

August 2008 - Michael Williams (Tuskfish)

Congratulations to Michael Williams on winning TOTM for August 2008 with his sensational 6ft'er!

Michael is known as Tuskfish on the RTAW Forums and you can read more about his tank in his Tank Journal.

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Introduction

I have been keeping fresh water tanks on and off for the past 25 years. I've kept cichlids and angelfish and some ugly catfish and managed to breed a few things. About 7 years ago, I moved house and put my 4 ft tank in storage for a couple of years. I considered packing the hobby in as I had grown bored with fresh water set ups.

Then one day, I was in a LFS here in Adelaide called Seaview Aquariums and was amazed at how beautiful their marine display tank was. I had never seen a tank like it, full of colourful corals and some amazing fish. It inspired me to try and set up my tank again as a marine tank.

I took the 4 ft out of storage and set it up.

I spent the next 4-5 months struggling with a tank that had its limitations due to size and lighting. I was on a huge learning curve and made a lot of mistakes.

I realised the 4 ft wasn't going to cut it and I decided to buy my current 6 ft tank.

Current set up

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The tank is 72" x 20" x 20" and was bought off the shelf, having been advertised as a "marine tank set up". It included a hood, T8 lighting and sump with bioballs.

The water volume is around 550 -600lt including the 36" x 18" x 18" sump.

I would change the width of the tank if I had the chance again. Hindsight is a wonderful thing.

The tank is situated in the dining area of the house and it gets viewed by the family daily at mealtime. The stand is 70cm high which is ideal for viewing from the dining table but is a little cramped with the additional equipment I've added. Hindsight!

The tank has been running for about 4 years now and has seen a few changes in that time. I have ditched the bioballs and turned the sump into a refugium, ditched the hood and gone topless and ditched the T8 lights for metal halide.

The tank has more or less evolved to what it is now, as opposed to being planned.

Filtration

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The filtration consists of a Weipro 4000 recirculating pump in the sump, with a Tunze 2045 nanostream, Tunze 6060 and an el cheapo 3000lt per hour power head.

It circulates the water through 150kg (guesstimate) of live rock. Water from the overflow travels down into the refugium before passing through two baffles of live rock and then to the last chamber containing the pumps for the chiller, skimmer and return.

The skimmer is a Reef Octopus DNW150 and was originally bought to house in the stand but it was too tall and had to go next to the tank. My calculations were out by 2 cm. Doh!

Other equipment

Over the years I have added a second hand Teco chiller, which I had serviced and re-gassed due to a leak and it hasn't missed a beat since.

I have also added a Reef octopus CR100 calcium reactor to replace having to mess around with kalk water daily.

I've added an auto top off using a peri pump from one of the group buys which feeds from a 25lt container housed in the cabinet.

I run carbon through a fluid bed filter housed in the sump.

Lighting

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My purchase of metal halides has probably had the biggest single impact on the way the tank has progressed.

The lighting consists of 3 X 150 watt 14000k halides and 4 x 30 watt T8 tubes housed in a mozoo light fitting. The globes/tubes are changed every 12 -15 months. I find a big difference in the colours of globes from different manufacturers.

My current 14,000k globes are a bit yellow so I'm waiting on the 20,000k globes I have just ordered to arrive.

The mozoo unit has been pretty reliable and tends to match the look of the rest of the tank although it does hum a bit.

The T8 actinics are switched on by timers for 13hrs a day and the halides are on for 8hrs.

Maintenance

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Water changes of 100lt are done every 2-3 weeks using NSW which I collect myself.

I don't dose the tank with anything and prefer to keep it simple (and cheaper). I view a lot of the additives and solutions as snake oils.

The skimmer gets cleaned every 2 weeks and the top up water is replaced every 4-5 days. The carbon in the fluid bed filter is replaced monthly.

Apart from razor blading the front glass every week and using the glass magnet, I don't really have to do much else.

Water parameters

My water parameters are fairly stable, but I'm not a religious tester.(Bi monthly)

Salinity 1.026

pH 8.3

Alk 8.5

Calcium Around 400

I've always had nitrates in this tank and used to think it was because I didn't have a deep sand bed (which I now have in my 'fuge). I had been advised by my LFS to use crushed shell as my substrate when I first set up.

I realise that the tank is probably just overstocked a tad but I really love colour and movement in a tank.

Fish list

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Harlequin tuskfish - *Choerodon fasciatus* (my oldest fish)

Yellow tang - *Zebrasoma flavescens*

Mimic tang - *Acanthurus pyroferus*

Powder blue tang - *Acanthurus leucosternon*

2 x Ocellaris clowns - *Amphiprion ocellaris*

Pink shrimp goby – *Cryptocentrus* sp.

Mandarin - *Synchiropus splendidus*

Flame angel - *Centropyge loricula*

Coral Beauty - *Centropyge bispinosus*

Humbug - *Dascyllus melanurus*

Chromide - *Chromis viridis*

Damsel - ?

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Coral list

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Lobophyllia

Euphyllia ancora

Nepthea sp.

Coral morphs

Sinularia

Sarcophyton

Small acros

Euphyllia glabrescens

Zoanthus

Xenia

Duncanopsammia axifuga

Lobophyton

Inverts

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Anemone - Heteractis crispa

Maxima clam

2 x Squamosa clam

Tigertail cucumber

Black cucumber

Acknowledgements

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I'd like to thank Reef Octopus for sponsorship of TOTM and for some great products.

Thanks to all the guys on the forums who have been a massive source of information.

A big thanks to all the masaog members who have shown me their tanks and shared their time and ideas.

And thanks to my family for putting up with the fish geek!