

Angelfish

Care Guide

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.

An Angelfish's 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 for Angelfish

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. Maintain good filtration and perform water changes of 10% weekly or 25% every other week 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 Recommendations for Angelfish

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. Water flow 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, smooth surfaced gravel, as angelfish like to forage along the bottom for food.

Behavior/Compatibility for Angelfish

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 tank 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.

What do Angelfish Eat?

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.

Angelfish 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 or fry. Breeders induce pairs to spawn on vertical pieces of slate or other material, which they remove to hatchery aquariums for raising.