

Surviving The Heat

We are not the only ones who suffer in hot weather. Our fish suffer too, especially in a prolonged heat wave. Coldwater fish can start to stress in temperatures over 26°C and tropical fish at temperatures of 28°C-30°C (depending on species). As the aquarium water heats up it holds less oxygen and some fish will suffer more than others, gasping at the surface or sitting on the bottom. Other stress symptoms may include fungal and bacterial infections such as fin rot, slime problems and cloudy eye. There are a number of steps you can take to protect your fish in the hot weather.

Be Prepared

- Keep plastic bottles of frozen water in the freezer.
- Make sure you have a fan available.
- Keep an air pump and extra air stones on hand.

Decreasing Water Temperature

It is unnecessary to turn your heater off or unplug it! Your heater is thermostatically controlled and should not come on while your tank is too warm. If you are unable (or forget) to plug the heater back in when a cool change inevitably arrives, you run the risk of your tank losing too much heat and further stressing your fish.

- Place a fan so that it is blowing directly over the surface of the water.
- Float bottles of frozen water in the tank and replace when thawed. This method prevents adding untreated tap water to the aquarium. You will need to keep plenty of frozen bottles on hand, larger bottles being more effective than smaller ones.
- Perform a small (10%) water change daily. This will only be temporarily effective and should not be done more than once a day as it will simply further stress the fish.
- Open or remove hoods and cover glasses to disperse heat.
- Turn aquarium lights off.

NOTE: With light, plants produce oxygen which is essential for healthy fish. Without light they reverse this process and produce carbon dioxide. If you turn the lights off and your aquarium receives no ambient light (is in complete darkness), the plants will be using valuable oxygen that your fish need. In this case, you may wish to remove live plants from the aquarium and store in a bucket of tank water in a cool place until you are able to turn lights back on and return plants to aquarium.

Increasing Oxygenation Levels

- Increase water circulation by increasing water flow through pump outputs and direct outlets onto the surface of the water to create a rippling effect (thereby increasing oxygenation levels).
- Add large airstones.

Monitoring Fish Health

- Feed fish lightly during the hot period.
- Test your water for pH, ammonia, nitrite & nitrate daily (see B.A. Biological Basics care sheet). Add a good quality bacterial filtration supplement to help prevent ammonia and nitrite levels rising due to fish stress. 'Seachem Stability' is ideal and should be added daily for seven days.
- To help protect fish against stress reactions add a high quality stress coat. Seachem 'Stress Guard' is ideal and should be added daily until water temperature and test results are all within acceptable ranges.
- Monitor your fish closely for the next week or so for signs of stress related disease such as white spot, fungus and fin rot.

Feel free to contact the friendly staff at Boronia Aquarium for further information

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