

# freshwater shark care sheet



The generic term “shark” is applied to many unrelated fish with a similar body shape found all over the world. Freshwater sharks are not true sharks, but are typically catfish or relatives of carp. Freshwater sharks add personality and character to an aquarium.

## facts

includes:	rainbow, redbtail, bala, apollo, silvertip and black shark species
average adult size:	5 to 13+ inches long, depending on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	omnivore
minimum aquarium size:	20+ gallons, depending on species
water temperature:	72 to 82°F



*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.

# freshwater shark

rainbow, redbtail, bala, apollo, silvertip and black shark species

## care sheet



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### diet

A well-balanced freshwater shark diet consists of:

- Flakes, pellets or freeze-dried foods.
- Frozen mysis or brine shrimp.

### feeding

Things to remember when feeding your freshwater shark:

- 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 plenty of space for swimming and hiding places.
- 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 species, such as rainbows and redbtails, are territorial and should be kept individually in a community tank.
- Some species, such as balas, should be kept in schools of at least three sharks of the same species.

### habitat maintenance

**Daily:** Check filter, water temperature 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

- Generally, sharks are compatible with like-sized fish of a similar temperament (community with community, semi-aggressive with semi-aggressive).
- Check Petco's Freshwater Compatibility Care Sheet for species specific information.

### signs of a healthy shark

- Clear eyes
- Eats vigorously
- Active swimming
- Good color

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
- Bloating
- Frayed fins

*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.
Ich	White spots appear on fins and body; fish rubs against hard objects or swims awkwardly. Rapid respiration.	Quarantine fish immediately; use a commercial ich remedy as directed.

## shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized aquarium
- Appropriate food, dry and frozen
- Décor
- Water conditioner
- Filter
- Water test kit
- Full spectrum lighting
- Net
- Thermometer
- Freshwater substrate
- Heater
- Airline tubing
- Airstone
- Air pump
- Book about freshwater sharks

## sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on freshwater sharks 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.

