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For immediate release.

In keeping with our goals, MASNA strives to educate our membership and the general public interested in the marine aquarium hobby through published online materials. Furthermore, we strive to eliminate abuses in collecting, transportation, and housing of marine organisms through education, assistance, and encouragement.

The much anticipated sequel to “Finding Nemo”, “Finding Dory”, premieres this weekend across American box offices. MASNA would like to take this time to remind our members and all those that may want to go out and purchase saltwater fishes after the movie, that responsible pet ownership is crucial for a prosperous and sustainable hobby. Please take pause and seriously reflect in your ability to be able to provide a stable environment for any fish that you may purchase. Different species require different levels of care, and not all systems can house all species of fish.

For newcomers to the hobby, make sure that you are fully prepared for both the financial and time commitment of setting up and maintaining a proper marine aquarium system that ensures the health and wellbeing of your fishy friends.

Remember that we, as responsible pet owners, take it upon ourselves to become the caretaker of these living organisms, and that our actions determine if our new pets will thrive or not. Some species, like the Palette Surgeonfish, a.k.a. “Dory”, require specific care for them to thrive. If one cannot provide such level of care, then the decision to keep that animal needs to be reevaluated. For those that have kept/keep saltwater systems, it may be relatively easy to provide adequate housing and care for surgeonfishes that can have long lifespans. But for those who have never kept aquaria before, it is certainly advisable to start reading up on the methods and time required for keeping an aquarium, and then start with easier to care for fish.

MASNA does certainly not discourage anyone from keeping fish tanks if it is within their means and capacity to do so. There are many benefits in keeping fish tanks (both fresh and saltwater), including teaching basic science to children, and allowing for a more intimate connection to animals one would not normally see, which may ultimately help foster a sense of stewardship of nature.

For those that have some experience with freshwater tanks already, and seek to advance to saltwater, make sure you are prepared to do so. Make sure you read up on all the literature that you need. A good place to start is MASNA’s Library Recommendations page (link below). Ask questions, and don’t be shy about it. Visit your “local fish stores” or your “big box retailers.” Go prepared with questions, and use that opportunity for you to not only learn more about this wonderful hobby, but also to gauge the level of professionalism of the store. Make sure that when you walk away, you are satisfied that the store has given you all the information and equipment you need to successfully transition to the saltwater side of fish keeping. If the store seems to be pushing a sale by saying “yes, you can buy the tank and take fish home with you today”, you should find a different store that encourages responsible fish keeping.

When you first visit a store, you should also be prepared to hear things that you don’t like, or don’t want to hear: such as “your tank needs to be setup for weeks and properly cycled before adding fish to the tank”. For those that went to the fish store because their kid(s) now want a pet “Nemo” or “Dory”, it is paramount that it is clear to the kids that “Nemo” or “Dory” is not coming home with them the same day you buy the tank. But, take that as a learning opportunity, since surely, one of the most important aspects of keeping a fish tank is patience. And learning that lesson early on can be of great benefit to your and your kid’s salty future in the marine aquarium hobby as responsible pet owners.

For more information about the Palette Surgeonfish (“Dory”), please visit our educational page found here: <http://masna.org/masna-programs/palette-surgeonfish/>

For literature recommendations on setting up and maintaining a saltwater aquarium, please visit our MASNA Library page found here: <http://masna.org/masna-library/>

For MASNA’s position statement on Sustainable Marine Aquarium Fisheries, please visit our Hawaii Ban Fact Check page found here: <http://masna.org/hawaiibanfactcheck/>

-MASNA Board of Directors