

cardinalfish

care sheet



Cardinalfish have two distinct dorsal fins and can be found around the world. These slow-moving nocturnal fish make excellent additions to large community aquariums. Most species are recommended for beginning marine aquarists.

facts

average adult size:	2½ to 5+ inches long, depending on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	omnivore
minimum aquarium size:	5+ gallons, depending on species
water temperature:	72 to 78°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.

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includes several cardinalfish species

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diet

A well-balanced cardinalfish diet consists of:

- Flakes, pellets, and frozen food.
- Vary diet to ensure proper nutritional balance.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your cardinalfish:

- 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 plants, rock and décor for hiding places and plenty of room for movement.
- **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.**

normal behavior

- Peaceful, some species can be kept in small groups; different species should not be mixed.
- Although nocturnal (active at night), cardinalfish can become used to daytime feeding and activity.
- May become aggressive toward individuals of the same species; should be kept in groups of five or more.

habitat

maintenance

- **Daily:** Check filter, water temperature, specific gravity and other equipment.
- **Weekly:** Check water quality at least once 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

- Compatible with dwarf angelfish, blennies, clownfish and gobies. Can be compatible with large angelfish, damselfish, groupers, psuedochromis, tangs and wrasses.
- Check Petco's Marine Compatibility Care Sheet for more information regarding your specific species.
- May become aggressive in an overcrowded aquarium.

signs of a healthy fish

- Clear eyes
- Eats vigorously
- Fins completely intact and undamaged

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
- Listlessness
- Labored respiration
- Weight loss
- Cloudy eyes
- Erratic swimming
- Frayed fins

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.
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.

If you notice any of these signs, check water quality and improve as necessary.

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 cardinalfish

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on cardinalfish 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 and petco.com/caresheet for more information about aquatic life and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the care needs of other species. Go to petco.com for more information.

