

schooling fish and do well with a number of conspecifics in the same tank with a large swimming area. The **Cichlids** are an extremely popular group of fish consisting of species from the Amazon River as well as the Rift Lakes in Africa. Some species, such as the angel fish, are suitable for community tanks, while others, such as the oscar, are predacious and can only be kept with fish of similar size. **Cichlids** are intelligent and colorful, and many species provide substantial parental care to their offspring, making them particularly interesting to the hobbyist breeder. The **Anabantoids**, and other labyrinth fishes, are specially equipped to utilize atmospheric oxygen by breathing air just above the surface of the water. Two popular fish in this group are the gouramis and the Siamese fighting fish. The practitioner is encouraged to read several of the excellent books available on natural history and husbandry of specific groups of aquarium fish. There are many exceptions to the general comments above. Tropical marine fish and invertebrates are popular and

valuable aquarium pets. With the exception of clown fish, almost all marine fish are wild caught. Management of a marine aquarium is challenging as the fish require a stable environment and nutritional needs may be unknown or difficult to meet. Disease processes of marine fish are often poorly understood, and therapeutic options are limited.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Most veterinary practices will have most of the equipment needed for handling fish patients. Basic equipment includes a light microscope, glass slides, cover slips, scalpel, forceps and small, curved scissors. Special equipment specifically for fish includes water-quality testing equipment (Table 1), a few small aquaria (5 or 10 gallons each) for hospitalization or treatment administration, an air pump, plastic tubing, sponge filters, nets, buckets, a source of dechlorinated water or a chemical dechlorinator, and sea salts. An initial investment of \$200 to \$400 should be adequate.

Table 1. Suggested water quality equipment appropriate for a veterinary practice providing service to pet fish clientele.

TEST KIT	RANGE	COST ^a
FF-1A Aquaculture Kit		\$176.00
Alkalinity	0.4-8 gpg ^b	
Ammonia	0-3 mg/L as NH ₃ -N	
Carbon dioxide	5-100 mg/L	
Chloride	5-400 mg/L	
Dissolved oxygen	0.2-20 mg/L	
Hardness	1-30 gpg ^b as CaCO ₃	
Nitrite	0-0.5 mg/L as NO ₂ -N	
pH	4-10 pH units	
Temperature	-30° to 120°F	
Saltwater Master Test Kit		\$ 35.75
Ammonia	0-3 mg/L	
Nitrate	0-50 mg/L	
Nitrite	0-0.75 mg/L	
pH	6.5-8.5pH	
Chlorine		\$ 32.50
Free and total chlorine	0-3.5 mg/L	
Copper		\$ 27.50
Free copper (low range)	0-2.5 mg/L	

^aPrices listed are from Hach Company, 1993-4 catalog, Loveland, CO. Similar products are available from other sources.

^b1 gpg = 17 mg/l or 17 ppm