

# CORAL REEF FISH IDENTIFICATION

Pages in Humann 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition  
Reef Fish Book

## Class CHONDRICHTHYES (sharks, skates and rays)

### CARCHARHINIDAE – Requiem Sharks

*Carcharhinus perezii* Reef Shark 447

Typical shark shape. Gray in color. Can have back tips to all fins. 3-10 feet.

### MYLIOBATIDAE – Eagle rays 461

*Aetobatus narinari* Spotted eagle ray

### DASYATIDAE – Stingrays 459

*Dasyatis americana* Southern stingray

## Class OSTEICHTHYES (Boney fish)

### ACANTHURIDAE – Surgeonfishes

\* *Acanthurus coeruleus* Blue Tang (Juv. & Adult) 33

Sloping face down to small mouth. Often swims in schools along reef tops. Juvenile is bright yellow. Adult is blue with a yellow scaple on the caudal peduncle. 5-10 inches

\* *Acanthurus bahianus* Ocean Surgeonfish 35

Color varies from bluish white to deep blue. Uniform color with no body bars. More oval shape than blue tang. Often swims along shallow reef tops, sometimes in schools of blue tangs. 6-12 inches

\* *Acanthurus chirurgus* Doctorfish 37

Very similar in shape and colorings to ocean surgeonfish however, has black body bars (which can be quite faint at times.). 6-12 inches

### AULOSTOMIDAE – Trumpetfishes

\* *Aulostomus maculatus* Trumpetfish 381

Long, thin body with trumpet like mouth. Colors vary. Usually in vertical position for camouflage.

### CARANGIDAE – Jacks

\* *Caranx ruber* Bar Jack 45

Thin oval in shape. Silver body. Bright blue and black border runs along dorsal fin onto lower caudal fin. 6-14 inches. Often school around reefs.

\* *Caranx latus* Horse-eye Jack 47

Silver body. Steep but rounded nape. Yellow caudal fins. very large eye. School above reef or under overhangs. 1-2 feet.

*Caranx lugubris* Black Jack 47

Steep nape. Long dorsal and anal fins. black caudal fins. 1-2 feet. School above reef or under overhangs.

### **CHAETODONTIDAE** – Butterflyfishes

Disk shaped fishes. Often hover coral heads.

- \* *Chaetodon striatus* Banded Butterflyfish 29  
White and black banded fish. Long snout. 3-5 inches.
- \* *Chaetodon capistratus* Foureye Butterflyfish 29  
White, black and yellow in color. Black ocellated spot on rear body near caudal peduncle. 3-4 inches.

### **EPHIPPIDAE** – Spadefishes

- Chaetodipterus faber* Atlantic Spadefish 87  
Silver body with several dark bars. Looks like a spade if you stand it on its head. Big lips. 1-1.5 feet. Usually in open water.

### **HAEMULIDAE** – Grunts

- \* *Haemulon flavolineatum* French Grunt 93  
Yellow fish with silvery blue stripes. Bands from pectoral fin to lateral line. Often schools around the reef. 5-10 inches.
- Haemulon plumierii* White Grunt 95  
Yellow bands on head running through eye. Usually seen alone or in schools of other grunts. Less colorful than other grunts. 8-14 inches.
- \* *Haemulon sciurus* Bluestriped Grunt 93  
Yellow fish with blue stripes. Dark dorsal and caudal fins. Usually in schools of same species or other grunts. 6-14 inches.
- \* *Haemulon carbonarium* Ceasar Grunt 95  
Blue fish with yellow stripes. Dark dorsal, caudal and anal fins. often a dusky patch on stomach as well. . Usually in schools of same species or other grunts. 5-12 inches.
- Haemulon parra* Sailor's Choice 101  
Light uniform coloring with black tips to scales. Looks like sequins. Large eye. 8-12 inches.
- Haemulon album* White Margate 109  
Gray to white in color. Relatively small eye and steep nape. 10-20 inches.
- Anisotremus surinamensis* Black Margate 109  
Silver fish with a black patch behind pectoral fin. 1-1.5 feet.

