

EDITORIAL

In the past year I have traveled to SE Asia three times, Europe once and through the US. Most things have changed for the better and some preconceived ideas still hang on.

Years ago a hobbyist could ask the same question at five different aquarium stores and get five different answers. Today, a hobbyist can ask the same question in twelve stores, and get twelve different answers. This is confusing, frustrating and aggravating to spending consumers who are willing to pay for a successful aquarium.

Most dealers are doing a great job. They have secured enough information about quality aquarium products to offer them to interested individuals. They realize that their success depends on your success. While other dealers are reluctant to upgrade or switch brands of salts, use and sell trickle filters, skimmers, and high technology equipment. In most cases, the latter type of dealer tells individuals that they have "been using the same salt for years, and have not had any problems". It is too bad these dealers have not *kept the same fish for years*.

Dealers that continually promote low cost items in an effort to keep their customers in the hobby, or attract new customers by offering low cost items have simply created a clientele that may be unsuitable for marine fish and reef aquarium keeping.

One of the problems dealers and hobbyists have is with hobbyist authored articles in aquarium magazines. Every few months, one of the current aqua-gurus is promoting something to replace what they promoted earlier.

These 'authors' are simply expressing opinions. In most cases, their opinions change with the tide. A few years ago it was wet/dry filters that used trays of rock, gravel or sand. Then it was wet/dry trickle filters that used DLS or sponge. Then it was trickle filters that used the lowest cost rings, discs, balls and even shaved PVC pieces. Then it was giant skimmers to replace a perfectly good, properly designed trickle filter with BI OX®.

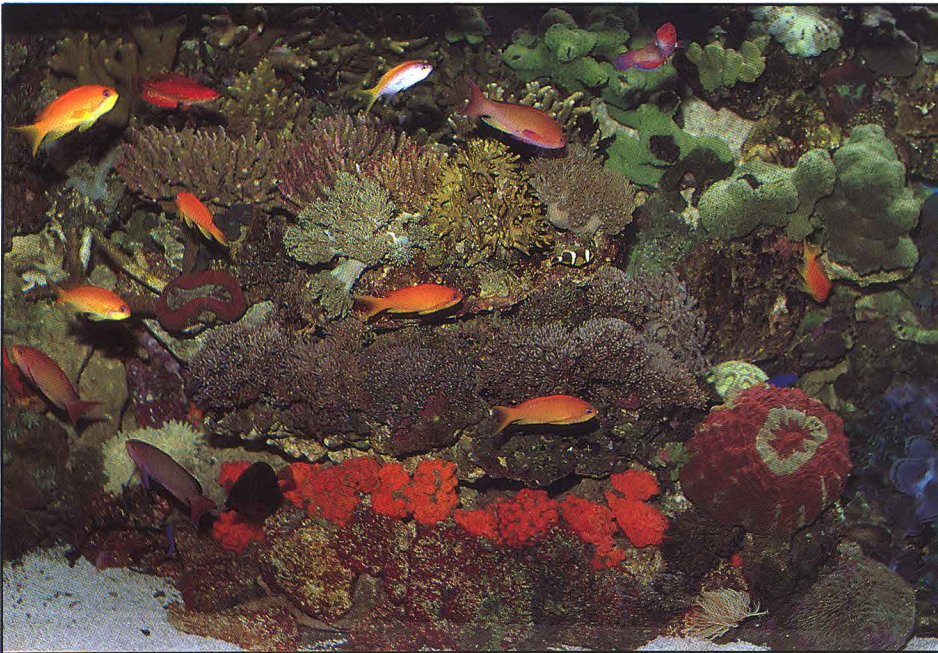
Somehow I have to wonder why anyone would want to replace a small, efficient, under the aquarium trickle filter (with BI OX®) in favor of a fluid bed filter that produces water that is low in dissolved oxygen or a protein skimmer that is several feet tall and has to stand next to the aquarium or in a separate room.

We know a marine aquarium with a simple undergravel filter can keep marine fish and most invertebrates for years. Aquariums with a low cost undergravel filter require the most maintenance. Aquariums with trickle filters require less maintenance and keep fish and invertebrates better. Protein skimmers serve a different function than trickle filters, but work well together.

UV, ozone, chemical resins, dozers, redox and pH controllers plus an abundance of marine salts and additives (of dubious value) have the majority of people confused. Misinformation results in confusion. This supports the myth that salt water aquariums are difficult to keep.

What happened to the low cost, easy to enjoy home salt water aquarium? It is here. I say, avoid the hype and get back to basics. ❖

Michael Del Prete. Editor.



100 gallon salt water aquarium with colorful marine fish and invertebrates.

This aquarium has been operating over three years. Lighting is three 5600°K metal halide lamps, two Phillips actinic 03 fluorescent lamps and one daylight fluorescent lamp. All the lights operate on timers. The daylight lamp runs from 7 AM to 10 PM. The metal halide and 03 lamps run from 9 AM to 9:30 PM.

All aquarium inhabitants accept a variety of foods which include: fresh minced prawn, scallop and shrimp that are soaked in Marine Vita-Pep™, and Tetra Marin® flake food.

The water is 100% Marine Environment® dual phase formula™. No additives, supplements, carbon or chemical resins are used. A 25 gallon water change is made each month.

A trickle filter is used that holds eight gallons of Super BI OX®. A protein skimmer that is 48" tall x 6" in diameter is also used. Ozone and UV are not used.

Specific gravity is maintained at 1.023. pH remains at a constant 8.3 without the use of buffers. All marine fish and invertebrates were quarantined for 45 days prior to being introduced into this beautiful and trouble free marine aquarium. .

A Nikon F camera with 28 mm Auto Nikkor lens set at f:5.6 was used to make this exposure on Ektachrome Elite ISO 100/21° film. Lighting for this photo was one electronic flash. The shutter was set at 1/60 sec. (x sync).

Not a contest ... a search and reward.

\$100 paid and photo credit for each color slide or photo of high quality and of interest that will be printed in *Marine Aquarist*™.

You must include the following information along with your name, address and phone number.

- 1) Common and scientific name (*if known*) of your fish and/or reef pets. OK to include the name you gave your pet.
- 2) Size of your aquarium.
- 3) How long have you kept your pet.
- 4) What foods are offered.
- 5) Type of lighting.
- 6) Brand of marine salt.
- 7) Do you use: a skimmer, ozone, UV, carbon, equipment controllers, resins, chemical filter pads, trickle filter, liquid or powder additives, or other devices?
- 8) Describe your marine fish or reef aquarium. Try to offer information useful to other hobbyists.
- 9) Type of camera, film, exposure and lights used to make your photo.

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