



Transporting Koi to a Show

South East
Koi Club

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This article was first published in July 2002 in preparation for our Open Show as a guideline for exhibitors. It was then uploaded to our website on the 26th October 2002 where it has resided in its current form ever since.

This document has an additional “at a glance” page containing salient details in the form of bullet points.

Transporting KOI to a Show

We could cover this subject in one paragraph by saying, if you want to take your koi to a show, double bag them with oxygen, put them in a box and place them transversely across the axle of the car. But would that guarantee that they arrive safely? Would that ensure that you have no problems when it comes to your turn? We don't think so. So what we have done is take that paragraph and expand upon it, adding hints and tips that we have gained from experience in the hope that you can benefit from 'other peoples mistakes' and turn this traumatic task into an easy one.

PREPARATION & PLANNING

There is an old and crude saying that goes "Preparation & planning prevents p*ss-poor performance" and that holds very true where the art of koi transportation goes. So let's start by building a plan of action. This can be done well in advance of a show.

EQUIPMENT

You will need boxes to transport your fish safely.

The boxes that the dealers get their fish in are ideal, but don't worry if you can't get them, there are other alternatives. Supermarkets are a good source of cardboard ones that you can reinforce with strong tape. Keep your eyes open for polystyrene boxes too they are excellent, and don't worry if they don't have lids.

Size is important, I don't care what people say. As a rule of thumb consider that you need a box at least six inches longer than the fish you intend to travel in it, and the box needs to be approximately half as wide as it is long.

For every box you are going to use you now need 2 polythene bags and 2 elastic bags in each. When you've totalled this up, add 50% of each as a contingency measure.

Bags like boxes come in different sizes so ensure the bags are at least 9 inches longer than the longest fish going in them. It doesn't matter if they are too long but they are no good if they are too short. Bags and bands can be bought from your dealer or in some cases your Koi club.

By now you have assembled a collection of boxes, along with their associated bags. The next job is to work out how you are going to fit them into your vehicle. So clear your car of all clutter. If it is not conducive to the comfort of the koi, then it is not essential. If the car is in danger of breaking down, then it is time for a new one. If your partner shares your passion for koi then, they will agree. If not, then tough, their winter holiday, season ticket for the Arsenal, or however their passion manifests itself is nothing but a luxury. Koi are essential to good living.

Unless you have been extremely lucky, your boxes will be of various sizes, some differing from another by just a couple of inches. *As mentioned previously boxes should be stowed transversely across the axles of the car. This is to prevent them from being damaged when braking etc. However, there is an exception to this rule - a box that will contain fish smaller than its width, let's say under 10 inches can be positioned longitudinally. Think about it, fish of that size are not constrained by the width of the bag.* So try arranging them in the car like a jigsaw puzzle until you find the optimum configuration. When you've found it, draw it on a piece of paper and give each box a reference, then write the reference on each box. Mine are labelled A thru H (8 boxes). Having done this you can empty the car and store the boxes until required.

The next part of the planning can be done in the comfort of an armchair. Each box has a limit to the size of the fish it can hold. So, armed with that knowledge consider which fish are going to the show, and which box suits their needs best. If you are oxygenating the bags (strongly recommended) the bags can hold more fish. If a bag is to be shared ensure that the fish sharing are roughly the same size. Don't be tempted to put a small one with a big one, just imagine what can happen if the large one thrashes about. When you have sorted this out you should have a plan that tells you which fish(es) are going in which box and where that box is positioned in your car. You can now rest easy until the time comes to catch them.

OXYGENATION

In short, if you intend to show your fish regularly then invest in an oxygen cylinder, especially if your journey is over an hour. Alternatively, talk to your dealer, if he's closer to you than the show then consider driving there first and getting him to do it. This is not an unusual request, especially if you are showing fish that you have bought from him. If neither of these options are viable then you can still adequately bag the fish by trapping as much as air as possible when you tie the bag. We would however, advise that you reduce the numbers of fish in the bags, keep the travel time short, and travel during the cool of the day.

CATCHING & BAGGING

This is the time when all the planning you have done comes into effect. You know which fish are going, what box they will travel in, and where they will be loaded in the car. So get dipping. We suggest you guide each fish into a floating bowl. Then get the appropriate bags, put in enough water to just cover the fishes gills when laying horizontal (the bag that is) and then transfer the fish to the bag via a sock net. We recommend that you then place the bag in its box before inflating with oxygen. This way you ensure the inflated bag fits the box.

When the fish is in the bowl, check for any signs of disease, parasites or damage. If

you find any return the fish to the pond as it will only be excluded from the show during benching. A good way of checking the underneath of the fish is to lift it high while it is in the bag and examine it from underneath. We recommend that you double-bag the fish, the rationale being that if one punctures the other acts as a spare. Secure each bag with sturdy elastic bands.

LOADING THE CAR

This should present little problem as you have already checked that all the boxes fit. In the process you will have worked out an order of loading. Once loaded place a cover over any boxes without lids, a towel will be adequate. In fact consider taking a towel anyway, they are always useful items to have at koi shows. If you want a quick getaway from the koi show, think about packing your own oxygen cylinder too. If not, don't worry the show (if it's a BKKS one) will supply oxygen at debenching, however, be prepared to wait your turn. If you ever wasted your money on one of those telescopic handled nets, now's the time to recoup your losses. As a short handled net it is ideal for catching your fish for rebagging at debenching time.

One final word of advice - drive straight to the show, no breakfasting on the motorway or anything like that.
Now relax and enjoy the show.

Checklist

- ❖ **Make sure you have enough bags, boxes and elastic bands.**
- ❖ **Make sure you have access to oxygen if travelling for more than an hour.**
- ❖ **Decide which Koi are going into what boxes, taking into account their size.**
- ❖ **Never mix large Koi with small Koi in the same bag.**
- ❖ **Check Koi for wounds and visible parasites before bagging**
- ❖ **Never take sick Koi to a Koi Show.**
- ❖ **Catch, bag and box the Koi in the order in which they are going to be loaded into the car.**
- ❖ **Cover any open boxes with lids or towels for the journey.**
- ❖ **Take Spare bags and bands with you.**

