

REMOTE FISH LAB

SOP # = Lab3

Purpose: Describes the procedure for setting up fish for a lab (animals being kept remotely from sea tables for short periods of time).

Policy: This method is recommended for public education fish labs, university program labs and lab tests, and any observational studies on fish that do not have running seawater for periods of time.

Note: Generally fish labs should be done without removing them from their sea tables or aquaria. However, occasionally for specific labs the following method can be used.

Responsibility: Public education assistants, animal care specialist, public education coordinator, university programs coordinator and TA's, research coordinator and researchers.

Materials: Plastic aquaria (light weight and less dangerous than glass)

Procedures:

Note: Fish are far more affected by noise, vibrations, high temperatures and low oxygen levels than invertebrates. Thus, extreme care must be used when dealing with them.

1. The aquaria must be large enough for the animals to comfortably move around.
2. Sediment and/or small rocks must be put in to give the animal adequate hiding and shelter.
3. Seaweed should also be placed in tank to provide cover. If animals are placed in bare tank with no shelter, they behave more frantically and are not as easy to observe.
4. Lids must be used to prevent fish from jumping out of aquaria.
5. Total time in the plastic aquaria can vary from 1 to 2 hours based on the animal density and how warm the building is. Most fish can be left in aquaria for a half hour without water changes, however aeration by air stone and pump must be used throughout. Hands should be placed in water only when necessary as this warms up the water. If the aquaria are to be left out longer than a half hour, a quarter of the water should be refreshed with cold seawater every 20 minutes. Previously prepared sea water ice cubes can also be added. This refreshing every 20 minutes will re-aerate and cool the water for up 2 hours.
6. If any animal starts to look sluggish or appears to be gasping, it should immediately be placed back in a sea table. If in doubt about any animal, return it to its sea table environment.
7. Fish should only be handled when absolutely necessary. Not only is our body temperature much higher than theirs (hands should be wet and cold when handling) but also handling will disrupt the fish's slime layer thus leaving them vulnerable to bacterial infection.
8. Finally, fish of similar size should only be placed together. Small fish placed in a tank with larger fish could be eaten.
9. Fish are extremely susceptible to noise and vibrations. Keep noise in the class to a minimum and try to reduce any chair dragging or table banging, etc.