

KEEPING SOME OF THE DIFFERENT PUFFERS IN THE BRACKISH COMMUNITY AQUARIUM

Written by John DiVenuti, BAS, Pub. in The Daphnian, Oct 1990
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I have a number of different puffers in community set-up. It is upsetting to see the bad press given to puffers in the aquarium hobby magazines. They all seem to advise keeping puffers alone. The magazines state that puffers will destroy other fish they are kept with. I believe this not to be the total truth. Puffers can be aggressive towards other fish, but this does not have to be the case. Care should be taken in the choice of tank mates but there are a number of fish who get along quite well with the puffer.

I have kept several different puffers, some in community set-ups, and some with just another fish. The puffers I have kept in the past and am keeping in the present are the following: Carinotetraodon Somphongsi (Somphong's puffer), Tetraodon Palembangensis (Figure eight), Tetraodon Schoutedeni (Spotted Congo Puffer), and Chonerhinos Naritus (Bronze Puffer). The Figure-eight Puffer and two of Spotted Congo Puffers are being kept at present in a brackish-water community aquarium. The Bronze Puffer lived in peace for years with a Red-tailed Shark in a ten gallon aquarium. Somphong's puffer got along well with a rainbow shark also in a ten gallon aquarium. They we both removed from my twenty gallon community aquarium because of aggression towards the other puffers in the aquarium. They were attacking the spotted puffers and my figure-eight puffers. They did well with labeo species when they were removed to tan gallon aquariums.

I believe puffers can be kept with many brackish water species with no problem at all. I totally disagree with the statements I have read saying that puffers cannot be kept with other fish. I believe that they can be kept in a brackish community set-up because I have been doing just that for a number of years. At this time I am keeping two spotted congo puffers and a

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figure-eight puffer in a brackish set-up. I have three Archer-fish (*Toxotes jaculator*), an Orange Chromide (*Etroplus Maculatus*), four Mono (*Monodactylus Argenteus*), one Bumble Bee Goby (*Brachugobius Doriae*), and two Knight Gobies (*Stimatogobius Sadanundio*). None of the three puffers I keep in this twenty gallon aquarium harass or bother any of the other fish. I have kept Labeo species, Celebes Rainbow, Australian Rainbow, and even African cichlid fry that I was raising together.

The puffer does not deserve the bad press it receives from the tropical fish magazines. I know puffers are not total angels, but I do not believe that they must be kept isolated in an aquarium by themselves. They interact with a large variety of brackish-water fish as I have pointed out in this article. I strongly urge my fellow aquarists keeping these fish, not to keep them isolated. You will find them to be quite entertaining as they look real comical as they seem to hover in their brackish water home. Give them a try; you'll enjoy keeping them.