

February, 2010

ISSUE 02

# Idaho Reefs

Monthly Newsletter of the Idaho Marine Aquarium Society



## Reef Tour 2010

The IMAS Reef Tour is an opportunity for the public to view local salt water aquariums located in the homes and businesses of hobbyists in the Treasure Valley. This year, this very popular event will take place on Saturday, May 1. The Reef Tour is a little later than years past in order to avoid conflicts with spring break and build some momentum as we head into the summer. The Reef Tour is a great way to socialize with other enthusiasts and make new friends!

IMAS is currently looking for tanks to be on the tour. The requirements to be on the tour are simple; you must display a saltwater aquarium and be willing to open your home for several hours on a Saturday. Tanks of all sizes are encouraged to be on the tour.

Please visit the Reef Tour forum on the IMAS website to get the latest information on the tour and to submit your tank for viewing on the tour.

## IMAS Membership

The Idaho Marine Aquarium Society needs you! With your financial contributions, IMAS is able to maintain our goal of providing free education to the public about the safe care and propagation of marine animals.

The best way to donate to the club is by becoming a paid member, and doing so has never been easier. We've made two major changes to membership options. The first being different member categories. In addition to the classic Individual membership, we have added Family and Student memberships. The Family option allows for two household members at a discount when compared to the Individual option. For our younger hobbyists in high school and college, the Student option is an affordable way to support the club.

The biggest change to becoming a member is the flexibility to pay monthly. When combined with the member categories, you may become a member for as low as \$1.50 per month!

Please visit our website and become a member today.

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## February Meeting Roundup

The previous IMAS meeting was on February 5<sup>th</sup>. IMAS President Scott Morell gave a presentation on how to safely frag (propagate) a variety of different corals.

The presentation included information on the tools and materials every reefer should have in a good fragging kit followed by his personal experience on the frightening process of chopping up your favorite corals that take so much time and effort to grow.

In addition to the presentation, folks in attendance were invited to get their hands wet and practice fragmenting and mounting corals that people brought with them to the meeting. The meeting was great for those new to cutting corals and a great refresher course for those with a little more experience.

### Come to the Meetings!

The next IMAS meeting will be held on March 5<sup>th</sup>. Meetings are educational and free to the public. See page 4 for details!

## Vodka Dosing Resources; Do Your Research!

The introduction to vodka dosing on this page is only a high-level overview of this advanced subject. For your own benefit, please do your own research. This primer is largely based upon a detailed article titled "Vodka Dosing... Distilled!", located at the following internet address: <http://reefkeeping.com/issues/2008-08/nfft/index.php>.

Many of our local reefers have successfully tried vodka dosing. A great place to get questions answered is by tapping into local expertise on the IMAS forums at [www.idahoreefs.org](http://www.idahoreefs.org)



## Introduction to Vodka Dosing

Dosing vodka into reef aquariums seems to be gaining popularity. There is regular discussion on the topic in the IMAS forums. This article is meant to serve as a primer into the subject of carbon dosing. Please do more research into this complex topic before pouring anything into your tank. Remember, there are plenty of reefers with beautiful tanks that do not dose any supplement and only keep the vodka to dose their orange juice.

Careful dosing a source of carbon into your reef aquarium can result in a reduction of nitrates and phosphates through the growth and eventual exporting of bacteria. A number of carbon sources can be dosed, including vodka, vinegar, and sugar. All of these items are affordable and readily available when compared with commercial sources of carbon "designed" specifically for reef aquaria. Vodka is probably the most common organic carbon source used for growth of

bacteria in the home aquarium.

As with anything that can provide benefit to your tank, there are prerequisites. You must have a good protein skimmer in order to properly export the increase in bound nutrients. To determine how much you dose to the system, owning relatively sensitive nitrate and phosphate test kits are essential.

Patience is a vital tool when dosing anything to your tank. If you are unwilling to take the time to properly measure,

test, and otherwise monitor your tank on a daily basis, you should probably not try vodka dosing. Maintaining a good log of your dosing can be helpful as well.

Again, please perform more research before starting a vodka dosing routine. The following steps are merely a quick overview.

First, test and record your

*Primer by James Lemoine II*

nitrate and phosphate levels. You must also determine the true water volume of your system, which is usually less than you think when accounting for the displacement of rock and sand.

For the first three days, start dosing 0.1ml of vodka (80 proof) for every 25 gallons of water in your system. Double

**"Patience is a vital tool when dosing anything to your tank."**

your dose to 0.2ml for the next four days. From there, increase your daily dose another 0.5ml after each week. Once you start to

measure nitrates and phosphates decrease, keep your daily dose the same until your test kits are unable to detect any nitrates or phosphates. At this point, you can slash your daily vodka dose in half in order to maintain current levels. While you are dosing, monitoring your fish and corals for stress is very important. Adjust your dosing accordingly and perform your due diligence!

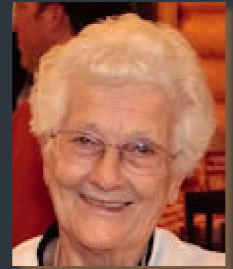


## Photo of the Month

This gorgeous frogspawn with 30+ heads is owned by Nate Rad. The great photo was taken by fellow reefer Ricky Prieto.

