

# Bettas Deserve Better

No fish should live  
and die in a tiny bowl



Betta fish are vibrant and beautiful, but they're also very sensitive and they suffer when forced to live in a small amount of water. Petco sells and markets bettas as office decor and even allows shoppers to buy fish *online*. Countless fish suffer and die as a result.

The minuscule cup containers stacked on Petco shelves bear no resemblance to bettas' natural habitat. Native to Asia, bettas live in the shallow water of rice fields, ponds, or slow-moving streams. Because of the way they are displayed and sold, many people mistakenly believe that they have to be kept in "solitary confinement." But female bettas *can* live together. And while male bettas do fight with other male bettas, they can be placed individually in a "community aquarium" containing other species of fish.



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## The Hidden Lives of Fish

- In his book *What a Fish Knows*, author Jonathan Balcombe notes that Siamese “fighting fish” exhibit cooperative group behavior when they’re released from the “artificiality of captivity.”
- Male bettas build “bubble nests” with their mouths for their babies and fiercely protect them.
- Study after study has shown how fish are defying stereotypes: Some can use tools, recognize individual faces, count, or tell time.



## Stacked Like Cargo

A PETA exposé uncovered the appalling conditions in which bettas are transported for the pet trade. Most bettas sold in the U.S. come from breeding farms in Southeast Asia. Thailand is the leader in the industry. Farms breed bettas in small tubs and, as they grow, transfer them to individual glass or plastic bottles or hanging bags. Shippers pack them in tiny plastic bags with only an inch or so of water and send them to the U.S., where they are often held by distributors until eventually being sold to pet stores. At one massive fish wholesale warehouse, a PETA eyewitness found bagged bettas—dozens, if not hundreds, to a box—piled on top of each other, and they were shipped off to retailers in similarly horrific, cramped conditions. Countless fish are deprived of food before and during the sometimes days-long transport, and many don’t survive.



### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please, don’t buy bettas or *any* animals from Petco or any other business. Supporting the pet trade means sentencing countless betta fish and other animals to a grim existence and often a sad and lonely death.

## Rotting Fins, Dead Fish, Filthy Water

Shoppers have posted reviews about the conditions that they’ve seen at Petco:

- **“Went in Saturday to buy a betta fish and several of them were sick. Two had fish rot so bad that they had no tails, and one was missing [an] upper fin as well.”**
- **“I started looking through the different Betta fish and found three [who] were dead!!! One of them looks [to have] been dead for days since the water is very dirty.”**

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