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On the live marine ornamental fish keeping at Keelakarai, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu

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A well managed and scientifically monitored aquarium was observed at Keelakarai near the fish trap landing centre. There are many small fish keepers, but the one located at Keelakarai was a major one where 38 species of marine ornamental fishes were available. These fishes and other organisms were collected mainly from the traps operated near Appa island, Mulli, Palliva Munai, Yanai bar, Kilichan bar, Thidal, Putti, Ida Muruvai and Valai island in the Gulf of Mannar. Some of the specimens caught in traps were in live condition when brought to the landing centre.

Table 1. List of live fishes and other organisms available along with their current market price

| Species | Price (Rs.) per specimen |
|--|--------------------------|
| <i>Abudefduf bengalensis</i> | 25 |
| <i>Abudefduf sordidus</i> | 25 |
| <i>Acanthurus leucosternon</i> | 700 |
| <i>Acanthurus lineatus</i> | 30 |
| <i>Acanthurus matoides</i> | 20 |
| <i>Amphiprion sebae</i> | 25 |
| <i>Balistapus undulatus</i> | 500 |
| <i>Balistes viridescens</i> | 500 |
| <i>Canthigaster margaritatus</i> | 50 |
| <i>Chaetodon auriga</i> | 100 |
| <i>Chaetodon collaris</i> | 25 |
| <i>Chaetodon decussatus</i> | 150 |
| <i>Chaetodon octofasciatus</i> | 30 |
| <i>Chaetodon plebius</i> | 175 |
| <i>Chaetodon vagabunda</i> | 35 |
| <i>Chelinus chlorurus</i> | 75 |
| <i>Chromis viridis</i> | 125 |
| <i>Coris formosa</i> | 400 |
| <i>Cryptocentrus caeruleomaculatus</i> | 50 |
| <i>Dascyllus aruanus</i> | 25 |
| <i>Dascyllus trimaculatus</i> | 35 |
| <i>Gnathanodon speciosus</i> | 75 |
| <i>Halichoeres hortulans</i> | 150 |
| <i>Heniochus acuminatus</i> | 275 |
| <i>Lactoria cornuta</i> | 10 |
| <i>Neopomacentrus nemurus</i> | 50 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Periophthalmus regius</i> | 50 |
| <i>Platax teira</i> | 75 |
| <i>Plectorhynchus pictus</i> (big) | 50 |
| <i>Plectorhynchus pictus</i> (small) | 75 |
| <i>Pomacanthodes annularis</i> | 500 |
| <i>Pomacanthodes semicirculatus</i> | 650 |
| <i>Pomocentrus caeruleus</i> | 50 |
| <i>Pterois volitans</i> | 100 |
| <i>Sargocentron rubrum</i> | 25 |
| <i>Thalassoma lunare</i> | 75 |
| <i>Thalassoma lutescens</i> | 120 |
| <i>Zanclus canecens</i> | 200 |
| <i>Zebrasoma veliferum</i> | 200 |

Other organisms

| | |
|---|-----|
| Carrot anemone (Red colour) | 20 |
| Green anemone | 40 |
| Brown anemone | 15 |
| Carpet anemone (Blue colour) | 200 |
| Tentacle anemone | 125 |
| Red star fish - <i>Protoreaster linckii</i> | 60 |
| Star fish - <i>Pentacerastes regulas</i> | 40 |
| Sea-urchin | 15 |
| <i>Cyprea tigris</i> | 30 |

At this centre, the seawater, initially was taken from a borewell and collected in a cement tank. At this stage, the salinity would be 1 ppt less than that of the seawater as it is being taken through a borewell. The collected water is then allowed to pass through a series of five biological filters arranged one after another. Finally, the clean seawater is stored in a cement tank. At this stage, the salinity would be increased by 1 ppt due to evaporation, thus attaining the same salinity as that of seawater. This water is kept in an overhead tank and by gravity, it is transferred to other tanks meant for keeping live fishes.

These fishes are sold mainly to Chennai and from there, to Bombay, Patna, Calcutta etc. On an average, this centre generates a revenue of Rs. 1,500-5,000/- per day.