

Anemone Fish (Or NEMO!!)

On South Pacific, Indian Ocean and Red Sea reefs, large sea anemones play host to anemone fish that nestle safely among their tentacles. But the anemones' tentacles are lined with stinging cells that can paralyze fish, so how do the anemonefish survive? Scientists have found that anemone fish have a special layer of mucous that keeps the anemones from stinging them.

Anemonefish need the protection they find in their anemones: the anemones' stings keep fish predators at bay, and an anemonefish never lives without its host anemone. The partnership may benefit the anemones, as well. They get scraps of food dropped by the anemonefish as they eat. And the aggressive and territorial anemonefish may defend their anemones by driving away butterfly fish and other anemone-eating fishes.

Diet	Tiny drifting animals like copepods; algae, plankton
Size	Nearly 4 inches (10 cm)
Range	Throughout most of the tropical Indo-Pacific
Relatives	Damselfish; Family Pomacentridae
Conservation Notes	In places, unscrupulous collectors use cyanide, bleach and other chemicals to catch coral reef fishes for the pet trade. Applying the chemicals stuns the fish and makes them easy to collect. But these poisons can also kill fishes, corals and other reef life. If you have a home aquarium, buy fish raised in captivity, not ones collected from the wild.
Cool interesting facts	All anemonefish start life as males. As they grow, a male may change to become a female. Some kinds of anemonefish never leave their anemones. There are 26 different kinds of anemonefish.