

May 2011 Dan

Congratulations Daniel on winning TOTM for May 2011 with beautiful, clean SPS reef.

Daniel is known simply as Dan on the RTAW forums and you can find out more about his tank in his tank journal.

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Both

Cathy and I have always had a love of the ocean. I have, like so many others kept and bred freshwater fish for many years and then about 6 years ago I finally decided to take the plunge into the world of marines seeking more challenges than freshwater could have given me. The first year a LOT of mistakes were made and lessons learnt and a move to Perth saw me have to give up my tank. 3 years ago we were back in the sunshine state, we found RTAW and marine aquarium keeping has slowly changed from hobby to obsession.

Display tank:

3ft x 2ft x 2ft eurobraced in 10mm glass, tank custom made by Dennison from MaryAnnes Aquariums.

Stand:

Custom pine stand stained dark brown. The left side panel is removable which allowed us to have the largest sump that could fit underneath and it also allows for better side access to the sump when doing routine chores.

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Sump:

30in x 18in x 18in split into 3 sections (skimmer -> refugium -> utilities/return)

Filtration:

Filtration is primarily through the live rock and skimmer. There is however a small amount of macro algae in the sump but this does not grow due to low nutrient levels

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Skimmer:

ATB Nano Cone (B version) with Airstar pump. Whilst I was always skeptical about spending money on a good skimmer, this extra performance has allowed us to feed corals and inverts in the tank almost nightly. Large input, fast removal is helping to ensure the sps growth rates are strong.

Water flow:

Single Vortech MP40w which is dialed in at around 50% on lagoon mode. This provides the tank with approx 20x turnover and pushes the limits of flow without causing a sand storm. We also have a

battery back up system to give us peace of mind.

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Lighting:

We originally had a DIY LED over the tank however found the corals did not seem to adapt well so we decided to go with T5's as they are widely used and have been for many years. The current fixture is a Solarmax 8 x 39watt which has individual reflectors for each tube. We choose to use ATI tubes and replace these every 8 months.

Dawn Channel – 11am – 10pm

Daytime (full light) – 12pm - 9pm

Other Equipment:

2 x TLF Fluid Bed Filter running ROWAphos & ROWAcarbon (changed monthly)

Scheego 300watt titanium heater & controller

Bubble Magus 3 Channel dosing pumps running solutions of Randy Holmes Recipe #1 and set to 6 cycles / day to ensure there is minimal daily fluctuations

Auto Top Up float switch connected to a 60lt reservoir of RO water

RO/DI unit from PSI Filters

Hailea 150a Chiller fed from the return pump

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Water Parameters:

The best thing I have learnt in this hobby is stability, this isn't always easy and I am still finding challenges keeping important parameters like Alkalinity stable due to the ever increasing uptake by my corals.

Current water parameters:

Salinity – 36ppm (refractometer)

Nitrate – Undetectable (Salifert)

Alkalinity – 8.0dKH (Salifert)

Calcium – 420ppm (Salifert)

Magnesium – 1280ppm (Salifert)

Phosphate – 0.00ppm (Hanna Checker)

Additives:

Prodibio (Bio Optim & Bio Digest) - fortnightly

Prodibio (Reefbooster) - twice weekly

Kent Iodine – 4-6ml weekly spread over 2-3 doses

Red Sea Potassium – 6ml weekly spread over 2-3 doses

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Coral Feeding:

Those who know me know how much I believe in feeding corals more than just light. Most marine aquarists go to great lengths to maintain 'natural reef conditions'; however the high volumes of marine planktons which feed the reefs are often overlooked or avoided due to potential issues with water fouling in our small closed systems. We currently hatch our own Artemia (enriched with greenwater) and use PolypLab Reef Roids to supplement the live Artemia. This coral food mix gets fed to the tank 5-6 nights per week.

Fish:

We have both always loved fish and felt that they are as integral to the tank as the corals unlike many dedicated SPS tanks which have few fish to keep bio-loads down. We are currently searching for one last fish for the tank but this is proving difficult due to size of tank, compatibility and availability.

Current Fish List:

Amphiprion ocellaris – Black & White Clownfish x 2

Halichoeres chrysus – Canary Wrasse

Pseudochromis fridmani – Orchid Dottyback

Zebrasoma xanthurum - Purple Tang

Corals:

Mainly SPS but with a few LPS scattered around the base of the rockwork.

Acropora sp.

Millepora sp.

Stylophora sp.

Pocillopora sp.

Ricordea sp.

Montipora sp.

Euphyllia ancora

Fungia sp.

Ricordea yuma

Scolymia australis

Acanthastrea lordhowensis

Symphyllia radians

Zoanthid sp.

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Inverts:

Lysmata amboinensis – Redline Cleaner Shrimp x 2

Tridacna crocea – Crocea Clam

Tridacna maxima – Maxima Clam

Trochus sp. - Trochus Snail

Strombus Sp. - Stromb Snail

Maintenance:

Daily visual inspection of all equipment

Daily visual inspection of livestock

Daily/Weekly algae cleaning (viewable sides & back wall)

Weekly 10% water change with natural sea water – I keep to this religiously ensuring trace elements we do not have the ability to test for are replenished

Weekly water parameter testing

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Acknowledgments

Firstly I want to thank Cathy who put up with this obsession day in day out during the early days, but is now as bad as I am. I also want to thank my cousin Brad (Bradw6860) who introduced me to RTAW and inspired me to keep persisting with a reefers ultimate challenge, the colourful sticks. A massive thanks to Heath, Bruce & John from QLD Coral Creations who time and time again give us access to the very best quality livestock (:clap:) I also want to thank the MASQ crew who without fail are always there if you ever need a hand, we've made some great friends along the way with a special thanks to Derek (Deek) and Heath who dropped everything to save our reef during Brisbane's floods earlier this year. Lastly thanks to those who volunteer to keep the RTAW forums running and those members who continue to share their knowledge along the way, our tank inhabitants have a much better life thanks to the resources RTAW provide.

Cathy and I are honored and proud to be nominated and included in a collection of some of the best tanks down under.

Happy Reefing.