



All About the

Angelfish

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The Angelfish

About the Angelfish

Angelfish (*Pterophyllum scalare*) are cichlids; that is, one of various tropical and subtropical freshwater fish of the family Cichlidae. They are a freshwater flat-fish breed that originated in the Amazon River and still lives in the bed growth of that body. Because they are such popular aquarium fish, they are found in tanks all over the world. They can be a little delicate when small, but they grow fast and get stronger as they grow. They are relatively easy to breed.

Average Size	6-12 inches	Characteristics	Round, silver dollar shaped
Average Lifespan	Up to 10-12 years	Special Needs	No special needs
Coloring	Many colors	Health Concerns	Can suffer from typical fish problems: parasites and skin diseases.



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Angelfish Characteristics

Angelfish are lively and pretty, but they do have a dark side. Angelfish will stalk and eat smaller fish, so be careful what you put with them in a community tank. Single angels do well, as do groups of three or more. Because they can be aggressive fish, you want to deny them the opportunity to bully and damage other fish. However, if managed properly, they are a pleasure to own – attractive, personable, and responsive to anyone approaching their tank.

Angelfish can grow to up to 6 inches long, with a height of as much as 12 inches. They can live as long as 10 to 12 years and fish in cooler tanks (mid-70s F) seem to live longer. If their tank is too cold, they will have a depressed immune system and be more vulnerable to the diseases discussed below.

There are a number of ways to categorize angelfish, including “veil tail” and “regular tail” angelfish, and those types further break down into “regular” and “pearl scale” fish, with the latter having scales that look rough or a little bumpy. All angels come in a variety of different colors.

Selecting Your Angelfish

Do some research before selecting your Angelfish. Obviously, the fish should be responsive and handsome, with no sign of bloat. Other than that, appearances vary a lot.

A Few Words About Pet Stores

Angelfish from pet stores can be a fine choice. If you wish to institute a breeding program, pet store Angelfish can work quite well.



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A Few Words About Breeders

Fish from breeders are usually more expensive, but you will have a wider variety to choose from, and can even select breeding pairs. Because there are so many variants, you may be able to find precisely the Angelfish you seek by working with a reputable breeder.

How to Choose your Angelfish

Angelfish are relatively hearty if bred and cared for correctly. If you are buying your fish from a store, the aquariums should be clean and free of dead fish. Most stores have a quarantine tank (or several) for sick fish. If they don't, it's worth asking about.

Unfortunately, choosing healthy fish can be a matter of guesswork. Signs of unhealthy fish are obvious, however:

- Fin and skin discolorations
- Evidence of injury
- Parasites attached to the fish's skin
- Lethargy or lying on bottom of aquarium
- Scraping body on rocks
- Irregular gill movements

Lack of appetite is hard to determine without seeing the fish eat – ask if your salesperson can give your potential fish a little food. They should be perky and notice the food immediately, because Angelfish simply love to eat. They will eat constantly, whenever food is available. Observe your potential fish; they should interact with others.

Breeding, Care and Feeding

Water quality and temperature is vital to breeding Angelfish – they need a cooling period, followed by a slow warming to trigger breeding. Keep in mind that some fancy Angelfish cannot be bred naturally, so the following method will not work for these fish.

Isolate a breeding pair that is at least 3 years old in their own 20-gallon love nest. The tank should also be planted so the eggs will have something to stick to when they are laid. Keep in mind that you will be moving the eggs (and what they're stuck to).

The male will tirelessly chase the female around the tank. He may even damage her slightly. The female will, upon exhaustion, release her eggs (hundreds or thousands) all over the tank. Many will stick to the greenery. The male will spray milt—a milky substance—over the eggs. This courtship will continue for about 3 to 4 hours.

Remove the eggs to the small offspring tank you prepared. At the lower end of the temperature range, the eggs will incubate in about 7 days, down to 5 days for the warmer tank. Watch the eggs for any signs of fungus, and remove those promptly. Healthy eggs will be transparent; after about 4 days, you will see the little black dots in the eggs – future Angelfish! Once they hatch, they will feed off the egg yolks for a couple of days.

Obviously there is more to breeding than this. If you plan on breeding your Angelfish, it would be wise to invest in a book on Angelfish breeding.



You'll need these basics before your Angelfish comes home. Click the items below to go to CheapPetStore.com to find the best prices for online pet supplies.

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Angelfish Fry

Angelfish are usually compared to coins because they are round. Juvenile angelfish ("fry") aren't considered young adults until they are about the size of a half-dollar.

Always use a sponge-type filter with angel fry, so they aren't damaged or killed by the filtration system. Angel fry must always be kept in a bare-bottom, scrupulously clean tank.

Newly-hatched fry need a live diet of freshly-hatched baby brine shrimp. As they age, they can be transitioned to an increasing proportion of flake food. Angel fry need to be fed 3 to 4 times a day.

The Angelfish Adult

Angelfish thrive at a variety of temperatures – from 72°F to as high as 95°F. At the lower end, angels will breed less frequently and show less aggression, but may have a less stable immune system. Angelfish are generally very healthy, so this is not as much of a concern with this hearty fish. Angelfish are omnivores, and do well on a diet of flakes plus some other exciting things. Select a basic flake as the primary food, and supplement its diet with live or frozen brine shrimp, black worms, chopped earthworms, and guppy fry. Several sources recommend preparing beef heart by blending it, freezing the result, and cutting it into cubes for your angelfish. There are various recipes available for this preparation. In all cases, you should be careful that you are not introducing disease with live or frozen food – know your supplier. Adult angelfish eat 2 to 3 times per day – more in warmer tanks, less frequently in cooler tanks.

Medical Considerations

Although angelfish are perhaps the most popular home aquarium fish and are quite hardy, they can suffer from quite a few diseases. If your Angelfish suddenly changes his behavior for any length of time or if his skin, eyes, mouth, gills or fins look different, you might want to do some research to find out what is ailing your fish. Some common ailments are Ick (a parasite), anchor worms, and myriad of skin diseases. Most of these diseases and parasites can be treated with medications you can buy at any pet supply store.

Necessary Items

Fish need a home and food. The home can be spruced up with a variety of décor. Set up their home several days before bringing your fish home. Your fish will need a tank, wider than taller if possible. A breeding pair needs 25 gallons and a set of 6 angels needs 50 gallons. You will also need a stand for the tank, a hood with a light and perhaps most importantly, a filtration system. Corner filters or sponge filters are recommended – sponge filters only for breeding tanks. You can also decorate your tank however you like. There are huge selections of various products you can choose from. Tank decorations, gravel, rocks, wood, marbles, live plants, and synthetic plants are just some of the items you can use.



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