

Leather made of janitor fish skin

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



Leather Made of Janitor Fish Skin In ancient times, animal skin has been used by our ancestors as their reliable clothing for cold climates. The time is evolving; many ideas came out for where to get other sources of leather since the usage of animal fur and skins is against the animal welfare law for some countries, especially if the animal is an endangered species. Many manufacturers are seeking for other alternatives that can be used as Leather. On the other hand, Janitor fish is considered a pest because it brings imbalance to the ecosystem in some parts of the world, especially in the Philippines.

Considering Janitor fish as pest, we can benefit from a pest by making its skin into leather. Janitor fish or the scientifically known as *Hypostomus plecostomus* is also commonly called Suckerfish, Sucker mouth Catfish or Pleco. Janitor fishes feed on algae, aquatic weeds, small crustaceans and other aquatic creatures. Moreover, janitor fishes would easily adapt in an environment where there is food. These fishes are peaceful in nature, thus, in an aquarium set-up; they can live with other fishes but are aggressive with fishes of the same kind.

It was called such because of its sucking-like mouth. This specie originated from the Tropical Central America and South America. It usually dwells in fresh running waters and salty waters of river mouths. This specie is of no value as food, yet it is in demand in the aquarium industry in United States, Singapore, Hong Kong and even in the Philippines. . Here in the Philippines it is widely known as the Janitor Fish. It earned its name when it was first introduced here as an aquarium pet.

It is usually seen in the sides of fish tanks sucking the growing algae. In the late 90's, Marikina River was teeming with several freshwater species, some of which are the tilapia, carp, catfish, mudfish, and golden apple snail. Fishermen survived with just fishing in this river because of its abundance of fishes. . But for quite a time now, this river is encountering a huge depletion because of the rapid growth of Janitor Fish. This causes much problem amongst the City Officials and the fisher folks.

The janitor fish invasion was believed to have started with the sudden outbreak of this specie from their breeding pens in Laguna de Bay and have traveled from there to the river. Another root of this was those aquarists, aquarium enthusiasts, who are already tired of taking care of their janitor fish just releases them in the open waters, in this case, in Marikina River. Ever since, fishermen had problems with their catch since janitor fishes had outnumbered the species native to the river. It was unlike before where the river was rich with fishes like tilapia, martiniko gurame, ayungin and biya.

One reason for this is that the janitor fish doesn't only compete with the food these other species eat but also suck the eggs of these fishes. Another reason is that the spiny and tough body of the janitor fishes bruise other fish species when the two get contact. This kills the fish. These fishes also contribute to the murky river in Marikina because these species are mud dwellers, thus causes commotion in the mud under water. Janitor fishes create holes in the banks as their hatching area for their eggs.

Eventually, after these eggs hatch, the seedlings leave the hole. Once a certain area in the bank has lots of holes then there is a higher tendency for

this area to collapse. This is called an outfall. If outfalls would continue, the width of the river might increase and the lanes built near the banks would eventually fall down. Janitor Fish is a fast multiplying specie that can last 10-15yrs. currently, it is infesting the water systems in the Philippines. The most famous of which is the Marikina River. The presence of this specie has greatly bothered the community.

How are we going to lessen the growing number of janitor fish by making it more useful, environment friendly, and prevent to destroy the uniqueness and beauty of some river here in Philippines, especially Marikina River?

There's no scientific evidence that the meat of janitor fish is safe for human consumption. And since there's a big threat of losing the Marikina River, we have to lessen them and make their skin more usable by making some leather goods. The population of the said fish grows faster than the ordinary fish.

And having that basic information at hand, we can reduce their population by using them as an alternative source of leather. Janitor Fish are also making holes at the river side as their home. So, imagine having thousands of holes at the river side. Surely it can cause landslides, right? So my idea would be, since we Filipinos are so creative, let's make the janitor fish skin more useful by using it as a source of leather. We have to be practical especially during these times, so I came up with the idea of putting janitor fishes' skin into exotically good use. Here, leather will be produced from their very skin.

Don't you find that amusing? But the 65-billion dollar question is: how on earth will janitor fishes' skin be made into leather? Can it compete with the

quality of genuine leather? Can it really help in decreasing their rapidly growing number? Your questions will be answered as you read and indulge in the next texts. I will prove that the janitor fishes' skin could be used quite impressively. Flip on the next pages and see! JANITOR FISHES' SKIN PUT INTO GOOD USE—LEATHER. As I have observed, the janitor fishes' skin is quite hard and shiny; most probably caused by its sliminess.

