

# REARING THE RED SEA ANEMONEFISH

## *Amphiprion bicinctus*

By Forrest A. Young

■ The Red Sea anemonefish, *Amphiprion bicinctus*, is an endemic species (coming only from one limited geographically separated area) and is a colorful and hardy addition to the marine aquarium. Red Sea anemonefish are very common in the wild but are rarely encountered in the marine fish trade due to the problems with supply of fishes out of the Mid-East. Lately these problems have

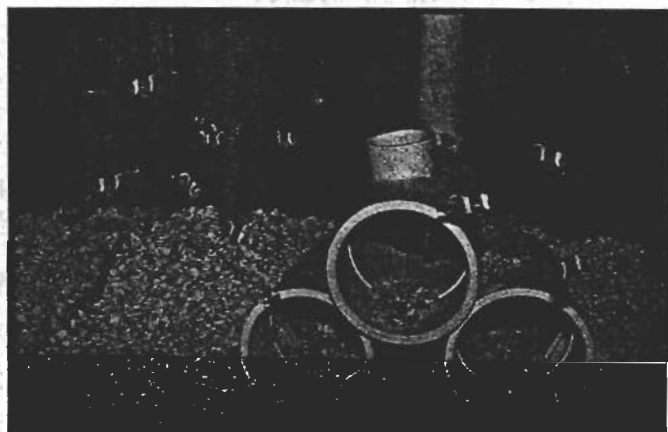
been exacerbated by the current crisis formed by Saddam Hussein and few fishes have reached the marketplace.

We at Dynasty Marine Associates, Inc., foresaw the limited availability of the species and imported a half a dozen mated pairs four years ago through German friends of the author, Mr. Peter Blas and Mr. Thorsten Jorgens of Aquaristik Imports, Frankfurt. The progeny of these first fish are just now

becoming market size. We encountered many difficulties conditioning the *A. bicinctus* pairs to spawn and it took three years of experimentation and the sacrifice of three pairs to achieve the rearing successes to date.

The nest of the Red Sea anemonefish is about the same size as *A. clarkii* and *A. chrysopterus*, which is 6 to 8 cm in diameter, and the eggs are typical in

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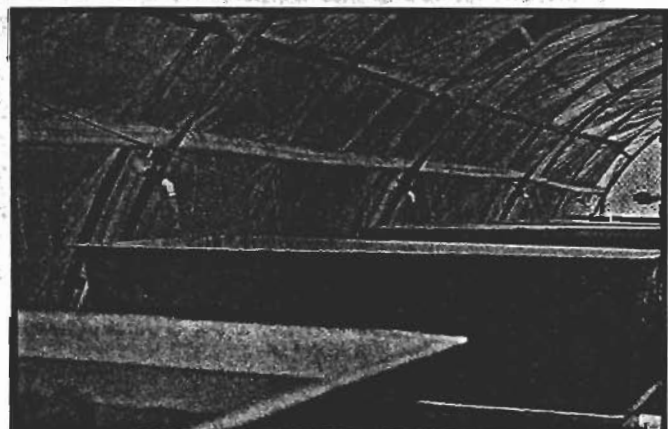
Top Row, Left: *Bicinctus* pair.

Top Row, Right: 4 week old showing black caudal marks.

2nd Row, Left: 6 week old *A. bicinctus*.

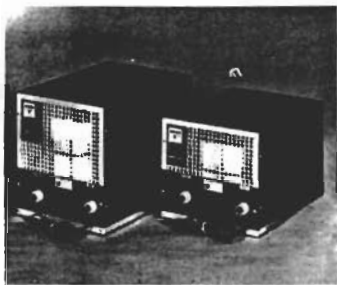
2nd Row, Right: Juvenile *bicinctus*.

Right: Growout greenhouse.



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size, morphology, and embryology of the "Clarkii complex" as described in Allen (1972, 1980) and *Amphiprion ocellaris* as described by Moe (1973). Spawning occurs at, or about, the time of dusk in our artificially controlled photoperiod. The spawning lasts about 45 minutes to one hour and during this time 600 to 1000 eggs are deposited in a circular pattern as is the case with all the other described anemonefishes. The development of *A. bicinctus* is also most identical to that of *A. clarkii*.

Larval rearing is accomplished in 1000 1 cylindrical vats with no filtration and are aerated by two airstones only. The nest is introduced into the larval tank the day of hatch, is aerated by air wands and the eggs hatch as darkness falls. The larvae are typical *Amphiprion* larvae and feed initially upon the marine rotifer (*Brachionus plicatilis*) for the first five to seven days, after which they are weaned to newly hatched *Artemia nauplii*. The *Artemia* are essential to about fifteen or seventeen days at which time the newly metamorphosed juveniles begin to eat particulate foods in earnest.

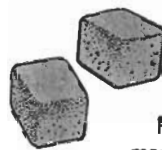
The most unusual thing that we noticed with the Red Sea anemonefish was the striking and brilliant coloration of the young juveniles. They are a bright orange color with prominent white bands. In addition, there is a small, dark spot on the second dorsal fin and the upper lobe of the caudal fin. These are very pretty little fish and as they mature, the dark spot fades and disappears totally. This is similar to the white edging on very small juvenile *A. clarkii* that also disappear as the fish matures.

We have found them to grow well in our life support systems and will offer the first specimens for sale by the time you read this article. We have been experimenting with other anemonefishes and perhaps will discuss this in a later article.

### Literature Cited

- Allen, G.R. 1972. Anemonefishes. T.F.H. Publications, Neptune City, New Jersey. 288pp.  
Allen, G.R. 1980. The Anemonefishes of the World. Aquarium Systems, Mentor Ohio. 104pp.  
Moe, M.A. 1973. Breeding the clownfish, *Amphiprion ocellaris*. Salt Water Aquarium, 9(2):3-14.

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