



**Ascension Island
Government**

Guidelines for the Importation of Live Ornamental Fish

Issued in pursuance of the Ascension Island Biosecurity Ordinance
2020

1. Why is the importation of live fish controlled?

Due to the risk posed to our marine environment, **saltwater ornamental fish are prohibited**. However, with appropriate precautions, freshwater fish can be brought to the island under licence. All animals imported to Ascension require a licence.

Disease control:

Fish diseases are not just carried by fish; they can also be in the water used for transportation. If fish turn up on island diseased, we will have no choice but to confiscate and humanely destroy them.

Other pests:

Fish arriving in water may not be alone. The water can contain fish parasites, snail eggs, mosquito and midge larvae and a range of plant seeds.

A common snail for example is the spreader of liver fluke and bilharzia, both diseases which can affect people. Certain mosquitoes spread malaria and certain midges spread diseases like Blue Tongue. Worldwide a number of invasive water weeds are causing havoc choking waterways and reservoirs after being accidentally introduced.

Wild or captive:

To obtain a licence we ask for two pieces of information: the species scientific name and whether the fish is wild caught or captive bred.

The selling of wild caught fish should only occur under a strict licence, otherwise you cannot know if it is from a sustainable source, disease free or even legal. Some fish species are listed as protected under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) and their possession can get you into trouble with the law.

2. How do you import ornamental fish into Ascension?

Whilst not all biosecurity risks can be eliminated, they can be significantly reduced. If importers adhere to the following import conditions live fish may be brought to Ascension:

- 2.1 **Saltwater fish are not permitted for import into Ascension so make sure you are importing freshwater fish.**
- 2.2 Apply for a licence no later than six weeks before the scheduled date that the fish consignment is expected to leave the country of export.



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Georgetown, Ascension Island

Telephone: 00 247 67000 Email: biosecurity@ascension.gov.ac

- 2.3 The water fish are transported in must be clean and free of sediment not containing any type of pond weed.
- 2.4 The fish must be transported and handled with all due care for their requirements, such as temperature, oxygen and food.
- 2.5 **Imports from St Helena** – Fish must be subject to 28 days of quarantine either in St Helena prior to export or on Ascension upon import. For quarantine on St Helena, evidence of a purchase receipt or St Helena import certificate will be required when you apply for the licence to import to Ascension. At the completion of the quarantine the fish will be subject to an inspection by the St Helena veterinary competent authority (for St Helena quarantine) or Biosecurity Officer (for Ascension quarantine). For all fish exports from St Helena an export health certificate from the veterinary competent authority of St Helena is needed.
- 2.6 **Imports from anywhere other than St Helena** – Upon import fish must be subject to a period of quarantine for no less than 28 days on Ascension, at the completion of which they will be subject to an inspection by the Biosecurity Officer.
- 2.7 Any fish death or illness during the quarantine period must be reported to the Biosecurity Officer immediately. The fish will be disposed of appropriately by the Biosecurity Officer or another officer acting on the instruction of the Agricultural Authority. **Dead fish should not be disposed of through the waste water system.**
- 2.8 The disposal of water used to transport ornamental fish must be done by the Biosecurity Officer. The fish owner must collect the water in a sealed container and contact the Biosecurity Officer who will dispose of it appropriately.
- 2.9 Any container(s) used to transport the fish must be surrendered to the Biosecurity Officer or confirmation provided to the Biosecurity Officer that the container(s) have been thoroughly disinfected.

3. Check lists

Pre border checklist:

- Has the fish had a 28 day quarantine period on St Helena or have you prepared the equipment necessary for a 28 day quarantine period on Ascension?
- Can the supplier give you some assurances that their stock is healthy?
- Are they tropical or cold-water?
- Have you got the right equipment and feed to keep them?
- What are their common and scientific names?
- Is the water you are given clean and free of debris and pondweed?
- Have you filled in your application form for a licence to import?
- Have you received a licence to import?
- If exporting from St Helena, have you got an export health certificate from the veterinary competent authority of St Helena?

Post border checklist:

- If quarantine is needed on Ascension, (see section 2.5 and 2.6) transfer the fish into the quarantine tank ensuring the water used to transport the fish is contained and stored for the Biosecurity Officer to dispose of. Monitor quarantined fish for 28 days.



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- Contact Biosecurity Officer to dispose of any water used in transportation.
- Treat container in which the fish was transported or hand into Biosecurity officer.
- Do the fish look okay? Are they swimming freely and upright, are their fins intact or eaten away, does the skin look shiny and colourful or is it blotchy and dull with red sores or fluffy ulcers (fungal growths)?
- Report sick or dead fish to Biosecurity Officer who will dispose of them appropriately.

Further information can be obtained from:

Biosecurity Officer
Ascension Island Conservation and Fisheries Directorate
Georgetown
Ascension Island, ASCN 1ZZ
Tel/Fax: 00 247 66359
Email: biosecurity@ascension.gov.ac



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