



## **Collaborative marine ornamental fish propagation efforts**

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The Rising Tide Conservation initiative aims to develop techniques to breed marine ornamental reef fishes, in order to reduce the collection of wild specimens for public and home aquariums. Most individual institutions have been unable to achieve this because of economic constraints, and challenges experienced at every stage of breeding and rearing these species.

Eight AZA facilities and the University of Florida's Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory (TAL) are collaborating to collect and culture eggs from fishes in public aquariums. Multiple fish species spawn together in large exhibits but most eggs and fry could not be easily identified. In this project, eggs are collected from the exhibits and sent to TAL where aquaculture scientists acclimate and hatch the eggs and develop methodologies for first-feeding and raising the fry. Over 15 species have been successfully reared and more than 15 others have hatched and begun feeding, but have not yet been raised to juvenile stages. These trials have revealed many of the specific requirements of different species, which were previously unknown.

New information is being transferred to commercial aquaculture operations in order to increase the propagation of these fishes for the ornamental fish industry and reduce wild collections.