A good Aquarium Heater is vital for Tropical Fish health

Finally, we can say goodbye to the sweltering temperatures of summer! I look forward every year to the return of fall colors and to the milder weather that the changing season brings. When the nights start getting cooler and the days are shorter, I know that it's time to dig the warm clothes out of the closet. What does all this have to do with fish?

Well, fish are sensitive to temperature changes just like we are, they get cold too. Stable water temperature is important to a fish's overall health and immune system. Frequent swings can open the door for disease and infections. But, for a couple of other reasons, they can be more affected by a drop in temperature than humans.

The first is that they are tropical fish (yes, salt water fish are also from the tropics) where the weather is always warm and it's not unusual for water temps to be in the mid-eighties. The second (and more important reason) is that fish have no way to adjust their body temperature. Unlike humans who have an internal body temp of about 98.6 degrees, a fish's body temp is dependent on the surrounding water for warmth. Their bodies run on what is known as an exothermic system. In simple terms, it means that they don't generate any of their own heat. If the water is only 65 degrees, their bodies and blood are also 65 degrees. Burrrrrr.

So, since the fish depend on their environment (which happens to be an aquarium in this case) for their body heat and we control that environment, it is important that we maintain it properly.

Fortunately, it's pretty easy to do. First, make sure that the thermostat in your building or home is not set too low. We recommend 68 degrees. You also want to make sure it does not turn off at night or on the weekends (if your tank is located where you work). Secondly, make sure that your aquarium heater is plugged in and in good working condition. If your heater is older than 2 years, you should consider replacing it with a new one. When an aquarium heater stops working properly, it either does not work at all or it will stick on and raise the water temperature to dangerous levels. And, by the time you find out that something is wrong, many of your fish could be dead. I have seen many examples of a heater malfunction that ended in disaster. Don't let something that is so easy to prevent ruin all your hard work.

If it is time to replace your heater, below is a chart that will help you select the right size heater for your fish tank.

So, let's do our part to keep our fish safe and comfortable during the cooler months of the year.

Ambient Room Temp = 68 degrees F

Desired Water Temp = 77 degrees F

Heating required = 9 degrees F

Tank Size = 20 gallon

Heater size needed = 50 watts

Heater Sizing Chart

Tank Size	Raise temp 9ºF	Raise temp 18ºF	Raise temp 27ºF
5 gal	25 watt	50 watt	75 watt
10 gal	50 watt	75 watt	75 watt
20 gal	50 watt	75 watt	150 watt
25 gal	75 watt	100 watt	200 watt
40 gal	100 watt	150 watt	300 watt
50 gal	150 watt	200 watt	two 200 watt
65 gal	200 watt	250 watt	two 250 watt
75 gal	250 watt	300 watt	two 300 watt
80-100 gal	300 watt	two 200 watt	two 350 watt
110-135 g	two 200 watt	two 250 watt	two 350-400 watt
150-200 g	two 250 watt	two 300 watt	two 400-500 watt