Fish Rescue & Welfare

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The Most Humane Way To Euthanise A Fish.

As Approved By The Fish Rescue And Welfare Charity

PLEASE REMEMBER AND NOTE. USING CLOVE OIL TO PUT A FISH TO SLEEP AND END SUFFERING IS A TWO PART METHOD NOT JUST ONE. USING CLOVE OIL ALONE HAS RESULTED IN THE FISH WAKING UP.

What Is The Most Humane Way To Euthanise A Fish

There comes a time in every aquarist's life when a fish that can no longer recover from disease or injury must be euthanised. This is no easy task, but it can be done humanely and peacefully without stress to fish or aquarist.

PLEASE DO NOT FLUSH YOUR FISH DOWN THE TOILET, OR DEEP FREEZE IT AS SOME DO, AS THIS IS A VERY CRUEL WAY TO END A SICK FISHES LIFE.

Why a two step method should be used:

The best method is a two-step process. First, anesthetise the fish with clove oil so that it is sleeping and unable to feel pain; then introduce a clear grain alcohol like vodka to ensure the fish will not wake up. Clove oil will put a fish to sleep and ensure it feels no pain. The fish can wake up from this sleep if removed from the clove bath or removed too soon, however, the last step of adding the vodka will ensure the fish expires This method is commonly misrepresented as mixing clove oil and vodka together. Clove oil MUST be introduced first, allowing the fish to fall asleep before introducing vodka. Vodka will be stressful for a fish that is not anesthetised. Clove oil, or eugenol, is available at most chemists and is sold as a toothache remedy. It

has been used for years as a fish anesthetic for surgeries and tagging procedures.

********** THE METHOD **********

- **Firstly, move the fish into a suitable container that can be thrown away afterwards or easily cleaned. Fill the container so the fish is covered by 4 to 6 inches and it must be the fishes own tank water.**
- **Put 3 drops of clove oil with a half pint of water and shake very well, so the oil and water make a fusion - otherwise the oil will just float on top of the water. For the euthanasia to work the fish has to get the oil into its system. I must emphasise that it is very important that you mix the water with a clove oil properly to avoid it simply floating on the surface like any oil slick.**
- **Add the mixture to the water that the fish is in and stir it around slowly with your hand. The fish should become lethargic and sleepy.**
- **Add another mixture of 2 to 3 drops of oil in water.**
- **When the fish goes "belly up or on its side" it is asleep - not dead.**
- **Add 3 more drops of clove oil. The fish feels nothing, it is very peaceful and humane. It seems mad that a few drops of something can have such an effect, but it IS very strong.**
- **Don't make the mistake of thinking that if you initially put more in it will act quicker - it will only freak the fish out - it has to be done gradually so the fish doesn't notice the change in the water.**
- **Once the above has been done, a shot of alcohol to ensure the final deed is done and your fish wont wake from the over dose of anaesthesia.**
- **By shot .... 20-25% white grain alcohol. For example, if the fish is in 8oz (240ml) of water, add 2oz (60ml) of vodka.**

A few other tips.

- **Do not flush the fish down the toilet. Not only can this spread disease to local waters if the fish was ill, but the fish could still be alive and could regain consciousness in the sewer waters.**
- **Do not put the fish in the freezer or in cold water before incapacitating it. Unlike humans who fall asleep and die from the freezing temperatures, fish can actually feel the ice crystals forming on their skin causing immense pain and suffering before death. Fish do not pass out from cold as humans would and tend to live for hours at extreme temperatures before death.**