

# butterfly fish

## care sheet



Some butterfly fish have a dark-striped band that runs through the eye on both sides of their face. Many butterfly fish are finicky eaters and may only choose to eat coral polyps. Most commonly found in tropical Pacific and Indian oceans. Recommended for experienced aquarists.

### facts

includes:	auriga, heniochus, fourspot and raccoon
average adult size:	3 to 9 inches across, depending on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	omnivore
minimum aquarium size:	50+ gallons, depending on species
water temperature:	75 to 82° F
specific gravity:	1.020 to 1.025



*Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, refer to the Sources section or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.*

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

## diet

A well-balanced butterfly fish diet consists of:

- Pellets: freeze-dried or frozen.
- Vary diet to ensure proper nutritional balance.
- Some butterfly fish may reject all food sources with the exception of live coral.

## feeding

Things to remember when feeding your butterfly fish:

- Depending on species and size, feed small amounts 2 to 3 times daily, no more than fish will eat in 1 to 2 minutes.
- Thaw frozen food before feeding.

## housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium; provide plenty of substrate, rocks and hiding places. Live rock provides a natural food source for aquatic life while also enhancing biological filtration.
- 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.

## characteristics

- Some are known for the dark-colored vertical stripe that runs through their eyes.
- Tend to swim in pairs or small schools.
- Shy and peaceful; usually inhabit the middle and lower part of the tank.

## habitat maintenance

**Daily:** Check filter, water temperature, specific gravity and other equipment.

**Weekly:** Check water quality at least twice 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

- Can be aggressive with other butterfly fish or similar-looking fish.
- Depending on the species, avoid coral reef tanks since they like to eat coral.

## signs of a healthy fish

- Clear eyes
  - Healthy appetite
  - Fins completely intact and undamaged
  - Bright, even coloring
- 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
- 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 your aquatic veterinarian for treatment.
Fungus	White cottony growth and/or discoloration of the eyes.	Quarantine fish; use a commercial antifungal remedy as directed.
Bacterial infections	Cloudy eyes, open sores, and/or reddening of the skin.	Improve water quality; use a commercial antibacterial remedy as directed.
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 sized 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 butterfly fish

## sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on butterfly 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](http://cdc.gov/healthypets) and [petco.com/caresheet](http://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](http://petco.com) for more information.

