General Introduction.

As members of the Sustainable Aquarium Industry Association (SAIA) we acknowledge the responsibility affiliated with the trade of live animals.

To all members the health and welfare of marine ornamentals is vital and we recognize the importance of implementing best and sustainable practices in handling, husbandry and transport as described in this code and continuous improvement as fundamental to the long term future and viability of the Marine Aquarium Trade.

By applying the practices described below we aim to achieve high standards of health and welfare of marine aquarium organisms to reduce mortality and losses in this trade and thus the pressure on the natural resources such as of coral reefs.

By implementing this code of best practices we contribute to a sustainable and ethical marine aquarium industry and trade.

All our activities shall follow applicable international, national and local regulation and law.

Acquisition Policies.

SAIA members shall:

1. Select their suppliers based on the results of test shipments and give preference to reliable suppliers of consistent good quality organisms from sustainable sources (e.g. official partners of SAIA, MAC Certified collection areas (once available)).
2. Encourage their suppliers to participate in sustaining the sources of the marine aquarium trade (e.g. by requesting net caught specimens, give feedback and transfer knowledge to support improvement in supply countries, etc.)
3. Work on the integration of a fair trade component to the prices paid to fishermen.
4. Order only organisms that are in demand.
5. Order only organisms that can be handled appropriately by the member.
6. Do not order animals that have a poor survival rate in captivity unless expertise is proven by the customer.
7. Do not order animals that grow too large for the average home aquarium unless right care taking can be proven by customer.
8. Do not order animals that are listed vulnerable or above by IUCN.

Introduction and Acclimation of Newly Purchased Animals.

SAIA members must:

1. Accept responsibility for any livestock ordered, even if delayed. After hours contact numbers should be made available to suppliers.
2. Unpack fish promptly, in dim light, and acclimate in a professional manner using best practice methods to be defined by SAIA. ¹
3. Give feedback and advice for improvement on the shipment quality to the supplier. Record DOA and DAA and pass numbers back.
4. Hold newly arrived fish separately from current stock away from the public eye. ²
5. Rest new fish for a minimum of 48 hours or until normal behaviour and feeding resumes in a quarantine area separated from previously held stock. ²
6. Dispose of used packing materials, properly and/or disinfect used materials if they are to be re-used.

Care Taking of Organisms in Stock

SAIA members must:

1. Have regard to the physical and behavioural needs of each animal. Provide:
 - Cover/decoration for animals to reduce stress whilst on display.
 - Hiding places (where applicable).
 - Suitable lighting for zooxanthellate species.
 - Suitable water flow for all species.
 - Suitable water conditions. ³
 - Separation of aggressive individuals or species.
 - Appropriate feeding.
2. Adjust all new fish to generally available hobby foods before allowing them to be sold. If this proves impossible then clearly label them as 'live food only' or distribute to a facility that can better hold them.
3. Monitor carefully the overall condition of organisms in stock, including behaviour and feeding patterns.

Dealing With and Treating Disease.

SAIA members must:

1. Have in place reasonable precautions to prevent disease outbreak and spread. Hospital/quarantine tanks should be available to treat animals away from the public. It should be possible for individual tanks on a display system to be isolated from the rest of the connected system.²
2. Isolate any fish showing signs of disease and/or distress.
3. Identify the problem and treat appropriately.
4. Utilize any drug with the guidance of a veterinarian where appropriate and in accordance with applicable law.
5. Dispose of water containing drugs with care including pre-treatment with carbon prior to discharge.
6. Feedback information on disease diagnosis to supplier.

Maintenance of Systems

SAIA members shall:

1. Adhere to an acceptable standard of water quality parameters.³
2. Regularly monitor water parameters.³
3. Keep tanks clean and disease-free.
4. Ensure proper and reliable functioning of technical equipment needed to maintain water quality.
5. An adequate quarantine system for new arrivals should be kept in good order, with separate hospital systems for fish undergoing treatment.²
6. Keep records detailing the number of animals coming into the shop along with associated mortality.
7. Keep records of mortalities, to track trends in origin, location, species and disease problems for future reference.

