



## New aquarium species database

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The UNEP–World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP–WCMC) is pleased to announce a new database on the trade in aquarium species, the Global Marine Aquarium Database (GMAD), which is available at <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/marine/GMAD/>

Users of the database will have access to approximately 50,000 records of trade in live aquarium species and may query these geographically (e.g. the number of fish exported from the western Pacific to North America) and taxonomically (e.g. the top ten most traded families of invertebrates in global trade).

A more detailed description of the database and supporting project is below. Further data collection is ongoing and the database is continuously being updated, with the release of the next version scheduled for April. Comments, and notification of any errors especially in the names of invertebrates, would of course be appreciated.

### Some background

Since April 2000 the UNEP–WCMC and the Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) have been collaborating with members of trade associations to establish the GMAD as a freely available source of information on the global aquarium industry. Our common objective is to centralise, standardise and provide fast and easy access to information on the aquarium trade.

### Description of GMAD

There is no monitoring or reporting framework for the global aquarium trade. This means that the best source of quantitative data is the wholesale import and export companies who link the supply and retail ends of the business. As a matter of routine business practice companies keep records of their sales, either as paper copies of their invoices or on company computer databases. The exact nature of these records varies, but all record the quantity of any individual species bought or sold, the date of each transaction and the source or destination of the shipment. Company sales records are therefore an excellent source of data on marine aquarium species in trade, and the only source for species not recorded under any other process (e.g. CITES).

UNEP–WCMC and MAC have established good working relationships with such companies from all around the world. They have provided us with access to their sales records, which are the core data in GMAD. These data have been through a careful and methodical period of data conversion (e.g. paper-based records have been computerised) and formatting (e.g. data from different electronic systems have been placed into a single standardised format). Data from 45 representative wholesale exporters and importers of marine aquarium species have been harmonised by this process into a single publicly available database.



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