

# *The Sea Star Quarterly*



*The Sea Star Quarterly  
is a presentation of*

wasatch  
marine  
aquarium  
society



## INSIDE THE STAR

- 2 It's Winter Again!
- 3 Species Profile: Harlequin Tuskfish
- 5 WMAS Find – A - Word
- 6 Managing Mushrooms in The Reef Aquarium
- 9. Upcoming Events
- 11 The Last Word

## It's Winter Again!

Cold days, colder nights... and warm Holidays with family and friends.

Snow, snow, and more snow! In this edition of the *SeaStar Quarterly* we focus our attention indoors - to all those new aquariums that were Christmas gifts; the warmth of those halide lights; the rainbow of spectacular coral reef colors against the seasonal backdrop of a sea of white. A great time to start a reef tank. And a great time to upgrade or clean up an existing reef.

Winter traditionally is a strong time in the Australian reef aquarium hobby, and that makes it easier to find more of those cool Aussie fish and corals at your LFS - and with better pricing. It is also a time when manufacturers introduce new or updated equipment lines or equipment, just in time for the new year.

Here at WMAS, Winter is a time to celebrate some great Club Events like the January Fragfest (don't forget to renew your Club Membership!) and the Annual WMAS Winter Banquet!

We hope you enjoy the ride with us as we preview all the great things to come here at WMAS in 2014 – so climb aboard... and let's go!!!



## **Species Profile: Harlequin Tuskfish**

by Bob Carlson

The Harlequin Tuskfish (*Choerodon fasciatus*) is a beautiful, ornately colored species of wrasse that, although well known, is not commonly seen in home aquaria. The Tuskfish can grow as large as 16" long in the wild. In captivity, they typically grow to a maximum size of 10 inches - although some hobbyists have had them grow a bit larger than that. Their potential size, along with a propensity to eat small invertebrates such as snails and crabs as part of a hearty appetite, is the reason for their relative rarity in the home tank.

The Tuskfish gets its name from the 2 sets of spiked teeth that jut out from each lip, almost like small tusks. These specialized teeth are used to break open the shells of small mollusks and crabs. There are 2 subspecies of Harlequin Tusk; the first makes its home in the Indo-Pacific region, and the other is native to Australia and surrounding seas. They are visually similar; although the Australian variety sports overall brighter coloration, and more definitive colored 'borders' on each of its vertical color bands.

Harlequin Tuskfish have a reputation for occasional aggression in a home aquarium environment, and so are generally kept in large, 'fish only' aquariums along with other larger predatory fishes such as lionfish and triggers. They are generally listed as 'Reef Safe With Caution' by most fish wholesalers, but are usually avoided by reef keepers due to (unfounded) fears over coral munching, and concerns about adult size. It has been my experience that the Harlequin Tusk will occasionally pick at your CUC (clean up crew) - especially snails; but they do not seem to give corals any unwanted attention. They also seem to be perfectly safe around anemones, clams, sea cucumbers, urchins, gorgonians and sea fans.





## **Species Profile: Harlequin Tuskfish** (cont)

Tuskfish are quick growers from the juvenile (1 inch) size to the young adult (5 – 6 inch) size; often growing 3+ inches per year; but then their growth rate slows and they will grow at less than 1 additional inch per year until they reach their maximum size . As mentioned before, they do have hearty appetites and will consume most prepared marine foods – so consider their impact on your tank's total bioload if you are thinking of adding one of these beauties to your tank.

The photo below (and this edition's Cover Photo) are of my own personal Harlequin Tusk, affectionately known as "Big Boy". I got him as a 2.5" juvenile about a year ago; he has since doubled in size. His growth does appear to be slowing down as referenced above. In spite of being the largest fish in my reef by several inches, he is still somewhat shy, and will dive into a rock cave should I approach the tank too quickly. He is housed with a 4" Vlamingi and a 3" Kole Tang, and they get along just fine. Also in there are (among other fish) a pair of 2" Banggai Cardinals and a pair of Black Clowns.