### **HOLOCENTRIDAE** – Squirrelfishes

- \* *Holocentrus adscensionis* Squirrelfish 239  
Yellow spines on dorsal fin. Usually hides in crevices during the day. 6-12 inches.
- \* *Holocentrus rufus* Longspine Squirrelfish 239  
White spines on dorsal fin. Usually hides in crevices during the day. 5-11 inches.
- \* *Myripristis jacobus* Blackbar Soldierfish 243  
Mostly red with a black bar behind head. Usually hides in crevices during the day 3-6 inches.

### **KYPHOSIDAE** - Chubs

- \* *Kyphosis sectatrix/incisor* Bermuda Chub 85  
Football (American football) shaped body. Silver to gray in color. Cheeks look fat. Usually above the reef. 1-2 feet.

### **LABRIDAE** – Wrasses

- \* *Lachnolaimus maximus* Hogfish (Juv., Initial, Terminal) 213  
Juvenile is usually red in color with a black spot behind the dorsal fin. 6-10 inches.  
Initial has a dusky nape.  
Adult is a light colored fish with a dark nape. 1-2 feet.
- \* *Bodianus rufus* Spanish Hogfish 213

Bright yellow belly and tail with a purple upper body. 8-14 inches.  
*Clepticus parrae* Creole Wrasse (Juv., Initial, Terminal) 215  
Juvenile is blue to purple. 2-5 inches.  
Initial is blue to purple with a series of spots along its back.  
Terminal has a dark head and yellow to lavender tail. 4-8 inches. Usually school above reef.

*Halichoeres garnoti* Yellowhead Wrasses (Juv., Init., Term.) 219  
Juvenile is yellow with a bright blue stripe. 2-3 inches.  
Initial is yellow in the center of its body.  
Terminal has a yellow head with lines radiating out from the eye. 5-6 inches.

### **LUTJANIDAE** – Snappers

- \* *Lutjanus analis* Mutton Snapper 111  
Silver to gray. Sometimes appear reddish on belly. Black spot on mid body below dorsal fin. 1-2 feet.
- \* *Lutjanus griseus* Gray Snapper 113  
Gray body often with darker tips to caudal and dorsal fins. Small eye. Sometimes has a dark band running through the eye. Often schools with same species or mahogany snappers. 10-18 inches.
- \* *Lutjanus mahogoni* Mahogany Snapper 115  
Silver body with reddish margins on caudal, dorsal and anal fins. large eye. Sometimes has a dark spot below dorsal fin. Often schools with same species or gray snappers. 7-12 inches.
- \* *Lutjanus apodus* Schoolmaster 121  
Silver fish with all yellow fins. 10-18 inches.
- \* *Ocyurus chrysurus* Yellowtail Snapper 119  
Silver fish with yellow stripe along lateral line and yellow caudal fin. Often in schools or swims with yellow goatfish. 10-24 inches.

### **MALACANTHIDAE** – Tilefishes

*Malacanthus plumieri* Sand tilefish 381  
Long, white to yellow body. Moves like a snake. Usually over the sand or hiding in a hole. 1-1.5 feet.

### **MULLIDAE** – Goatfishes

- \* *Pseudupeneus maculatus* Spotted Goatfish 409  
White fish with a series of black spots along the lateral line. Sometimes slightly reddish in color. Has 2 barbels under tip of chin. 5-8 inches.
- \* *Mulloidichthys martinicus* Yellow Goatfish 409  
Yellow mid body strip and caudal fin. 2 barbels under tip of chin. Flatter belly than yellowtail snapper. Often swims with yellowtail snappers. 6-12 inches.

### **MURAENIDAE** - Moray eels

- Gymnothorax funebris* Green Moray 425  
Bright green. Hides in crevices.
- Gymnothorax moringa* Spotted Moray 425  
White with black spots. Hides in crevices.

