

April podcast

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Jess 00:16

Clinton-Macomb public library community, I am Jess, one of the children's librarians you may see when visiting the Library's Main and South branches. Today's podcast topic will be all about the South Branch's aquarium. There have been numerous questions posed about our aquarium. So, I thought I would start with some commonly asked questions, and then highlight some neat resources that the library offers. If you wanted to learn...learn more about taking care of our fishy friends. So, one of the most commonly asked questions we get is when did you get a fish tank? So, that fish tank was actually installed in April of 2022, which is right around the time that I started working at the Clinton Macomb Public Library. It was a donation on an honor of a longtime patron who was also an avid fish keeper. So, when you come into the library, and you visit our aquarium, you can check out the plaque that has information about Michael cup comments. Another commonly asked question that we get is the about the fish tank is if it is a freshwater tank or a saltwater tank. Even though we have Angel Fish in our tank, they are actually freshwater angel fish species. So, it is a freshwater tank. All the fish in our fish tank are freshwater species. While there are angel fish species that live in a marine are salty environments. These fish that we have are actually most of them are from South America and live in the freshwater river systems. So, for saltwater aquarium care, you need to add salt to the aquariums because you want that salt the salinity of the tank to be between about 24 to 32 grams of salt per liter. While freshwater aquariums are only about three grams of salt per liter of water, our tank is about 170 gallons, and we do not add salt to our fish tank. So that is a freshwater tank not saltwater.

Which leads to another question is can we put saltwater fish in our tank or vice versa could be put freshwater fish and a salt tank. And the answer to that is mostly no most fish are going to do well in environments they're suited for. So freshwater fish species are adapted to living in different freshwater communities. Just like our saltwater fish are adapted to living in areas of high salt and different systems. There are a couple of species of fish that can live along those river ocean areas where we have fresh water coming in from the river and saltwater coming in from the ocean. And it mixes together to create what's called brackish water where it's not quite salty enough to be ocean water. But it's a little too salty to be a freshwater. So, there are a couple of fish species that actually do live there. And you can keep some of those in the aquarium industry. A couple of those species would be like any of like the Mali species. There are species of gobies, and there are some small, puffer fish species that also live in kind of his brackish areas. None of the fish in our tank, as far as I'm aware, live in those brackish conditions so they would prefer to live in freshwater. So, we feed our fish...another question is how often do we do...do we feed the fish, they get fed every day, except for Sundays. They

get a little fast period over staff on Sundays every day at noon, so if you want to come and watch us feed the fish, they are very active and excited during this time. They usually are all gathered up at the tank because they know when their feeding is. So, feel free to stop by and hang out by the fish take about noon. And then we will feed the fish on Saturdays because we are going to be fasting them on Sundays. We do give them we do push them after lunchtime back to three o'clock. So, if you're coming to this the library on Saturday 3pm is around the time that we do give them their late lunch.

What do we feed our fish? All of the fish in the tank are considered omnivores, which means that they can eat both plant and animal material. But our fish are fed a pellet diet. Sometimes we do drop in the algae wafers. So, they are...I will feed on the other fish flakes, algae wafers, and then they kind of do clean up crew, any leftover food or any waste created by the fish, we have some of our cleaning crew species that will help keep the tank clean eating the algae and excess food. Too much food can be a bad thing. So, another question that we get asked is who cleans the tank, and how often is it cleaned for a librarian and the library staff will do kind of spot cleans that check on the tank to make sure that little issues are taken care of. But for big, regular cleaning cycles, we do have an outside company that comes in, it's our Detroit aquarium company, they usually come in about once a month, on a Wednesday afternoon. So if you're in the library, and you see a couple of guys carrying big buckets and hoses and all sorts of stuff, that means the fish tank is going to be cleaned that day. And you can sit and watch and what's really neat process, they take a giant hose and connect it to the fish tank and then to a sink in our facility facilities cleaning closet. And then they kind of do a suction process where they remove the dirty water from the tank. And then they can refill it with clean fresh water. They don't take the fish out of the tank. They stay in there during the cleaning process. But they never drain all the water not recommended to take all the water out of the fish tank. Because as the fish are swimming and doing their fishy business, there are good bacteria that builds up that helps keep the fish healthy. So, we don't want to change too much of the water because we don't want to stress the fish out or make them sick. So, we keep some of that water there, we do try to remove as much of the waste that the fish produce and the extra food, try to clean some of the algae off. So that that looks nice and clean, the fish are visible, and we keep an eye on them as they swap out and keep an eye on any issues. And so, we do, I guess I'd do spot check and maintenance, we check to make sure that the filters are working properly, that the thermometers and heaters are keeping the fish at the ideal temperature. But we do have an outside company that comes in to clean our tank for us on Wednesdays.

