# Angelfish

April 19, 2021

## Care Guide

Angelfish (Pterophyllum scalare), are a freshwater fish known for their fancy fins,colors, and ease of care. These fish are one of the most popular fish in the hobby, but that doesn't mean you can throw them in any old glass box.



### Statistics

Life Span: 8-12 years

Family: Cichlidae

Size: 6in long  8in tall

Min. Tank Size:15 Gallons

Diet: Onnovoric

Temp.:76F-84F

Temperament: Semi-aggressive

P.H.: 6.5-7.5

Please keep in mind that things like size, and lifespan is different for every fish, some breeds like Altum get much larger. About P.H., people have kept them higher and lower, I am putting the statistics that make a happy fish. Just because they're alive doesn't mean they're happy. And for you people who don't care about an animal's well being, a happy fish is a colorful fish.

### Tank Requirements



Please keep in mind, Angelfish are large fish they need a lot of room to swim, preferably taller rather than longer. They are also from South America, or more specifically, the Amazon River. Most Angelfish you will see are not wild caught so you shouldn't worry too much about recreating their natural habitat. Angelfish are also cichlids. Cichlids have a reputation for being both gorgeous yet aggressive. Angelfish is a notable outlier. They seem to have a closer temprimt with their African

cousins, this is because African cichlids are more peaceful. You only need to worry about aggression if: you are introducing them into a tank, you have fish that are known fin nippers, fish that are fast swimmers, and when two angels pair up. Angelfish prefer warm water,76F-84F but in the middle is best. They also will like to dig around in the substrate, so make sure it is soft and fine, like sand.The P.H. should be close to 7 but they also don't mind a little more acidic like at 6.8. Both in the wild and in most breeders tanks there is very little current, so keep this in mind. Also these are not the most energetic fish, while showy and not too keen to hide, they still need a lot of space because they are territorial. Try to make your lights mimic the sun, 8-12 hours is perfect. Speculated preset features, like a mode with little their homes in the only beginner angelfish eggs are its tall broad leaves plan on breeding. there is also



lights are perfect and some come with moonlight mode, and a stormy lighting flashes. Wile not necessary to recreate Amazon, it still has plants that are not friendly, but are a notorious place where found, like the Amazon sword, known for it’s perfect for angelfish, especially if you But, you are not limited to the Amazon, Brizinion waterweed, and java moss which is also good for angels! Angelfish can be in all kinds of tanks, bare bottom, planted, community. Just make sure it is about 18in tall and the fish in there won't bother them. The rule of thumb is 10 gallons per angelfish, or 20 if there is a breeding pair, but bigger is always better, that's why I put 15 up at the top.They prefer the water to be a little on the soft side so keep that in mind because many places in the states have hard water. Also, I should not have to type this out, but please use a water conditioner to neutralise not only the chlorine but the cholamine, both are very harmful to fish.

## Diet

Angelfish are omnivores, they need plants and meat. They need more meat than plants thought. So, not every day you should give them a green bean or two(Yes, they can and will



eat green beans, also other vegetables.) It is also important that like you and I, they should get a varied diet. Some of their favorite foods are tubifex worms, brine shrimp, and blood worms. Blood worms are good because they are healthy and can encourage breeding, so only give them every one in a while.

It can be hard to tell how much to feed a fish. Some fish will eat till death. Angelfish are one of these. They are very opportunistic eaters so they love eating. They will not eat plants in aquariums, but if you want to give them vegetables, make sure they are cooked. Feed them what they can eat for 30 seconds, if they act hungry still add a couple more seconds to it. I would go for what they can eat in 45 seconds. If this is too hard to understand. Their stomach is the same size as their eye.

There are many types of food, live, flake, frozen, freeze dried, and home made.

| | Live | Flake | Frozen | Freeze Dried | Home Made |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pros | Often the best in terms of nutrients. | Very easy to find.<br>Often transparent about what is in it, and nutrients.<br>Nutrients are consistent. | Ease to find<br>Healthy. | Steiral, so fish won't get sick.<br>Has a lot of nutrients, but not as many as frozen. | You controle what is in it. |
| Cons | Hard to find.<br>May contain parasites. | A lot of it is low quality so it is hard to find a good one.<br>Many have inedibull fillers. | Need to be kept cold.<br>Can have parasites. | Have soak it otherwise it will expand in the fish's stomach. | Clouds water easier.<br>You may mess up and kill your fish. |

I personally recommend flake food, because of the availability. But you need to be careful. Look at the back.  What are the main ingredients? Fish meal, or whole fish? Are there grain fillers in it? A product that labels fish meal as its number one ingredient is a sign of low quality. Same with grains, which are indigestible to all fish. What you should look for is whole fish, and low amounts of fillers. Whole fish, or even parts of fish is a much better sign.