He has not shown any aggression towards any of his tankmates and so far has been a model citizen.

If any of you happen to own a larger reef aquarium, you should consider the addition of a juvenile Harlequin Tuskfish into your own system. They add a burst of color and character not often seen in the home aquarium.



# WMAS Find – A – Word

B H S I F Y L L E J F Q C W K J W J  
 D S U P O T C O M N U C M I C P M V  
 A K R V V U Y C Z Z L G M Q F X O I  
 V D E N O M E N A A E S G X M B R I  
 R L T K U W S E M U T U B N F L A S  
 F L S H S W L S J Q U K O S B H Y H  
 H U B V R T A B O P H T J E I G E I  
 C G O O R W P N K M K I K A S L E X  
 O A L U E Q L I U N Y H S H H N L Q  
 R E T S S K O R A T N G U O A N S K  
 A S N D E B P L E I T J L R R B Y O  
 L B C U O A P S Q T V X L S K M M X  
 R M H W G L U H E E S V O E P P I W  
 E S F P U N P R L A O Y M T O D V H  
 E B Q B F Y I H C A L H O O B S X A  
 F A J U X B J R I H J I P X C Z D L  
 P T Q E I D A F R N I M O M F H Q E  
 N D E B U D O V M E C N Q N I B O B  
 O Q Z E E H W Y F Z H S E A U R O W  
 Z D S E A W E E D C V L L E H S H U  
 K V K Y M C N M A R L I N C Q G D S

## ANSWER KEY

CLAMS	CORALREEF	DOLPHIN	HERRING	JELLYFISH
LOBSTER	MARLIN	MOLLUSK	MORAYEELS	OCTOPUS
OYSTER	PLANKTON	SEALION	SEANEMONE	SEAGULL
SEAHORSE	SEAURCHIN	SEAWEED	SHARK	SHELL
SHRIMP	SQUID	TUNA	TURTLE	WHALE



# Managing Mushrooms In The Reef Aquarium

by William Spencer

Corals of the family *Discosomatidea*, or Mushroom Corals are often highly sought after by new Reef Aquarists. Long time Reef Aquarists, however, often learn to despise these corals.

Mushroom corals can be very beautiful in a reef tank, but their propensity to grow out of control and take over a tank can become problematic for those who want to keep other corals. The question then becomes how to control them and often times how to rid your tank of them all together.

When I started in the hobby I found that not only are mushroom corals fast growing they are very easy to frag and sell or trade with other hobbyists. I cut and traded hundreds of mushroom corals with others and always had an abundant supply because they grow back so fast from the base of the coral after being cut. In fact cutting them often leads to the stem growing back multiple mushroom heads and thus quickly adding to their numbers.