And they let us know if they're seeing anything that we need to change if there are something that we could do about the example of the algae problem. They're good about letting us know like, hey, try changing the settings on your lights so that they go off at a certain time. So, you don't get a buildup of algae. They do a really good job of taking care of the tank. And I'm always super impressed that when they do come to clean and take very, you can't really tell that they left that they clean and take other

than the fact that the tank looks amazing. Because they don't make a big mess. When I had a fish tank. And my fish tank was only about a 10 gallon I feel like I would get water everywhere. And then everything smelled super fishy. So, they come in they clean the tank, and they do a great job.

Next question, are the plants in the tank real? No, at this time we have artificial plants just to kind of keep maintenance down on the fish tank. Next question, are you going to get any more fish. And it really depends on the fish tank. And we do have some exciting news. We are considering adding some new fish at this time. Not quite sure yet on species. But we thought the tank looked a little on the empty side. Since right now the fish seem like they're doing really well the tank seems like it's stable and healthy, we decided that we would try to expand the population and maybe add a couple of new fish maybe a couple new species. So, don't know when that will be but keep checking on the library and you never know next time you come in, we might have some new fish friends for you to say hi to.

So, I have another question, and this one gets asked quite a bit, is can I feed the fish? So, the answer to this question is no. Because we do have so many fish in the tank, we want to make sure that they are not getting over fed or under fed. So we asked that library staff keeps an eye on them because we know how much they should be getting and we know you know to look for if there aren't any signs that the fish we might need to adjust their diets. So what we kind of talked about earlier with clean tank too much fish food in the tank that doesn't get eaten turned into waste, and then it just more that needs to be removed from the tank and too much and it can cause problems with water quality and make the fish sick. So, we have the library staff feed the fish, and that way they know that they're getting the right amount and we're not having any problems later down the road.

Our next question, do the fish have names? No, we haven't named any of the fish. So, you are free to give them nicknames but none of the fish at this time have any official names. What type of fish are living in the aquarium? Since we've gotten the tank, the answer to this question is that it has changed it's on new fish have been added as you lose fish. So currently what we have in the tank now we have several species are several examples of the angel freshwater Angel Fish. Its scientific name is Taro phylum Scolari, these fish are native to the Amazon Basin, they're fairly I would say large fish, they can grow up to six inches long in body length. And then with their fins, they can actually be about eight inches tall. So, you as you can see with our fish, they come in a variety of colors and pattern patterns. Some of our fish have stripes, some are solid, some are black, some are white, and yellow. And so, you can get Angel Fish in very many different colors and patterns. So, they're a fun fish for the fish to do a lot of variety. They can be kinda territorial, which means that they don't like other fish, even other angel fish coming into their part of the tank. So, you might see them sometimes chasing the other fish around. But they all seem to regulate or allow their buddy to sit in their...their tank with them. Because that's their...their chosen spot in the tank.

So, if you're going to change a fish, you want to make sure that your tank is large enough to accommodate the fact that they are officially kind of like their own space. So, having decorations, plants other objects in the tank to help make them feel like they're at home and this is their space will make them feel happier and safer. Like I mentioned earlier, these fish are omnivores, so they happily eat our fish flakes. In the wild though they'll eat more insects and worms. So those are always a good snack to feed them if you're keeping them as pets. Alright, so other fish that we have. You'll notice that we have another kind of large fish that has some long kind of pretty whisker like fins. It's not an angel fish. It's actually a pearl gourami and its scientific name is *Trichogaster leerii*. And again, this fish is also native to South America grows about four to five inches, and they can live I think about probably five to six years. So, they're fairly large long list fish species. Those long with your fins on help them explore their environment on where they live in the South American rainforest. So, streams can sometimes be very on, filled with other fish and plant material. And so, they use those fins to navigate and make sure that they're finding their way safely around that bumping into any predators or any obstacles. Kind of interesting facts about these fish is that they are similar to the beta family and the fact that they have a special organ that allows them to gulp air so they can breathe air if conditions in the water aren't helpful, but they can also use that air to build their bubble nests. So, if we had multiple Pearl Ramiz and they were getting ready to create a family, you might see them gulping air and making a little bubble nest further eggs and later baby fish to live in.

Some other fish that we've had in the library include our little catfish, our little corridors catfish. The catfish that we have are actually an albino version of the brand's catfish, Cory catfish, and its scientific name is *Codorus Aeneas*, again, a native South American species, they get their name because if you look closely at the species they have is bony body plate armor. And that helps protect them as they are searching for food in their environment. They also have these spines, that if you were to grab them, you want to watch out because not only not only are they sharp, they also have a small amount of venom in them calm so they are potentially a venomous species. They're a community fish. They like having several members of their species with them and they will swim around. They're very reactive species. So, you can see them dart around the tank usually near the bottom but sometimes they will dirt up to the surface back and forth. They also will sometimes go up here.