# Life Stages

## Eggs/Wigers

When you have to angelfish pair up it's kinda scary if it was unintentional. Both the mother and father will be aggressive to any fish that comes near their eggs, this will last around two months

if they don't eat the eggs first.(If you separate them from their eggs they can spawn up to every 2 weeks) There will be 100-1000 eggs but only a few hundred will hatch.It will take 3-4 days but they will hatch At this point they are called wigglers, because that's all they do! They look like whittle dots with a line just wiggling away! They do it because the fry is not able to free swim yet.The parents may move them alot, they will look like they are sucking them up and spitting them out, but it is how they take care of them. After a while there will be a cloud of swimming fry, and 2 poor parents in the middle.

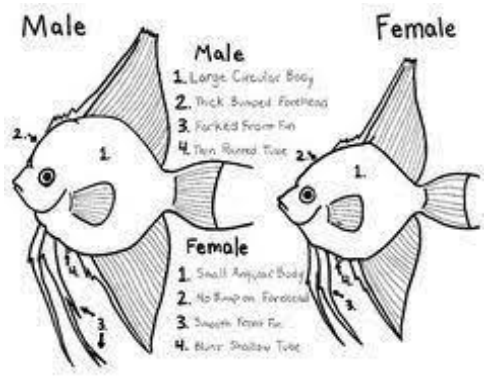
## Fry/Juveniles

Okay, this is where fish flakes may hit the fan! When they are able to swim it will look hectic, and sometimes breeders will separate the parents from the eggs or wigglers because they are unsure of that individual pair's parenting abilities. This is where it is kind of too late to do that. And where most will die. Not all will make it. Either because a defect, or the others out competed them. Yes, you will need to feed them. But make sure it is small enough to fit in their mouths. Like First Bites, or a finely ground flake, but the best, is some newly hatched brine shrimp. Their egg sacs are very nutritious, and both parents and fry love them. When they are about nickel or quarter size they are juveniles. This is another reason people move them because this is where they start to be aggressive. And this is where you can sell them, or give them to a local fish store. Now you can give them a normal egg yolk, just grind it up first. Remember they are around $10 at a local fish store but depending on quality, and colors they can sell for $20-$40 or much higher. Altums are a good example. They are typically wild caught, but you can still sell tank raised for $70-ish each. Even more is albinio.



(You can do 1-2 or 5+ NEVER 3, the other 2 will bully it to death) When you introduce angelfish into a tank they should be all at once, at a young age(dime, nikle, quarter, or half dollar size), because not only is it fun watching them grow, but  when they are young they are less aggressive and you won't see them fighting for a few weeks to months. When your angelfish are juveniles they will become territorial and form a sort of pecking order. They will defend their rank

fersely. Also during this stage you will see a funny thing from time to time. Some male juvenile angelfish will tip themselves over sideways, they think it is intimidating. During this age you will might be able to sex them male or female.




When you go to a fish store you need to look for some things. Avoid one with bent fins, twisted spines, or missing ventral fins. This is the drop from a local breeder getting rid of their bad fish. These defects may be genetic, or because a parent niked an egg or wiggler.Make sure the eye is clear, a cloudy eye is a sick fish. What you should look for is undamaged fish that are not too thin, I know angelfish are thin, but not too thin. You could have the store feed them, look for aggressive eaters. And pick one you like. If you see one with a really big eye. Avoid it. It is stunted from being in too small a tank. Stunting doesn't mean a smaller fish, it means a shorter life span. Also this is why you don't listen to people saying 'they will grow to the size of the tank' because this happens. Their bodies are not able to grow, but their insides still grow. Doesn't that sound painful.




Angelfish take around 10 months to become mature, but remember if you buy them at dime size they are around 6 weeks old. While their adults at 6 months, will still grow. The most important thing to a good sized angelfish is water quality. Ammonia and nitrites would be 0. Nitrites are safer but we need the best sized fish. Next is food. Feed them often. Dime to nickel, 4-5 times a day. Quarter, 3-4. Half-dollar or larger, 2-3 times a day.

