

# Amphiprion omanensis

-Article by Dr. Hameed Al-Alawi

## Identification

Amphiprion omanensis, also called the Oman Clownfish or Anemonefish, is one of the largest clownfish species. The Oman is a deep bodied clownfish from the Clarkii Complex, but it has a very distinct look. These fish typically have a stout, rounded body and a forked tail. This forked tail helps them to swim faster than other anemonefish with rounded tails. But its distinctive tail fin has a strongly forked, lyre shape with filaments streaming from the ends of the tailfin's lobes. When fully grown, the Oman can be just over about 6 inches / 15 cm in length. Males grow smaller than the females. Similar to others in the Clarkii complex, the Oman Clownfish can live at least 15 years in captivity with proper aquarium care.

Juveniles are light brown though yellow ventrally with two white bars on the sides. Adults have an orange to orange-brown, or red-brown body with a head that is paler and almost tan colored. There are two vertical white bars located on each side, one just behind the eye and the other on the mid-body. These bars are very narrow, which is quite distinct from other clownfish. As adults, the bar at the head area usually does not reach across the nape, nor does it extend all the way down to the very bottom of the chin, as seen in other clownfish.

The second stripe is narrower than the first and typically does not extend into the belly area in adults. Sometimes, the mid-body bar will fade away completely or until only a slight pigment remains near the dorsal fin. The tail fin is typically white while the pelvic and anal fins are always dark brown to black. There is also one color variation called the Brick Red Oman, which has a "brick red color" on the body and on the tail fin.



## Distribution / Background

Amphiprion omanensis was the newest clownfish to be scientifically described by Allen and Mee in 1991. They have a limited distribution as they are only found in the Arabian Sea off the coast of Oman at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Their limited dispersal may also be due to their very short larval stage. The Omani Anemonefish very rarely enters the aquarium trade. These fish are very hard to acquire since collection from the Oman Peninsula is very restricted. Consequently this is a very rare and expensive clownfish to come across in the aquarium trade. They are not evaluated or listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

They occur in small aggregations on inshore reefs at shallower depths between 6-27 feet / 2-9 m. Adult clownfish pairs commonly host in these anemones: Heteractis crispa, Heteractis magnifica, and Entacmaea quadricolor.

Juveniles can be found alone, or sharing an anemone with an adult pair. Like others in the Clarkii complex, these juvenile fish are less dependent on a host anemone. In nature, the sub adult Amphiprion omanensis will often prefer to hide in a reef crevice instead of a host sea anemone already occupied by adults.

The Amphiprion clarkii's forked tail enables it to swim faster than other types of clownfish. This clownfish is more visually distinctive because its caudal fin has a strongly forked lyre shape with filaments streaming from the ends of the tailfin's lobes. This fin is typically white while the pelvic and anal fins are always dark brown. ♦

---- Symbiosis, Breeding & Aquarium Care... continued on next page.