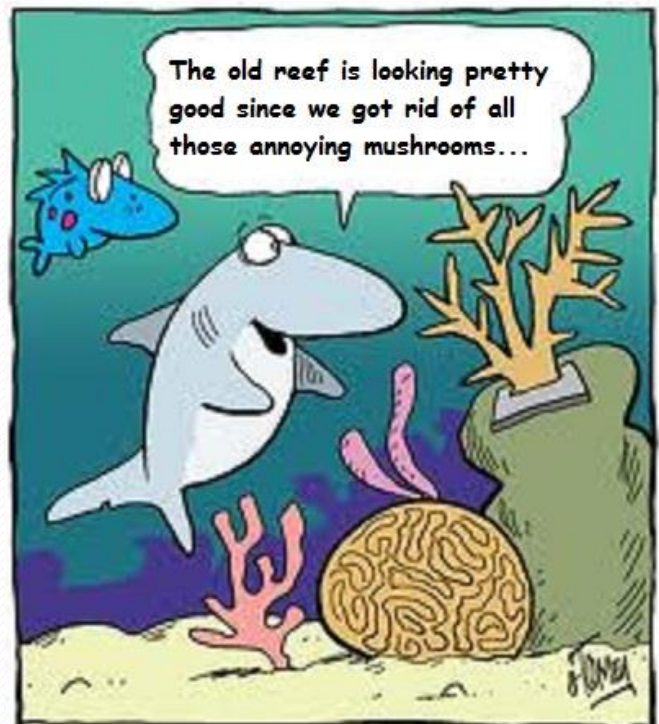


## Managing Mushrooms In The Reef Aquarium (cont)

Frustration later set in when I wanted to keep other corals and the mushrooms continually overgrew and killed off those other corals. I soon found myself wanting to get rid of most of my mushrooms for good. This is much more difficult that it seems it should be. The act of simply cutting the mushrooms off the rock does not work since every bit of mushroom flesh must be removed or the pieces that are still on the rock will quickly grow back and just make the problem worse.

If mushrooms are the only the corals that are visibly present on the rock and the rock is one you can easily remove from the tank you can simply pull out that rock and trade, sell or give it away to someone who still wants mushroom corals in their tank. But what do you do about the ones that are on rocks you either can not or do not want to remove from your tank, or that are threatening other corals?

After trying MANY different approaches, I finally found one that seems to work well.



## **Managing Mushrooms In** **The Reef Aquarium** (cont)

I heat up a small amount of vinegar in the microwave and inject it directly into the base of the mushroom coral, putting as much vinegar in the coral as possible. In my experience 80% of the mushrooms I treat this way have died within a couple of days. If one of the mushrooms is still alive after this treatment, I simply inject it with the same solution again.

I personally feel it is best to only kill a few mushrooms at a time this way since I am not certain of the effect of adding lots of vinegar to the tank. I am, however, certain that many dead and decaying mushrooms in a tank cause a large amount of pollution. I suggest running carbon and a protein skimmer while applying this solution.

I personally have noticed that my protein skimmer pulls out a lot more gunk as these corals die.

The great thing about this solution is that you can pick the mushrooms you wish to kill and leave those that you want to keep. This way if a mushroom is threatening another coral you can remove just that one mushroom.

If you are looking to selectively remove mushrooms from your tank or if you want to remove all of them, I suggest you try this method. Just remember, like everything else in this hobby be patient and keep working on it. Eventually you will be successful.

If anyone has any other suggestions, I urge you to post them on the Forum so we can all learn from each other.





## Upcoming Events – Winter 2014

- **January** - Join us on January 2<sup>nd</sup> for our Annual Winter Fragfest! Coral frags by the boatload, with prices starting at just \$10 (PLUS 50% off for Paid Members)!!!



- **February** - Winter Banquet Time!!!

Quality Marine Importers will be the Guest Speaker., so join us for food, fun, prizes and great entertainment on Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>!!!



- **March** - Join our Special Guest Speaker Brandon Davis from *zoanthids.com* for an in – depth look at the wonderful world of those awesome little corals affectionately known as



“zoos”... and you can expect that there will be a ton of sweet zoanthids available for purchase – and maybe a few raffled off to some lucky meeting attendees!



# THE LAST WORD



*Wasatch Marine  
Aquarium Society*



It's hard to believe that it has been 19 years now since a small group of 5 or 6 local Salt Lake saltwater enthusiasts got together and started what became known as the Wasatch Marine Aquarium Society. Meeting at various members houses for the first few years, the group known as the WMAS has grown into one of the largest continuously running Marine and Reefkeeping Clubs in the United States. With the advent of the Internet, the WMAS launched their website ([www.utahreefs.com](http://www.utahreefs.com)) in 2004. Today, the Forum and Message Board are consistently in the Top 5 'local' Marine Hobby Forums in the country for daily site visits. No local club in the western US – including the 'big name' clubs in California – even comes close. And we have weathered the storms and yes, the 'tsunamis'; those competitors who set up their own shops looking to try and beat us at our own game. Well, they have all come... and they have all gone. And look at who is left, still standing strong. Happy 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, WMAS! And may you have many, many more!

**WASATCH MARINE AQUARIUM SOCIETY**  
**[www.utahreefs.com](http://www.utahreefs.com)**