Its skin is rubber-like and could be a very good material in making leather. The texture and composition of its skin is rough, yet slimy like leather. What products could usually be made of leather? Shoes, bags, belts, clothing, and wallets are just some of the possible products we can produce through its skin. Resourceful and useful indeed! The very texture and composition of the skin makes it an excellent alternative for leather. Also, this would a very good help in budget cutting, since the janitor fishes' skin will definitely be less expensive than that of the genuine leather.

Plus, the quality's almost the same. Most importantly, our focus to reduce the growing number of janitor fishes that destructs most of our water resources where we get majority of sea foods. Since the janitor fish is considered as pest here in the Philippines and no one could think of a possible action to get rid of them, we're going to get rid of them through making extra good use of their skin! In that way, aside from decreasing their number and putting them to use, we could also save a lot of money instead of purchasing expensive snake and alligator skins.

As I have said earlier, it's skin is rubber like yet slimy; just like the genuine leather made of snake and alligator skin. MARIKINA, the country's shoe

capital, may soon be using Janitor fish skin as accent for footwear and other products as an alternative to alligator and snake skin.. But why are we going to get rid of Janitor fish, why not stick on the alligator or snake skin when making leather goods? Janitor fish doesn't harm people unlike alligator or snake right? Well... the answer to that question is that... The fish digs holes in pond dikes and river embankments for its nest, eroding soil in the riverbanks.

Although edible and harmless to humans, Marikina residents do not want to have it because of its seemingly dirty habitat. Janitor fish is a threat to freshwater biodiversity, Janitor fishes " compete for food with the native catfish, carp, mudfish, tarpons, mullets, tilapia and other fish species. Since they (janitor fishes) are opportunistic and voracious feeders, they may cause their numbers to increase enough to disrupt the marsh ecosystem by displacing the native fish species, and causing the reduction of native fish catch, that's terrible right? Imagine having no native fish, just a janitor fish.

What is worrisome is that the janitor fish has no natural enemies, and this means it can rapidly multiply, So, Janitor fish in the Marikina River, the city government has launched a campaign to get rid of the " pest" which multiplies very quickly. We can actually make wallets, purses, watch straps, billfold and key chains using skin from the belly of the fish. The janitor fish's skin has spots and patterns like those of alligators and snakes which are prized for their unique patterns and texture. Also, some study show that the oil from janitor fish could also be used as bio-fuel for motor vehicles.

Imagine how greatly we could be of great help, not only to the country's economy but to nature as well. Definitely, the circle of life is a mystery and the authority in decreasing the earth's species numbers aren't supposed to be in our hands, but let's be practical. It is not money and time alone that we can save, but lives and people as well. For when this product would be endorsed and put to work, livelihood would boom. A lot of unemployed people could have jobs and spend their time wisely than staying outdoors or at home, doing nothing—being unproductive.

Think wise, for the Lord made a lot of things with a lot of great purposes yet to be revealed and discovered. And when these things would finally be revealed, we will all be amazed in its beauty and greatness, its richness and uniqueness. This project of making fine leather from a pest's skin (janitor fish) would be of magnanimous help to us all. Let's be wise, conserve, be practical and support nature. I really hope this project would pursue, that in my own little knowledge, I imbibed and partake in bringing about change. To end this argument therefore, I must say that LEATHER MADE OF JANITOR FISHES'

SKIN is good and competent, and is a very product for the public. Having said over and over that we have to reduce their rapidly growing population as pests and also cope with our economic crisis, this product will definitely be great! Can you imagine leather at a cheaper cost? Leather made from a fishes' skin? Leather than can compete with the quality of original and genuine leather? What more could you ask for? Aside from helping fishermen, you, above everything else, helps in saving the environment. See

how a simple product could help a lot in conserving the richness and beauty of the environment?

Indeed, great things could come from small things. We should eradicate the janitor fish as fast as we can. Like what I've said on the first part, "Imagine having no native fish, just a janitor fish". We should fully support those people who are continually discovering and experimenting goods from janitor fish, not only from their skin but for whatever we can use from them.

SOURCES: * (March 10, 2008) Janitor Fish Invasion in Marikina River: Plotting Potential Invasion on nearby water. <http://epmgis.wikispaces.com/Janitor+Fish+Invasion+in+Marikina+River+Plotting+Potential+Invasion+on+nearby+Water> *