Why You Shouldn’t Order Fish Online

Koi Carp · https://shirleyaquatics.co.uk/knowledge/why-you-shouldnt-order-fish-online/

In our knowledge base articles we have now covered a wide range of concerns about fishkeeping, particularly online shopping. In this article, we will highlight the cons of ordering fish online and why you shouldn't do it.

You can't see the fish you're buying

When you order online, you have the handicap of not being able to physically see the exact fish that are being caught for you. You can't observe their behaviour or see the exact size. Nor can you do your own health checks before purchase. Of course, no self respecting aquatics retailer will ever ship sick fish. It paints the wrong picture to their customers and ultimately, it leads to having to refund or replace those fish, leading to a loss regardless of which option is chosen. Don't forget that the shipping costs alone can be substantial and making such a silly mistake can be costly for a business. Fortunately there are a other tools you can use. A good online retailer will always specify the current size of the fish they sell and will use their own photographs of their own livestock. Any website that doesn't do either of these should be approached with caution.

You can't control how those fish are transported

No doubt you heard many horror stories about fish arriving in poor condition or worse. This is sadly a risk that is taken. Each retailer does their own version of packing with different materials used, different boxes and different methods of transportation. A good retailer should stipulate somewhere on their website what their processes are and what courier they use. This shows that they are transparent about their level of care and have nothing to hide, which in turn suggests that they care deeply about the quality and welfare of their livestock. You can, of course, simply ask them to walk you through it step by step or even send a video. Any retailer that seems cagey about it is likely to be doing something they shouldn't. Always ask about the courier. There are currently only two acceptable couriers that are licensed to carry livestock. Those are DX and APC. Royal Mail is not licensed to carry livestock and any business using them to ship anything other than plants and corals is breaking the law. This is a big red flag! Of course, even the licensed couriers will occasionally

mishandle a parcel and that's a risk you and the retailer both take. Fortunately these incidents are quite rare and a good retailer will promptly handle the complaint, resolve the situation and report it to their chosen logistics firm. Well packed, healthy fish seldom die in transit.

There's no real human to speak to

This is true. You are looking at a page with a description and a picture and your decision is based largely on the information before you. There are so many variables to fish keeping! A good website will not only have a full, detailed description of the fish you're looking at, but fine details such as its behaviour, desired habitat and what water parameters it needs. As mentioned before, highlighting the actual size of the fish will show greater transparency and reduces the likelihood of unpleasant surprises. But more importantly, nothing really measures up to having a conversation between humans and a good retailer will also actively encourage their customers to contact them with their questions and concerns. After all, we are the most enthusiastic of all the fish people and want nothing more than to talk about fish!

Support your local LFS

An LFS, or Local Fish Shop is a small business with big costs. Running such a shop requires immense amounts of electricity, carefully chosen employees and bucket loads of passion. Supporting them ensures that these shops will still be around in another decade. These are not corporate shareholders and multi-million pound businesses. More often than not, they are just super passionate people who treat fishkeeping like a religion. They get by on valued customers and hard work. Equally, some may not measure up to your standards, so when you turn to online shopping instead, you are still supporting an LFS... just not the one in your neck of the woods.

You never know where you stand and what guarantees there are

It can be risky shopping online with small retailers as you may be afraid that you'll get scammed or that you'll end up shouldering the expense of mistakes or losses. Fortunately, most quality retailers make their policies clear as day. Nearly all have a live arrival guarantee and a guarantee for 7-10 days after. The rules are often simple to follow and usually ask for photographic or video evidence of the problem within a clearly set time frame. Sometimes you will have to present water tests. Any retailer not offering a guarantee or making their policies crystal clear is a red flag! The customer should never be expected to take responsibility for things that were beyond their control. But you are

expected to report problems immediately and it must be clear the mistake was not your own. You wouldn't dream of walking into a clothes shop and demanding a refund for a garment you found a fault with without presenting the garment as evidence.

Reviews are important, but take them with a pinch of salt

Reviews can reveal a lot about a retailer. It can give you an idea of how much risk you are taking when you place an order. Overall rating can be a good indicator whether the retailer you're considering are actually good at what they do. But always treat reviews with caution... Opinions are very subjective. And they're not always what they seem. Sometimes a person can be unreasonable and sometimes the review reflects the truth. A good indicator of the truth is the substance behind the reviews, positive or otherwise. What information they convey and how detailed they are makes a huge difference. If there is a common and consistent theme in the negative reviews, this can also suggest that this could happen to you. The response from the retailer also matters. A shop that cares about their reputation will reply to most reviews. And always remember! For every negative review, there are at least 10 happy customers who didn't leave a one, because it is always in our nature to highlight our disgruntlement, but we don't often dispense praise. Google is the best source for reviews as this is where the largest number of people voice their opinions. Trustpilot and Feefo are also worth a look, but remember that not many people use them, so there will be a much more disproportionate number of people with negative opinions and very few positives.