

# SOMETHING FISHY, INC.



## Something Fishy University Extension Courses Protein Skimmers 101



### What is a Protein Skimmer?

A protein skimmer, otherwise known as a foam fractionator, is a type of filter that is usually found on most saltwater aquarium setups. A protein skimmer should be used in coordination with other filtration such as UV, mechanical, biological, and chemical filtration components.

### Why do you need one?

A protein skimmer will strip dissolved organic compounds out of the water column. These compounds are so small that they pass right through other filtration components. These organic compounds, if left in the water, will tend to discolor the water, lower water quality, and can emit noxious odors from the aquarium water.

### How does a Protein Skimmer work?

Dissolved organic compounds consist of large chains of molecules. A protein skimmer works by injecting small air bubbles into a column of water. The bubbles act as templates for those long molecular chains to snap around. As the bubbles that are now coated with organic compounds rise in the reaction column they begin to stick and clump with all of the other organic coated bubbles. As these bubbles rise through the neck of the skimmer they are condensed into a semi-moist paste that is then collected in some form of cup or collection container. This must be cleaned out at least weekly for optimal performance of the skimmer.



### How do I choose the right Protein Skimmer for my system?

There are many sizes of skimmers out there. Choose one that will adequately handle the volume of the given system. It never hurts to oversize a skimmer, especially if you know that you may be getting a bigger tank in the future. There are lots of skimmers on the market, ranging in price from \$100 to \$10,000. Most of them are good, but as with any piece of equipment, you usually get what you pay for.

All skimmers will function differently in every system. Mostly it has to do with how and where the skimmer is installed. Ideally a protein skimmer should be installed in a service friendly location where the water level stays constant. By doing so you will eliminate a lot of the adjustment headaches associated with dialing in a skimmer. With hang on skimmers there is no way around the constant adjustment.



**My Aquarium is \_\_\_\_\_ Gallons**

**My Aquarium is a SWFO / SW REEF**

**My Aquarium has a Sump / Hang on Filters**

**My skimmer is \_\_\_\_\_**

**My skimmer is rated for \_\_\_\_\_**

**My skimmer pump comes with / Does not come with.**

**Check list:**

**Skimmer Pump**

**Appropriate Tubing to get water from pump to skimmer.**