

February 2009 - Steve Sterling (Rhys123)

Congratulations to Steve Sterling on winning TOTM for February 2009 with his beautiful mixed reef!

Steve is known as Rhys123 on the RTAW Forums and you can read more about his tank in his Tank Journal.

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Well this definitely came as a very big surprise.

Ok where to start, I guess I started out as many others did with a freshwater tropical fish tank that morphed into a large cichlid tank that housed a breeding colony of Frontosa.

From that illustrious beginning, when I was able to, I decided on a whim to get myself a marine setup, so over the course of a weekend back in Sept 2007 without a clue and no preparation or planning I launched into the world of the Marine Reef Hobbyist.

And that more or less finds me where I am today, I was lucky I found RTAW joined MASWA and met a few people who where able to guide me in the right direction.

The Tank:

My tank is a 3x2x2.5 with a left hand corner weir and a backup siphon durso combo as described Silent Overflow - Syphon and Backup Overflow Design

The sump is a 2x14x14 divided into 3 sections, the first section containing both the tank overflow and skimmer outlet with a bubble trap, the middle section is a DSB and Refuge, and the last section holds the return pump.

Total system volume is roughly 340 liters

Filtration and Flow:

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The tank has 100kg of live and base rock.

The corner weir feeds a DNW150 RO External Skimmer which is perfect for my system.

The tank siphon line leads into a 100 micron nylon mesh filter sock which is rotated every second to third day.

Flow is provided by 6 Seio Powerheads

3x 6000lph 1 on a timer on for 1 hour of for 1 hour

2x 2400lph

1x 3200lph

This gives me a turnover of roughly 86x tank volume, give or take a bit.

Lighting:

Is supplied by a 400w MH Lowbay with a 20000k bulb (this hopefully soon will be upgraded to a Lumenarc or something similar)

I use a blue cold cathode tube as dusk setting and a row of LED's as moonlighting

Lighting period. The moonlights come on at 5am followed by the cold cathode tube at 6am the MH come on at 10:30 am then of at 7:30pm the cold cathode tube goes of at 10:00pm and the LEDS go of at 11:00pm

Water top off and Water Changes:

Water top off is via a medical drip and 2x20 liter water drums full of Kalk (which is my main supplement for the tank) behind the tank in another room dripped via a medical drip and with stefani valve.

I do very large water changes, at least 1/3 a week and sometimes 1/3 twice a week. You would think that this would play havoc with my water parameters but they are rock steady.

Auxiliary Equipment:

I run a FBF with Antiphose and Matrix carbon.

Supplements:

My main supplement is Kalk, I supplement very lightly with Bicarb at night and DampRid in the morning for that extra kick and once a week I dose Epsom salts for Mg.

I actually have a RO CR-70 Dual Chamber calcium reactor but I am loath (or to lazy) to play with a system that is working.

For trace elements I use the Seachem Aquavito fuel range dosed at 20ml per week.

I use Antiphose to control PO4

Water Parameters:

Temp: 27 to 28

PH: 8.4

Salinity: 1.026

Nitrate: 0

Phos: 0.06 (checked with a photometer this is the only way to reliable check PO4)

Alk: 9.6

Calc: 460

Mag: 1350

Fish stock:

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1x Atrosalarias fuscus - Highfin Blenny

3x Amphiprion Ocellaris - Clown Fish

1x Gramma Loreto - Royal Gramma

1x Halichoeres Chrysus - Banana Wrasse

1x Masudai Hogfish - Peppermint Hogfish

1x Pseudocheilinus hexataenia – Sixline Wrasse

1x Cirrhilabrus filamentosus – Whipfin Fairy Wrasse

2x Pomacentrus Pavo - Blue Chromis

Inverts:

1x Trochus Snail

150x (I stopped counting at this point) Turbo Snails

30x Mini Hermits

40x Cerith Snails

1x Large (Dumb) Hermit

1x Mantis (Sump Resident)

1x Large Crab (Sump Resident)

3x Holothuria Thomasi Tiger Tail Sea Cucumber

1x Peppermint shrimp

Corals Soft:

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Xenia

Actinodiscus discosoma – Morphs of different kinds

Rhodactis – Several different kinds

Zoanthids & Palythoa colonies

Star polyps – Several different kinds

Coral SPS

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Acropora

Montipora

Millepora

Pocillopora

Seriatopora

Corals LPS

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Cataphyllia jardini – Elegance

Plerogyra sinuosa – Bubble coral

Euphyllia ancora – Fluro Green Hammer

Echinopora spp

Fungia

Turbinaria Pelta

Lobophyllia – Open Brain

Trachyphyllia – Rose coral

Duncanopsammia

Scollymia Australis

A few other bits and pieces that I have missed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone for voting for my tank and I would also like to thank a few people who I believe have made the hobby more enjoyable for me. Adrian (Amashun) he has helped me out with many problems and given much advise, most notably when I had an AEFW, Jason (Spanishmack) even though he has drifted to the dark side (flubber) he was always willing to listen and always offered freely what he had in his tank, recently Chris (Blackjack or Cwright) and Chris (Poppie) The community that we have is a great community thanks to you all.

I would also like to thank Janyee and her husband for the livestock that I was able to secure of them at start up for an unbelievable price (I always walked away with more then I was meant to) they where very generous, something I hope I

have carried forward and Sirknight for the live rock I obtained for a steal.

Special recognition needs to go to my son Kyan who at five (5) informs me whilst I am away working what has been going on with my tank during the day, to my wife's despair he also tells me if she has deviated from the strict regime (cough cough) that I have set out for her during these periods away.

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