

Marine Aquarist™ Free

DEDICATED TO SUCCESSFUL SALTWATER AQUARIUM KEEPING

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One of the most colorful and easiest to keep shrimps known is the Whitebanded Cleaner Shrimp. This exotic inhabitant of the tropical Western Indo Pacific and Indian Ocean is readily available and can be found in most aquarium shops.

The scientific name for the Whitebanded Cleaner Shrimp is *Hippolyssmata grabhami*. Adults can reach a length of approximately 6cm (about 2-1/2 inches).

In nature the white banded cleaner shrimp can be collected at a depth of about 15 feet using snorkels and goggles. However, most of the shrimps have their territories at about 50 to 65 feet. Collecting in deeper water requires the use of diving equipment and air tanks.

The word "cleaner shrimp" describes the role *H. grabhami* plays in the natural environment. Groups of 20+ can form a "cleaning station" in an area of 2 to 3 meters (6 to 9 feet). Various sizes of different types of fish come to visit this cleaning station to have naturally occurring parasites removed by the cleaner shrimp. Fish literally stop swimming and most of the time open their gills so the cleaner shrimp can clean and groom them. This same activity can be observed in the marine aquarium.

Like all shrimps, the *Hippolyssmata* have five pairs of thin legs, with claws as the first pair. They appear to walk about resembling a man on stilts. If necessary they can move rapidly to avoid capture by predators with the use of their entire body and fast movable legs. A fan-shaped tail can assist in movement and for use as a possible rudder.

In captivity, the cleaner shrimp is ideal for display in reef type aquariums. It likes to be housed with live rock, corals, alga, sponge and lives well with many other invertebrates available to reef keepers.



The Whitebanded Cleaner Shrimp, *Hippolyssmata grabhami*.

In mixed or fish only marine aquariums, the cleaner can be added without too many concerns. Most fish will allow themselves to be picked clean of any parasites, just like in nature. Keep in mind however, lion fish, groupers and trigger fish are some types of fish that could see the white banded cleaner shrimp as a tasty snack!

Acclimating the whitebanded cleaner shrimp into your marine aquarium should be a slow and considerate process for your new pet. I recommend the following procedure to introduce this and all marine fish and invertebrates into your aquarium.

- 1) Be sure the quality of your aquarium water is at its best.
- 2) Turn off your aquarium light(s).
- 3) Float the bag with your new pet on the surface of your aquarium water for 20 - 30 minutes.
- 4) Discard 1/3rd. of the delivery water.
- 5) Acclimation can be done in the delivery bag if large enough or a clean plastic bucket.
- 6) Slowly add water from your aquarium into the delivery water with shrimp.
- 7) In 30 to 45 minutes have about 75% aquarium water into your acclimation.
- 8) Add Hydro-Safe™ to your acclimation solution. This will reduce the possibility of further stress or shock to your new pet that may occur when being introduced into its new home. Hydro-Safe™ has proven valuable in acclimation of most shrimps, invertebrates and marine fish.
- 9) Net out your new pet and gently add it to your marine aquarium. Discard all acclimation water. In a few hours resume your regular lighting schedule.

The whitebanded cleaner shrimp will accept a variety of flake and frozen foods and can live for years in captivity with the proper care. Enjoy your whitebanded cleaner shrimp and your marine aquarium. ♦

MARINE AQUARIST™ was created for the benefit of amateur and professional marine aquarists. Topics may include: water chemistry, system design, filtration, lighting, nutrition, mariculture, aquatic and chemical science, collecting, shipping, importing, selling and keeping many forms of marinelife in captivity.

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