Angelfish
Care Sheet

Graceful
Possibly the most recognized freshwater fish in the aquarium hobby, angelfish belong to the family Cichlidae. Admired for their graceful swimming behavior, angelfish make stunning additions to large community aquariums. Wild caught angelfish are rare in the aquarium hobby, with most fish for sale being captive raised. Wild angelfish are silver with black vertical stripes, however, through selective breeding, many color patterns as well as long-finned varieties, known as "veiltails" have been developed over the years. Most angelfish sold in the hobby are *Pterophyllum scalare*, however, *P. altum* is occasionally available. A third species, *P. leopoldi*, the smallest and most aggressive species of angelfish, is almost never seen.

Natural Habitat
Angelfish are native to a large area of tropical South America, including much of the Amazon River system. In their natural habitat, they are found almost exclusively in quiet, slow moving water. In the wild they prefer dimly lit areas, under overhanging vegetation or among trees that have fallen into the river.

Water Requirements
Captive raised angelfish accept a wide range of water conditions, although they prefer slightly warmer water. pH should be between 6.8 and 7.8, with hardness between 3° and 8° dKH (54 to 145 ppm). Temperature is best kept between 78° and 84° F. If the aquarium is kept in rooms below 78°, use an Aqueon® aquarium heater to increase the heat. Maintain good filtration and change 10% to 25% of the water at least once or twice a month using an Aqueon® Aquarium Water Changer or Siphon Vacuum Gravel Cleaner. Don’t forget to treat tap water with Aqueon® Water Conditioner before refilling your tank!

Housing
Angelfish grow to be quite large, and will require an aquarium of 55 gallons or larger when full grown. Tall aquariums are best, to accommodate their body shape. Current should be gentle, and décor should include large broadleaf plants and driftwood that is arranged vertically to simulate downed branches and trees. A few floating plants can also be added to provide shaded areas and cover. Substrate should be fine to medium grade and smooth surfaced, as angelfish like to forage along the bottom for food.

Behavior/Compatibility
While angelfish are generally peaceful fish, they are cichlids and can be aggressive toward one another, especially when attempting to pair off and spawn. Also, they will not hesitate to eat smaller fish. This does not mean they are aggressive, as many aquarists believe; like most fish, they are opportunistic and will eat anything that fits into their mouth. Suitable aquarium mates include larger tetras and rasboras, gouramis, peaceful barbs, rainbowfish, corydoras and other medium-sized catfish. Angelfish can also be kept with discus in larger aquariums, if the temperature is maintained above 82° F.

Feeding
Angelfish will feed at the surface or mid-water, however, in nature they often forage along the bottom looking for worms and small crustaceans. They are omnivores and will thrive on Aqueon® Tropical Flakes, Color Flakes, Tropical Granules and Shrimp Pellets. Frozen and live foods can also be fed as treats or to help induce spawning. For best results, rotate their diet daily and feed only what they can consume in 2 to 3 minutes, once or twice a day.

Breeding Level – Intermediate
Adult angelfish will pair off and spawn readily. They clean a flat vertical surface on which to lay their eggs and chase other fish away. Spawning occurs with the female laying rows of eggs on the prepared surface, and the male following, fertilizing them. Unfortunately, most captive angelfish have lost the rearing instinct and usually eat their own eggs. Breeders induce pairs to spawn on vertical pieces of slate or other material, which they remove to hatchery aquariums for raising.