

International Report: RED SEA

MARINE AQUARIST™ Mid East correspondent is Dr. Hameed Al Alawi, Ph.D. in Marine Biology. Dr. Al Alawi is the creator and director of Bahrain Waterlife Centre. Bahrain Waterlife Centre is considered to be the world's foremost collector and supplier of marine fish and reef invertebrates from the Red Sea, Arab Sea, and Arabian Gulf areas. P.O. Box 2044, Manama, Bahrain. Fax + 973-732770.

Bahrain Waterlife Centre is a collecting, holding and shipping facility that has been in operation since 1983. Bahrain Waterlife Centre has three collecting stations. They are located in Yemen in the Red Sea, Aden in the Arab Sea, and Bahrain in the Arabian Gulf.



Michael Del Prete and Dr. Al Alawi at Bahrain Waterlife Centre

The holding facility at Bahrain Waterlife Centre is about 9000 US gallons. There are two separate systems with over 260 tanks. Each system utilizes wet bio-towers with BI OX® media, air strippers, protein skimmers, and bio-filters. Dissolved oxygen is kept at saturation. The pH is kept at 8.1-8.3. All marine life is acclimatized to a specific gravity of 1.024.

Each collecting station is equipped with protein skimmers, UV, bio-filters, wet bio-towers with BI OX® media. Although each collecting site is located on the sea, each facility uses 100% Marine Environment® dual phase formula™ for holding, maintaining, and shipping. Hydro-Safe™ is used in all shipping water.

RED SEA: A long narrow body of water with limited areas of continental shelf, the Red Sea extends in a general Northwest - Southeast direction for about 2000 Km (about 1250 miles) and has a maximum width of 352 Km (about 220 miles) in the vicinity of Gizan which is the border of Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The area of the Red Sea is about 438000 Sq. Km. (about 273750 Sq. miles). The depth of the Red Sea averages 500 Meters (about 1575 feet) though in certain places it may exceed 2500 Meters (about 7850 feet).



The Red Sea is one of the hottest and most saline seas on earth. It takes its name from the seasonal abundance of billions of minute algae, *Trichodesium erythraceum*. *T. erythraceum* live near the surface of the sea. They contain reddish or brown pigments which discolor at the surface of the water in some areas, at certain times.

Some of the fish collected from the Red Sea are: Asfur, Maculosus, Koran and Emperor angelfish, Semilarvartus, Larvartus, Austiacus, Fasciatus, Trifascialis, Paucifasciatus and Heniochus intermedius butterfly fish, Bicinctus clownfish and Radiata lionfish. The collecting holding station in Yemen is about 5000 US gallons.

ARAB SEA: The Arab Sea is the rocky coast of Oman, Aden up to the Yemen border. It is part of the Indian Ocean and has a constant promise of discovering new places. The relative remoteness of sections of the rocky coasts and islands has helped to preserve their natural beauty and wildlife. Consequently, these areas offer dramatic scenery of huge growths of corals and algae with plentiful marine fauna and flora.

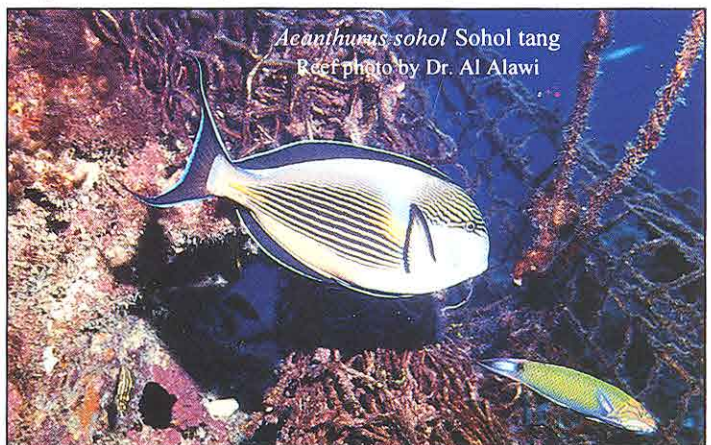
Some of the fish collected from the Arab Sea are: Emperor and Maculosus angelfish, Purple and Sohal tangs, Clarki clownfish, Assasi triggerfish and Orange dotty back. The collecting holding station in Aden is about 3000 US gallons.

ARABIAN GULF: The Arabian Gulf forms a shallow arm of the Arabian Sea between Iran and Arabia. It is linked with the Arab Sea by the strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman. It is a semi-enclosed sea with an axis length of some 1000 Km (about 625 miles). The Arabian Gulf varies in width from 200-300 Km (about 125-187 miles) and an area of about 226000 Sq. Km. (about 41250 Sq. miles).

The Arabian Gulf has an average depth of only 35 Meters (about 110 feet) with a maximum depth of 100 Meters (about 315 feet) near the narrow entrance at the strait of Hormuz in the Gulf of Oman.

The greatest coral development is found around the low sandy islands which extends Northwards. In the deeper water, below 20 meters the bottom varies from coarse gravel and shell to extremely fine clay and mud. The later becoming dominant the further Eastward and therefore, deeper one goes.

Some of the fish collected from the Arabian Gulf are: Maculosus and Emperor angelfish, Nigropunctatus, Melapterus butterfly fish, Purple and Sohal tangs, and Pseudochromis persicus.



Fishes are collected by means of scuba diving up to a depth of 20 meters (about 65 feet). All fish are hand caught by net, sometimes with two divers, without using any drugs. Extra large or breeder size fish are not taken unless requested by a public aquarium so they can procreate in the wild. Fish are gradually brought to the surface to avoid potential swim bladder damage. Each fish is carefully examined then bagged individually with 100% oxygen on the collecting boat.

Freshly collected specimens are placed in tanks according to their territorial and individual requirements, thus avoiding fighting, damage and stress. All fish are fed a variety of foods, including a rich natural diet of specially prepared crab, prawns, and brine shrimp.

All marine life collected in the Red Sea and Arab Sea are acclimatized at the collecting site, then shipped to Bahrain for further acclimatization and final shipment to foreign lands. All marine life is held for a minimum of 7 days in 100% Marine Environment® dual phase formula™ before being shipped internationally. Hydro-Safe™, a stress and shock reducer, is used in all shipping water. ◆