

## HOW TO MOVE AN AQUARIUM

Moving can come with some special requirements, that's for sure. If you own a fish tank, you will discover this. As a general rule, fish do not travel well. Therefore, despite your best efforts, some fish may not survive the move. Some experts agree that it would be a good idea to sell your fish and purchase new ones when you have settled into your new home. But if you are determined to take your fish along the move, follow these rules to avoid any significant amount of loss:

**\*NEVER MOVE THE FISH TANK WITH YOUR FISH STILL IN IT! FISH AND TANK MUST BE MOVED SEPARATELY\***

### MOVING THE TANK

Your fish tank's filtration will present you with the greatest challenge during your move. With no oxygen flow in the water, the aerobic bacteria will begin to die in only a few hours. It will take a good deal of time to tear down the tank, pack, unpack, and set up. If you are moving a short distance of only one to two hours travel time the bacteria colony can be preserved. Otherwise you will want to start a new one. Here are the steps for safely transporting your aquarium:

- (1) Put fish in a holding container.
- (2) Drain the tank. If the move will be short, save some of the water to preserve the bacteria colony.
- (3) Disassemble the fish tank. PLants are likely to survive if their roots are kept wet. Bag them with some water and set aside for hand-moving.
- (4) For a short move, do not clean your filter medium. Place it in a sealed container. For long moves, either clean or discard your filter media.
- (5) Pack all accessories--heaters, pumps, etc, as you would any fragile items.

For a short move there should be plenty of de-chlorinated and treated water to fill your tank and get water moving through the filter. If you are making a long move, set the tank up as if everything is brand new. This means waiting a week before putting in fish. When it is time to add them, put in a few hardy fish first to establish the nitrate cycle. Once the tank is stable, go ahead and add the rest of your fish.

## **MOVING YOUR FISH**

There are three main points to consider when moving your fish:

### **(1) Where will you put your fish while moving and reassembling the tank, which may take a week or more?**

-Find a pet store that will "board" your fish while you move. Be sure to get a signed contract outlining the store's responsibilities and the total cost. Keep in mind the fish will be in the store's care for one to two weeks or longer. They may also offer the option of packing and air-shipping your fish to you, but this can be very expensive.

### **(2) How should you pack your fish for the move?**

-Fish can be safely kept in plastic bags half-filled with air for short periods of time (no more than 2 hours). This time can be increased a bit by using oxygen instead of air. Place the bags inside a padded, compartmentalized container to ship by air. For longer trips or for larger fish, use a sealed bucket instead of a plastic bag for each fish.

### **(3) How to support fish while they are being moved**

-Fish are too stressed to eat during a move. You don't want to affect the water quality by adding food anyway. As long as fish have been previously adequately fed they can actually survive for a week or longer without food. Be sure to maintain an even temperature by placing fish in a sealed cooler. For longer trips, especially in a vehicle, you will need a battery-powered air pump and air stone.

Once you have arrived at your destination, slowly acclimate your fish back to the tank, just as you did when they were new. All it takes is a little careful planning and attention to these instructions to ensure that your aquarium will be as healthy and beautiful in your new home as it was in your previous one!