

Saltwater Aquariums: What to Consider

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



The beauty and intrigue of saltwater fish draws many people into the hobby. But not all individuals are fully aware of what it takes to keep fragile saltwater specimens happy and healthy. Even though today's [modern technology](#) makes saltwater fish-keeping easier than ever, the decision to set up a saltwater aquarium should not be taken lightly.

Research, Research, Research

The special needs of saltwater fish present considerable challenges. The prospective aquarium owner needs to be well-versed in all the responsibilities required for a saltwater system. If you are considering setting up a saltwater aquarium in your home, your first step is research. Learn as much as you can about the individual [fish](#) and [invertebrates](#) that interest you. Not all species offered in the industry are equally well suited for the typical home aquarium. Choose fish and invertebrates suitable for the novice aquarist and refrain from pursuing unsuitable species, or species that have poor success rates in captivity.

Plan Enough Time for Care and Maintenance

A substantial time commitment is required to keep a saltwater aquarium system healthy. A saltwater aquarium requires diligent [maintenance](#) to keep it clean, [temperature-controlled](#), and properly [lit](#). [Salinity](#) is also paramount, so replacing evaporated water each day is critical.

Fish and invertebrates need to be [fed](#) on a regular basis. Remember that different species have different food requirements. Finally, saltwater aquariums rely on mechanical systems such as [filters](#), [pumps](#), [heaters](#) and [light fixtures](#). Like all equipment, these items require regular maintenance to keep them operating efficiently.

Because they need consistent care, saltwater aquariums cannot be left unattended for more than two days. It's a good idea to involve outside family members or friends with your aquarium. That way, you can ask them for their help in caring for your aquarium when you are away from home.

Financial Commitment

In addition to education and time, saltwater aquariums require a considerable financial investment. Start-up costs for a new saltwater tank range from \$300-\$500, and a continuous financial commitment is required to replenish supplies, livestock, food, and salt. Choose your new aquarium carefully. Like anything else, the larger the aquarium system, the larger the cost.



Saltwater fish-keeping is a wonderful, challenging, and educational hobby that can be a rewarding experience for the whole family. Once your new system is up and running, maintaining your aquarium will become less of a chore, but more of a pleasurable routine and enjoyable escape.