Another species that we've had in the tank is the Cherry Barb. The male...also this species are a very kind of distinctive red, which is where that name comes from. Female fish tend to be a little more brown, a little less colorful, but they still have that kind of reddish pigment to them so you know that it's a cherry BB, peaceful fish. They do enjoy their small groups. These fish are actually needed to Sri Lanka. And their scientific name is *Puntius Titteya* and then these nice fish for next species get really big, you might find these fish species in the aquarium at the pet store, only about three inches long. But as they get older, when they reach full grown adult size, they can actually be out two feet long. And I'm talking about our common pleco which *Hypostomus plecostomus*. Sorry, let me try that one

again, hit past in this plug customers Try saying that five times fast. So, these native these fish are native to Central and South America. They are considered to be peaceful fish, but because they get so big, anything that fits in their mouth, they may eat. So, if you are going to be having these fish in your fish tank, you just want to be aware of the sizes of some of your other animals. Because if it fits in their mouth, they will eat it. They are very helpful fish for an aquarium because they tend to be scavengers, and the cleanup crew so they help clean up waste in the tank. And they still get algae pellets every now and then just to help make sure that they don't go hungry if the tank has been recently cleaned. Because they get so big. They do have pretty hearty appetites.

And then the last species that we've had in the aquarium are the glow fish have trust. And the interesting thing about these fish is that the originally were developed many years ago to detect environmental toxins in a laboratory setting. And then because of the interesting colors that came out with it, they actually developed different lines of the glow fish species. So, there are actually seven different types of glow fish that you can purchase. Nowadays. We have the tetras like that we'd have at the aquarium which can come in different colors. We've had blue, pink, purple, green, the other species of glow fish that you can purchase are barbs, danios tetras, long, thin tetras, the quarry catfish Pasteles and the Bala sharks, they did have a line of betas. But they didn't seem to do as well. So that line has since been discontinued. The top dress that we have in here our take are considered a small peaceful fish. And they do well in our community. And my last question before we move on some of the library resources is what is your favorite fish. So, I do enjoy coming and watching all of the fish interact. I think they're all amazing little creatures. But I had to say a favorite would be a tie between I think our pearl gourami is a gorgeous fish. I love watching the fish swim through the water. I think the coloration on this fish is beautiful, looks very graceful, very elegant. The other fish they will have to stay as my favorites. They've always had a fondness for the little cory cats. I think their whiskers and their darting around the tank looking for food are very comical and funny. So, between the very peaceful gourmai who's just floating around looking very majestic, and then these silly little cory cats, it makes, I think a really entertaining to watch. So, if I had my own fish tank at home, I would definitely consider adding they'll go around me and the catfish. So, on that note talking about at home fish tanks.

So, the library has a lot of really good resources available to you a lot of different formats. So, I wanted to kind of highlight just some of the of the resources that you can browse while you're here at the library or online with our digital library. So, for books, we have a large number of books on fish, aquariums, saltwater fish, freshwater fish. So, I thought I'd highlight you know, one or two notable examples. So, if you were looking for a really cute story, to read with your family, or read aloud first story time, one of my favorites, I encourage you to check out is the library fish by Alyssa satin cap actually, there's actually two books in this series as of now. And in the first book. It's all about this little goldfish who is to APA library and loves listing to the librarian gift story times. But one day when the librarian doesn't come in, decides the goldfish decides that she's going to leave her bowl and explore

the library, so she goes on this little adventure, checks out her own books so she can do her own story time. Menace was a really super cute story in the second book. During a librarian story time, the library fish hear the story about a dog who learns how to read and the goldfish decides I'm going to do that I'm going to teach myself to read. So definitely a really cute book. ask the librarian next time you're in here, this book is definitely worth a checkout. If you want to learn more about the different types of fish, where they came from, how many species they are, we have some cool juvenile titles. The DK witness series about fish by Steve Parker is a really beautifully illustrated tax. It goes through kind of the origin of fish. You can learn about many, many different types of fish, the different species, where they're found that that title is available in print at all three locations. And then for those of you who are interested in aquarium care, we do have the freshwater aquariums for dummies and the saltwater aquariums for Dummies stuff, you get something that you are interested in learning more about how to take care of these...these fish. The dummies series is a great series for breaking things down and going through kind of step by step what do I need to know about this particular topic? So freshwater aquariums, we do have copies available at the South and North Branch. And then all three locations have the saltwater aquarium care. We also have additional titles about aquarium care in the library. But I wanted to highlight those...those two titles.

