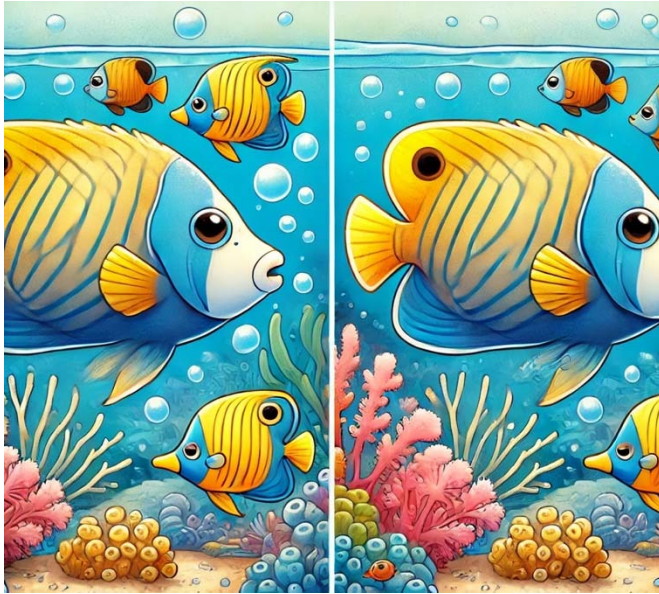


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Angelfish and Their Underwater Friendships



Angelfish may seem like they keep to themselves, but they actually interact with other species in fascinating ways. These relationships can benefit both the angelfish and the other animal, harm one while helping the other, or benefit one without affecting the other.

One common type of relationship is mutualism, where both species benefit. For example, saltwater

angelfish help clean parasites off larger fish, like groupers or snappers, by eating the tiny pests on their scales. This is a win-win situation: the larger fish stay healthy, and the angelfish get an easy meal.

Another type of relationship angelfish have is commensalism, where one species benefits, and the other isn't harmed or helped. For instance, small fish or shrimp may follow angelfish to find food stirred up as the angelfish swims. The angelfish isn't affected, but the followers get a free meal.

However, not all relationships are friendly. Parasitism occurs when one organism benefits while harming the other. Parasites, such as small worms or crustaceans, may attach to angelfish, feeding off their blood or scales. These parasites can make the angelfish sick or weaker.

Angelfish also interact with their environment in ways that help other species. By eating algae and keeping coral reefs clean, saltwater angelfish create a healthier home for other reef animals. This indirect relationship supports a variety of life in the reef, from tiny shrimp to larger fish.

These interactions show how angelfish are an important part of their ecosystem. Whether cleaning other fish, helping reefs thrive, or serving as a food source themselves, angelfish contribute to the balance of life underwater. Understanding these relationships reminds us of how all living things are connected, even in the ocean's depths.