# Tank Mates

When you look for tank mates you need to be careful. Because angels have long fins, they can be fin nippers like barbs. They can't be faster or the angel will feel threatened when it comes to food. It can be aggressive in any way or the angel may get hurt. Please keep in mind, if you are putting an angel in a community, the angel should be the most aggressive.

## Good Tank Mates

Cory Catfish- these fish are too big to be eaten, and will leave you fish alone.



Plecos and Loaches- (Be careful what type some grow over 2 feet!) These will not only clean your tank but will be ignored by angelfish, because plecos/loaches stay near the bottom, angels folate between mid and top tank.Also they are nocturnal so extra!

Large Live Bearers: Like mollies, sward tails, or platies, these are peaceful and colorful fish that every once in a while will have babies, which both the parents and the angel will try to eat.

Snails: They won't even be in the line of sight of an angelfish.



Large Tetras: colorful fish, that can be a dither fish if you have many angels. Make sure they are over 2.5in or the angel may eat them.

Discus: A colorful fish that is hard to care for is a risk because discus enjoy water temperature at around 86F.

Peaceful Cichlids: dwarf cichlids like the German Blue Ram are peaceful, but some still get iffy when they lay eggs.

## Bad Tank Mates

Small Tetras/Rasboras: Microrasboras, and neon tetras will be eaten, no question there.

Barbs: they are known for nipping fins.

Aggressive cichlids: Like the Paradise fish, colorful but a nasty bite.

Arowanas: we know your dad/brother/son wanted a cool looking arowana, but I just don't recommend this. Arowanas get big, like over 2 feet big, and they are notorious for jumping out of tanks. So you need a strong lid, and on top of that they may break their backs of the lid, they will also not be good with angels. I don’t think it's that hard to figure out.

Small Invertebrates(Shrimp): Angelfish LOVE hunting shrimp. So if you want shrimp, make sure they are big.



There are some fish like the popular Guppie which is a little controversial with angels. There are many success and failure stories. If you want to do this, be warned. If you still want to, make sure you raise the guppies with the angels. Maybe they won't see them as food. But be careful, an angelfish can fit even a female guppy into their mouth, so keep an eye on that little endler in the back of that tank.(Image is not to scale)

# Injury/Illness

No one likes to talk or think about what happens if they get sick or hurt. But it will happen. Just try to keep a hospital tank on hand, and some medicine.

Keep in mind I'm listing only the common ones or well known ones.

| Ailment | Symptoms | Causes | Correction |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nipped/damaged fins | A hole, brake, or a cut in the tail. | Sparing angels, bad tank mates, or sharp decorations. | Don’t move it, the injury will heal on its own, but you want to remove the reason it was damaged in the first place. |
| Fin/Tail Rot | A decentadrating fin with black tips. | Stress, unclean tank, improper temperature, over handling fish. Fin nipping fish. | Deeply clean the tank, and move fish to a clean medicine tank to administer antibiotics. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Swim Bladder Disease | The angel is unable to balance in the water. | Infections, over eating, air in the stomach, or swollen organs. | Go to a vet that can care for fish. Other treatments are depending on the cause. |
| Mouth Fungus | White fuzz on the fish's mouth. | Weaken immune system due to stress. | Cleen tank. Move the fish to a medicine tank to give medicine. |
| Ich | White dots on fins. | The bacteria is always present, but a fish may get it if there immune system is weekend.(Stress) | Raise the temperature in the tank to 80F, temporarily. |
| Iridovirus | Loss of appetite, darkened color, swollen abdomen. | | None |
| Singapore Angelfish Disease | Inactivity, loss of appetite, high and rapid mortality | | None |
| Hole-In-the-Head | Pale ulcerated area around head. | Parasite found in food. | Metronidazole or similar medication. Use food containing Vitamin C |
| Anchor Worm | Visible parasites attached to fish. | A new fish is being introduced with it already. | Take to a veterinarian, to remove. |
| Dropsy | Extremely bloated, with scales sticking out. | If this is happening to your angel or any other fish, stop reading and go to the vet! | Take it to a vet that can care for fish.. |

Rember, if something is wrong, you can always contact the fish store closest to you, your local fish club(at least one in every state), or a veterinarian, but keep in mind that not all vets can care for fish. And please, let them know your water parameters. It can save your fish.