

How the salts fared...

D-D H₂OCEAN PRO



It's good...

At 35ppt this salt is the closest to natural seawater in our test, and at 35.5ppt it has even higher calcium and magnesium levels without dropping the alkalinity too much. It dissolves quickly and is perfect for those who don't want to mess around with supplements.

But...

It left a light residue in the base of the test container which I take as calcium carbonate. This, however, became fully dissolved within 24 hours.

VERDICT

H₂Ocean is an excellent all-rounder that has the added advantage of having its levels of calcium, alkalinity and magnesium at the right level for reef tanks. All tests considered, this was the best marine salt in our lab test.

RRP: £26.50 for 6.6kg pack, 71.90 for 23kg
Rating: ★★★★★
More info: www.theaquariumsolution.com

TETRA MARINE



It's good...

This salt provided an impressive 437mg/l of calcium and a reasonable 1190mg/l of magnesium.

But...

Tetra says that this can be used with either tap or RO/DI water, which suggests that this salt is designed to be used with dechlorinated tapwater. This is not a bad thing, however, if looking to use it in a simple fish-only system but it's not a salt I would choose for reefkeeping.

VERDICT

A salt that would be ideal for fish-only systems or for those that don't mind adjusting their make-up water to match their reef. However, to raise the magnesium level to 1,350ppm in our tests, you would need to add an additional 134 grams of magnesium chloride per 100 litres of make-up water.

RRP: £9.33 for 2kg, £15.07 for 4kg, £25.47 for 8kg, £56.40 for 20kg
Rating: ★★★★★
More info: www.tetra-fish.com

REEF CRYSTALS

It's good...

This salt dissolves reasonably well and pH is about where it should be. The dKH is reasonably high too.

But...

You will need more salt than the other brands as you only get 25.3ml of saltwater to a salinity of 35ppt. In addition this salt recorded the lowest of all calcium and magnesium levels in our test. If you wanted to match the magnesium levels of H₂Ocean Pro you would need to supplement some 3g/l of magnesium chloride.

VERDICT

Our laboratory analysis showed Reef Crystals to be a poorer performer than the other salts tested here. It's fine for fish-only systems and has a dedicated following of satisfied customers, but for the reef aquarium it would really benefit from additional supplementation, which would add to your running costs and make things trickier.

RRP: £25.85 for 4kg, £47.45 8kg, £142.95 25kg
Rating: ★★★★★
More info: www.underworldproducts.co.uk



TROPIC MARIN PRO REEF

It's good...

Tropic Marin Pro Reef is made from pharmaceutical grade salt and dissolves very quickly leaving no residue. At 390 mg/l and 1220 mg/l respectively, calcium and magnesium levels are a good starting point for supplementation.

But...

Pro Reef mixed to a pH of 8.53 which is the highest in the test, while alkalinity levels were the lowest recorded at just 4.0 dKH. If you are running a reef aquarium you'll probably want to add additional supplements to get the desired levels.

VERDICT

This is good base salt but our tests showed it would need supplementing for optimum values and full reef use. Due to the high pH of mixed water, I wouldn't advise a large water change with freshly made water, waiting 24-48 hours to aerate being advisable given the pH levels found.

RRP: £18.99 for 4kg, £45.99 10kg, £73.99 20kg, £99.99 25kg
Rating: ★★★★★
More info: www.tmc-ltd.co.uk



STAR RATINGS

Excellent	★★★★★
Very good	★★★★★
Good	★★★★★
Average	★★★★★
Below average	★★★★★

TUNZE REEF EXCEL

► It's good...

This salt may be little known in the UK, but revealed excellent results. The yield was excellent and it took 35g of salt to get to a salinity of 35ppt. Calcium and magnesium were the highest recorded.

► But...

The calcium and magnesium levels are a bit above the 450mg/l and 1,350mg/l I would recommend for an Indo-Pacific reef system. This implies, combined with the yield test result, that this salt can be run at lower salinity than the others while maintaining high levels.

VERDICT

This may just make me change brands. I see it being easier to adjust my salinity slightly than to add additional supplements. It looks as though Tunze have blended this salt to be made at the 27ppt salinity range, which I feel goes against the grain, but something I am interesting at looking into!

RRP: £23.20 for 8kg, £48.30 16kg, £55.90 20kg.

Rating: ★★★★★

More info: www.tunze.com



Practical
Fishkeeping
2010
**RUNNER
UP**
MARINE SALT

RED SEA CORAL PRO



STAR RATINGS

Excellent	★★★★★
Very good	★★★★★
Good	★★★★★
Average	★★★★★
Below average	★★★★★

► It's good...

As with Tropic Marin and Tunze, it only takes 35g of salt to make a litre of water to 35ppt and calcium levels are about typical of the surface ocean values.

► But...

Alkalinity is a little high for my liking and may cause a bit of a ballet between the trio that is calcium, alkalinity and magnesium. As magnesium in our lab test results was on the low side it would be necessary to supplement approximately 139g of magnesium chloride to raise levels to 1,350mg/l per 100 litres, especially if you want to limit the risk of abiotic precipitation of calcium carbonate (CaCO_3).

VERDICT

Our tests revealed that, for the samples we received, calcium and magnesium results were under that of natural sea water. Therefore, unless you're willing to supplement the levels, there are better performers for the reef aquarium.

RRP: £7.99 for 1.26 kg, £29.99 for 7kg and £79.99 for 22kg

Rating: ★★★★★

More info: www.redseafish.com