Sales

1. All fish should be in good health, i.e. eagerly eating, swimming normally and not be exhibiting external signs of disease. Before sale a careful visual examination of fish should be done, with any abnormalities noted and the fish removed immediately for treatment.
2. Any specimen with obvious abnormality(s), which could affect its quality of life, should not be offered for sale.
3. SAIA members shall not offer for sale any marine specimen with poor survival rates in captivity, and will not keep any such specimen unless for research.
4. Offer and personally promote captive raised specimens at every opportunity, rather than sell wild stock.
5. Make available the special dietary needs for the fish to the hobbyist (consumer) to purchase. (for retailers only)
6. Fish should be caught in a manner to reduce stress and avoid physical damage.
7. Ensure that the customer purchases fish that are suitable for their aquarium. (for retailers only)
8. Enable a full range of books to be available to your staff for reference and senior staff should be available for consultation to the staff and customer.
9. Both customers and staff should be informed of risks associated with venomous or harmful species, including first aid measures.
10. Discourage the keeping of oversized animals destined to either die in unsuitable tanks or to be offered on to a reluctant public aquarium industry.
11. Pass on to the customer information sheets detailing captive care of the animal purchased. (for retailers only)
12. Have a commitment to educating the customer.

Transportation of the organisms to the customers:

1. Organism selection for sale shall be according to instructions (e.g. ordered species, sizes, sex, etc.) by the buyer.
2. The organisms should be placed in appropriate containers (e.g. bags large enough for the fish to turn around) with sufficient oxygen, and water (e.g. rule of thumb: 2/3 oxygen, 1/3 water). Bags should be placed inside an opaque bag, polybox or other suitable container that excludes light. If necessary insulation should be used to protect from temperature variations. Attention should be paid to the length of transport time and weather conditions and packing adjusted accordingly.
3. Additional attention should be paid to the bagging of animals capable of puncturing bags (fishes, corals, and invertebrates), double-bagging and lining is recommended.
4. Venomous animals should be labelled clearly on outside of packaging bag
5. Supplements to the transport water, like chemicals and drugs, shall only be used in agreement with the buyer and according to applicable law.
6. In case of third party transport the transport containers shall be carefully labelled. The label shall at the minimum indicate the live animal content, suitable temperature ranges, Consignor and Consignee name and address.
A packing list or invoice and all by law/regulation required documentation (e.g. CITES export and import permits, health certificates) shall accompany the shipment.
7. Instructions for proper acclimation for the organisms upon arrival at its new home shall be given to the customers. ^{1&2}(for retailers only)
8. After all livestock sales, advice and support shall remain available to the customer.

The customer should be given accurate instructions for the care and welfare of the animal purchased. (for retailers only)

Education & Training

To continually improve standards throughout the entire trade, SAIA members must:

1. Demonstrate a practical knowledge regarding the livestock that they sell.
2. Demonstrate a commitment to educating sales staff.
3. Have staff dealing with marine animals undertake the SAIA Qualification of Marine Knowledge in order to provide the information the consumer needs to maintain a healthy aquarium and to reach a standard of consistency within the hobby and industry.
4. Put an end to stocking animals that are doomed as a result of being unsuitable for captive maintenance.
5. Discourage the stocking of animals that may be endangered in the wild owing to small population size or inability to reproduce quickly.
6. Whenever possible, to know something of the provenance of imported animals and to give feedback concerning any problems back along the chain.
7. Ensure informative and correct labelling of tanks to educate the visitor. The label should indicate at the species level at the minimum:

Name (scientific and common)

Origin

Biology*

Ecology*

Behaviour*

Vulnerability*

(*for public aquariums only)

For full list of SAIA technical documents and information sheets see: “*Catalogue of SAIA Technical Documents*”

The technical documents are thought to complement the Code of Best Practices and should be read in conjunction.

- 1) SAIA Recommended Acclimation Procedures
- 2) SAIA Quarantine Procedures
- 3) SAIA Water Quality Parameters