

MAINTENANCE

Your aquarium will require regular maintenance, but most tasks are relatively quick and straightforward:

- regularly monitor water quality to prevent harmful levels of ammonia and nitrite. Even small amounts can severely stress your goldfish.
- regularly monitor the temperature of the water.
- partial water changes are required regularly to remove excess nitrate – we recommend 25 – 30% of the tank capacity every week. Ensure the new water is the same temperature as the aquarium water before adding and treat with a tap water conditioner to remove any harmful chlorine or chloramine.
- never use your mouth to siphon water from an aquarium.
- cover open cuts on your hands before putting them in aquarium water and wash your hands immediately after.
- check filter for clogging and waste build up. Never rinse it under a tap as this will wash away or kill the beneficial bacteria. Instead, rinse the filter in some waste tank-water during a routine water change.

The Pet Charity's Guide to testing water quality care sheet covers maintenance in more detail.

PET CODE OF PRACTICE

Never release a pet (companion animal) into the wild. It is illegal and for most species this will lead to an untimely and possibly lingering death, as they are not native to this country. Any animals or plants that do survive might be harmful to the environment. This includes the need to properly dispose of soiled substrate, so that eggs and live food can't escape into the wild.

SHOPPING LIST

- glass or acrylic aquarium with secure lid
- stand, if required
- gravel
- filtration
- air pump, in case of filter failure
- lighting
- siphon cleaning device
- ornaments
- plants
- water conditioner/dechlorinator
- thermometer
- water testing kits
- food

A water testing kit should be considered a necessary part of your equipment. Without it you cannot maintain good water quality.

Many retailers offer free water-testing services and provide advice on how to test your aquarium water at home.

THE FIVE ANIMAL WELFARE NEEDS

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 means all pet owners have a legal duty of care to their pets. Anyone who is cruel to an animal or is found not to be providing the five animal welfare needs, as listed below, can be fined and sent to prison.

- 1 Environment:** pets should be given the correct housing according to its size, this includes shelter, space to exercise and a secure, comfortable place to rest.
- 2 Diet:** pets should be offered the correct type and volume of food to cover all their nutritional needs alongside access to clean, fresh water.
- 3 Behaviour:** all pets should be allowed to exhibit normal behaviour patterns and should be provided with the facilities to do so.
- 4 Company:** some animals require the company of their own kind, whilst others should be kept on their own.
- 5 Health:** all animals should be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease, and given veterinary treatment if they become sick or injured.



This leaflet is produced by The Pet Charity, a national charity which promotes the joy and benefits of pet ownership.

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These organisations support the aims of The Pet Charity to promote the welfare and responsible keeping of pet animals.



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Registered charity no: 1052488

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GUIDE TO CARING FOR GOLDFISH IN AQUARIA

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pet:
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For joy, health & companionship



Goldfish have been kept by humans for many centuries and are possibly the most widely recognised aquarium and pond fish.

THE PET CHARITY GUIDE TO CARING FOR GOLDFISH IN AQUARIA

There are many varieties of goldfish such as the Sarasa Comet and Shubunkin. There are a vast range of colours too, including red, blue, yellow, black, white and orange.

BIOLOGY

Carassius auratus is the scientific name for goldfish. They are a relative of the carp and are members of the Cyprinidae family.

Goldfish have reportedly grown to over 40cm, although in an aquarium 25cm is a more common size.

They can live for many years in an aquarium with good water quality and there are many reports of fish living for 6 – 8 years. Some have lived for 20 years and more.

The colour of goldfish is determined by pigmentation cells in their skin known as chromatophores. The colour produced depends upon the amount and type of chromatophore present. Chromatophores respond to light, so the colour of your goldfish may change over time depending upon the lighting conditions. Juvenile goldfish lose dark pigmentation as they age and become brighter, whereas old fish may lose colouration altogether.

Goldfish can be sexed during the breeding season. Males develop tubercles (white spots) on their gill covers and pectoral fins. Females have deeper bodies compared to males.

WATER REQUIREMENTS

Goldfish are an adaptable species that can tolerate a wide range of environmental conditions. It is suggested that you maintain the water quality within the following guideline values:

Aquaria water requirements for goldfish

Temperature	between 4 – 25°C
pH	6.0 – 8.0
Ammonia	0mg per litre
Nitrite	0mg per litre. Not to exceed 20mg per litre above normal tap water levels
Hardness	Moderately soft – moderately hard (5 – 19°dh)

DID YOU KNOW?

Goldfish are first known to have been kept in China during the third century. During the 1700s they were imported into Europe.



AQUARIUM REQUIREMENTS

As a general rule it is advisable to buy the largest aquarium possible within your budget, and it should be able to accommodate your chosen fish once they are fully grown. Otherwise, you must be prepared to buy a larger setup as your fish grow. The larger the aquarium, the more stable the environmental conditions such as temperature and water quality will be. Whatever the size, a filter is always essential.

The tank should also have gravel and ideally live plants present. If live plants are not used then adding plastic plants and ornaments such as plant pots or model caves is recommended. These provide fish with shelter.

A heater is not required for goldfish unless they are kept in a very cold room. Although goldfish are coldwater fish, extreme fluctuations in their water temperature can cause stress and lead to disease. Position the aquarium away from draughts or heat sources and also out of direct sunlight, away from loud noises, vibrations and sudden movements.

Lighting is recommended. If no lighting is added to the tank, then ensure the room is bright enough.

Water-testing kits are essential. Goldfish can be very dirty – and this will increase levels of ammonia and nitrite, so check their water regularly to ensure it does not slip below the recommended standards.

COMPATIBILITY

Goldfish can be kept on their own or with others. It is not advisable to keep Comet goldfish with fancy goldfish because Comets swim faster and often out-compete fancy goldfish for food. There are reports of boisterous goldfish fin-nipping the slower swimming fancy varieties.



FEEDING

Goldfish are opportunistic feeders in the wild and will take most food types. In the home aquarium they should be fed with a good quality flake or pellet. Goldfish require more carbohydrates than other fish species so a specialised goldfish food is advisable.

They are insatiable feeders and will constantly look for food. Try not to over feed as this can lead to a build-up of uneaten food which will release toxic waste in the tank.

Goldfish should be fed 1 – 2 times a day and give them only what can be eaten within a few minutes. Remove uneaten food to reduce waste build-up.

BREEDING

Goldfish can be successfully bred in large home aquariums. It is more likely to occur if males and females are kept at a ratio of 2:1 male to female. Spawning can be induced by slowly raising the water temperature to approximately 20°C, in effect, mimicking what happens in spring. Spawning often occurs following a partial water change.

Males will chase the females in a courtship display. The fish will lay eggs in plants or on a spawning mop. It is important to transplant these to a different tank to prevent the goldfish from eating their eggs and fry (babies) – something they are notorious for.

If successful breeding has taken place the eggs will hatch within three days and dark-coloured fry will be seen swimming within a few more days.

Healthy fish have clear bright eyes, undamaged fins, intact scales, no ulcerations or bumps, appropriate swimming and steady breathing. Do not purchase a seemingly healthy fish if sickly fish are present in the same tank. Fish diseases can be carried without showing any clinical signs. Ask your retailer for advice.