And one last in print title that I wanted to share with you that I think is super helpful is that at the Main Library, there is a visual reference novel called 500 Freshwater Aquarium Fish, a visual reference to the most popular species. And I didn't realize there was at least 500 fish freshwater only. So, there are a lot of options when you are deciding to start a fish tank from the beginning. So, if you wanted to kind of learn about what type of freshwater fish they have available, what they look like, how do you keep care of that how to take care of them. That is a really good resource to start with. Because it does go through some of the more common species, what to look out for what to avoid. So, a really good tool to have with your tank.

So, moving on, we have some digital resources that I wanted to highlight to you. So, hoopla and OverDrive, if you're not familiar are our digital library materials for getting eBooks, eAudiobooks, magazines, there's some movies and TV shows available music, especially with hoopla. So, checking in between these titles. First, online children's titles, there is the history of the pet fish, which kind of starts with the origins of when people first started keeping fish. And then it moves through kind of commonly kept fish. If you'd like this series and more they do have additional titles in the history of pets Pro you can look at the Care and Keeping up different pets animals like cats and dogs and pets and similar animals. And I was super excited. I was a big fan. I love shark movies. And so, I did not realize until kind of checking out to see finished books, the that the mag movie was actually based on a novel. So, if you are a fan of the mag series and wanted to get a little bit more information, you can check out the series by Steve Alton, did you have the audio books available? So, it's a great read as we are moving forward, in spring. We have lots of vacations coming up summers coming up sooner than we

realize. So, if you're looking for an audio book series, and you have time available, that's definitely one worth checking out.

And then another digital resource that I wanted to highlight was we recently received last couple of months, a new digital resource called Kanopy and Kanopy is really great because it has movies and documentaries available for checkout. You can stream from your device. There is a really cool feature for candidate kids. Setting the changing over time Kanopy kids beans that any of those titles in Kanopy kids are available to you unlimited access all month long. So, you can read and listen to any of the books in Canada kids as many times as you want, and it won't affect your monthly credits. For adults, you do get 15 credits per month. And the number of credits needed for different titles does vary. So, before you make a purchase, just double check to see if that is going to be if you have credits left. Sometimes the series are a little bit bigger because there's more titles in there. So just you aware that different titles might have different credit costs. But they will renew next month. And I did have two documentaries that I thought were interesting and worth checking out. This one is a nine AP is a series episode nine of this life in the world's ocean specifically talks about all different types of fish. So, while we might not see any of the fish in our tank, it's a really interesting series kind of covering over the history of fish, how they came to be, how they've changed over the years and kind of talks about more current issues on what's going on in our oceans.

On that same note, another documentary on this the 2022. So, a little bit newer documentary called Ocean Invaders. It's about a popular saltwater aquarium fish, the lionfish that was accidentally introduced to the Atlantic Ocean, along like the Gulf Coast. And this documentary is kind of taking a look at what type of impact this fish had on the Atlantic environment. So, it's a really kind of timely as we move closer to Arbor Day, and we're talking about these kind of environmental changes, a really good documentary to look at how we can, what kind of impact we have on something as small as oh, this fish got into the environment. And what that looks like years later, I do have one final digital resource I want to check out.

We have a lot of research databases at our on our library, one that I felt really fits in with this topic of fish keeping aquariums is actually the Hobbies and Craft Reference Center. So, this title or the series, so this database is available on the Library's website. To get to the Hobbies and Crafts Reference Center, we're going to navigate to the Advanced Research tab. And then halfway through the page you should find under I think hobbies, there are a link to this this resource. And once you're in this database, you'll find that there are different categories and tabs there's a search bar, so you can navigate to the Home and Garden section. And then you can find specific tab aquariums. And once you're in there, you can see recommended articles, but then you can start searching your own. So, these articles might be from scientific journals, they might be from magazine articles you might find on different care requirements for different fish. Aquascaping is kind of related to fish keeping in that

you're using tanks to create these aquatic environments that you may or may not want to add fish to. They may look really amazing. But some fish species like to eat aquatic plants or as they're searching for food, they might accidentally uproot them. So, you may decide, I really like creating these beautiful underwater landscapes. But I probably don't want to add a bunch of goldfish who are going to uproot and eat only plants. So, it's a really nice tool for finding some additional information. There are short articles that you can really narrow down and try to find the most relevant information and what you're looking for. So, if you are interested in any of these titles, feel free to ask your librarian. The next time you stuff the library for help finding them, whether it's the book, the Digital Library, or these online research databases, a lot of really good content to help you make some decisions and learn more about the really amazing hobby of fish keeping. So, thank you so much for listening to this podcast. I hope you have a great day. And the next time you're in the library Be sure to stop by and say hi to our fish friends. Thank you. Take care and happy reading