

clownfish and damselfish care sheet



Clownfish and damselfish are active and colorful marine fish. Clownfish are well-known for living within the stinging tentacles of a host anemone. Damselfish are a close relative of clownfish. Recommended for beginning marine aquarists.

facts

average adult size:	2 to 12+ inches long, depending on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	omnivore
minimum aquarium size:	29+ 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.

diet

A well-balanced clownfish and damsel diet consists of:

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

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your clownfish or damsel:

- Depending on species and size, feed small amounts 1 to 2 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.
- If possible, keep clownfish with a companion anemone.
- **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

- Can be very territorial toward same species; Damsels become more territorial as they age.
- Damsels and clownfish like to hide in or near a cave, coral or crevice, darting out to defend territory or capture food.
- Damsels inhabit all levels of the aquarium; clownfish remain in the middle and lower levels.
- Petco only carries tank-raised clownfish, which are hardier and more colorful than those caught in the wild.

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 and large angelfish, blennies, gobies, hawkfish, pseudochromis, puffers, tangs and some wrasse. Can be compatible with some cardinalfish.
- Check Petco's Marine Compatibility Care Sheet for more information regarding your specific species.

signs of a healthy fish

- Clear eyes
- Eats vigorously
- Active swimming
- 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
- Cloudy eyes
- Weight loss
- Erratic swimming

If you notice any of these signs, check 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.
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 clownfish and damsels

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on clownfish and damsels 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.

