

Clownfish habitat

Most people know clownfish from the movie 'Finding Nemo', but there's more to this fish than that! They live in a saltwater habitat and are also called Anemone. But more on anemones later.

Clownfish are bright orange, with three white stripes down their bodies. If you look closely, you'll see that there are also little black lines next to the white stripes. They can grow to be from 2 to 5 inches long.

All clownfish are actually born male, but as they mature they change into breeding females. They live at the bottom of the sea in sheltered reefs or in shallow lagoons, usually in pairs.

Clownfish live inside sea anemones, which are marine animals that look like plants, but they're alive! Sea anemones are related to sea jellies (jellyfish) as both of them can sting. But clownfish don't get stung by the anemone they live in because the fish have a mucous that covers their skin.



Clownfish and certain anemones live in special friendship which is called a “symbiotic” relationship. This means they benefit from living with the sea anemone, and the sea anemone benefits from the clownfish. Clownfish cleans the anemone and gets to eat the leftover food like algae, and in return, the anemone is protected from other fish and is healthier because of the cleaning!

Clownfish can be found in the warmer waters of the Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean. They are also found in northwest Australia, southeast Asia, Japan and the Indo-Malaysian region.



ACTIVITIES

1. Write down the 3 facts you found most interesting about clownfish.

2. Make your own clownfish habitat! Draw a clownfish, or cut out one of the pictures here and make an anemone house for it to live in:

- Find an empty toilet roll or plastic bottle, cut it in half (be careful!) and use it as the base for your anemone.
- Look around the house for items to add, you could cut up a plastic bag, use pipe cleaners, tissue paper or a sponge!
- Cut the items to size and glue them to your base.
- Paint whatever colour you like.
- When it is dry, put your clownfish in its new home!