*Have a great photo? Send it to [newsletter@idahoreefs.org](mailto:newsletter@idahoreefs.org) to be considered for Photo of the Month.*

## Thoughts and Prayers for Bernice Thomson



Bernice Thomson is in regular attendance to the IMAS meetings with her son, Scott. Unfortunately, Bernice suffered a stroke in mid-January and was in the hospital for nearly a month. Scott informs us she is back at home and is doing great in therapy, which is fantastic news! Please keep Bernice in your thoughts and prayers. Hopefully she'll be back attending meetings in no time.

## TOTQ Suggestions

We are looking for suggestions for Tank of the Quarter. Every few months, we will spotlight a local aquarium on the IMAS website and in this newsletter. This allows local reefers to get a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the tanks of fellow hobbyists. The showcase will have many pictures and detailed specs of the setup. To submit a tank, submit a post in the forum or send an email to [newsletter@idahoreefs.org](mailto:newsletter@idahoreefs.org).

## 4-Sale/Trade Forum

Most of us in the hobby have old equipment and other aquarium related items taking up space in our closets. Why not list them on the IMAS 4-Sale/Trade forum? This forum has been busy recently. If you are in the market for some used equipment, this forum is the place to go to grab a good deal. There are a few folks breaking down entire systems this month, so now is a good time to check the listings and

see what is available. Posting items for sale or trade in the forum is easy, and best of all, it's FREE! To sell quickly, post photos and provide detailed descriptions of the items, along with the price or terms.

Keep in mind, the 4-Sale/Trade forum is for private sellers only. Fish stores and wholesalers are limited to posting in the "Local Fish Store Specials" forum.

## Got Skimmer Scum?

GARF is in the process of setting up new tanks for the production of their GARF Grunge product. They are looking for local reefers to donate the smelly and disgusting scum from their protein skimmers to help jump start and feed their Grunge. Scott Morell is collecting the skimmer scum for GARF. You may bring it to the next club meeting or contact Scott at 863-7143.

## TIP OF THE MONTH

### Measuring PAR for Coral Placement and Bulb Life.

Corals each have their own specific requirements in regard to the amount of light and spectrum required to facilitate growth and color. When picking up a gorgeous coral frag from a friend or local fish store, it can be helpful to know the amount of light the coral is accustomed to receiving before taking your prize home. If a coral has shown excellent growth and color under a PAR measurement of

185, then it might be unwise to expect the same growth and color if your light fixture is only capable of producing a PAR value of 60. At minimum, having access to a PAR meter will help you find the best location or depth in your tank to mount certain types of corals. PAR meters are also handy for gauging the drop in your light output over time. You can use the information to determine the best time to change your bulbs. If you are a Paid Member of IMAS, you have access to a club owned PAR meter. Simply post in the forum to have it reserved!

# Support the Idaho Marine Aquarium Society

## Become a Paid Member!

Your financial contribution will help IMAS continue its long tradition of providing free education to the public for the safe care and propagation of marine animals. As a Paid Member, you'll have access to shared club equipment, free raffle tickets, and free participation in club sponsored workshops and BBQ's. We are working on new benefits for 2010, so stay tuned.

## Membership Options

IMAS now has multiple membership options and is allowing dues to be paid monthly with recurring payments. All dues are paid through PayPal.

**Individual:** \$24 / yr or \$2.50 / mo

**Family:** \$40 / yr or \$3.50 / mo

**Student:** \$12 / yr or \$1.50 / mo

Visit [www.idahoreefs.org](http://www.idahoreefs.org) to join today!



## Upcoming Events

### March IMAS Meeting

**Date:** March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 – 7:00pm

**Location:** Fuddruckers, 1666 Entertainment Ave, Boise.

**Topic:** Inexpensive Coral Lighting For Your Coral Farm



Geothermal Aquaculture Research Foundation (GARF) director, Leroy Headlee, will be giving a presentation on inexpensive lighting for your coral farm. Leroy is one of the original coral farmers in America. He has traveled all over North America and South East Asia visiting reefs, coral and clam farms. IMAS is very excited to have our local expert speak at the club!

### April IMAS Meeting

**Date:** April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 – 7:00pm

**Location:** Fuddruckers, 1666 Entertainment Ave, Boise.

**Topic:** Frag Fest 2010

IMAS will be holding one of its Frag Fest trading meetings. There will be a frag raffle and trading galore!!! Everyone is welcome. There will be a small fee paid to IMAS for those selling any corals during the meeting. Get your frags ready! More details to come...

### May IMAS Meeting

**Date:** May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010 – 7:00pm

**Topic:** TBD

### June IMAS Meeting

**Date:** June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 – 7:00pm

**Location:** Fuddruckers, 1666 Entertainment Ave, Boise.

**Topic:** Adam Blundell of the Wasatch Marine Aquarium Society will be coming to Boise to discuss his research on the mysteries of coral fluorescence. Don't miss out on this great presentation!

## Newsletter Content

You can help the IMAS newsletter be successful! In order to thrive, every newsletter greatly depends on gathering content for the next issue. We welcome product review articles, tips and tricks, photographs, opinion pieces, financial aid, and anything else marine aquarium related. Please send your ideas to [newsletter@idahoreefs.org](mailto:newsletter@idahoreefs.org) or visit the newsletter forum on [www.idahoreefs.org](http://www.idahoreefs.org). To receive Idaho Reefs newsletter in the mail, please send an email to [newsletter@idahoreefs.org](mailto:newsletter@idahoreefs.org).

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