### **POMACANTHIDAE** – Angelfishes

(Juvenile & Adult for all)

- \* *Holacanthus ciliaris* Queen Angelfish 21

- Juvenile has blue bars on a yellow and dark colored body.  
 Adult has a blue spot on nape like a crown and yellow tail. 8-14 inches.
- \* *Pomacanthus paru* French Angelfish 23  
 Juvenile is black with yellow bars. Caudal fin is rounded with yellow tip in a circular pattern.  
 Adult has a dark body with yellow tipped scales. 10-14 inches.
- \* *Pomacanthus arcuatus* Gray Angelfish 25  
 Juvenile is black with yellow bars. Caudal fin is straight without a yellow tip. Bar pattern on caudal fin.  
 Adult is gray. 10-18 inches.
- \* *Holacanthus tricolor* Rock Beauty 25  
 Juvenile is yellow with a black ocellated spot on rear body.  
 Adult is yellow with a large black center marking on body. 5-8 inches.

**POMACENTRIDAE** – Damsel-fishes

- \* *Microspathodon chrysurus* Yellowtail Damsel (Juv., Adult) 133  
 Juvenile is dark blue with brilliant blue spots.  
 Adult is dark with a yellow tail. 4-6 inches.
- \* *Chromis cyanea* Blue Chromis 137  
 Brilliant blue fish with deeply forked tail. Often school above coral heads. 3-4 inches.

**SCARIDAE** – Parrotfishes

- \* *Scarus vetula* Queen Parrotfish (Initial, Terminal) 197  
 Initial has dark body with a thick white stripe.  
 Terminal has a blue to green mustache and beard. 12-16 inches.
- Scarus taeniopterus* Princess Parrotfish 199  
 Thick yellow stripe starting from gill plate. Purple borders to caudal fin. 8-10 inches.
- \* *Sparisoma viride* Stoplight Parrotfish (Initial, Terminal) 199  
 Initial has red belly and caudal fin. Remaining is black and white. Looks like Indian Corn.  
 Terminal has a pink band in front of pectoral fin and a yellow spot. 3 yellow markings also on caudal peduncle. 1-1.5 feet.
- \* *Scarus iserti* Striped Parrotfish 201  
 Dark stripe through eye. Blue or green borders to caudal fin. 8-9 inches.

**SERRANIDAE** – Groupers / Seabasses

- Hypoplectrus spp* Hamlets 141-149  
 Colors and marking vary greatly. All species have same diamond shape and are 3-5 inches.
- \* *Epinephelus striatus* Nassau Grouper 153  
 Brown to yellowish bar and band marking on body. Black saddle spot on caudal peduncle.  
 "Y" marking on nape. 1-2 feet.
- \* *Mycteroperca venenosa* Yellowfin Grouper 169  
 Yellow tip on pectoral fin. Other colorings may vary. 1-2 feet.
- \* *Mycteroperca tigris* Tiger Grouper 165  
 Often has about 9 tiger type bands on back. Big teeth. Jagged tips of dorsal and caudal fins, especially on larger fish. 1-2 feet.
- \* *Cephalopholis cruentatus* Graysby 157  
 Red and white in color. 3-5 dark spots beneath dorsal fin. Rounded caudal fin. 6-10 inches.
- \* *Epinephelus guttatus* Red Hind 159  
 Red and white in color. Dark tips to dorsal, anal and caudal fins. straight caudal fin. 10-15 inches.
- \* *Cephalopholis fulvus* Coney 161  
 Coloration varies. 2 black dots on lower lip and 2 black saddle spots. Often hide in

	crevices. 6-10 inches.	
<i>Serranus tigrinus</i>	Harlequin Bass	173
	Dark bars. Yellow stripe down center. 2.5-3.5 inches.	
<i>Serranus tabacarius</i>	Tobacco Fish	179
	White fish with mid body is orange to yellow (looks like someone peeled the skin off). Black band-like markings above and below. 3-4.5 inches.	
<i>Gramma loreto</i>	Fairy Basslet	191
	Front is purple, back is yellow. Swims close to coral, sometimes upside down under overhangs. 1-2.5 inches.	

### **SPARIDAE** – Porgies

* <i>Calamus calamus</i>	Saucereye Porgy	75
	Steep nape, large eye. Often has yellow tint to head. 8-14 inches.	

## **Order TETRAODONTIFORMES**

### **BALISTIDAE** – Triggerfishes

<i>Balistes vetula</i>	Queen Triggerfish	395
	Streaming tips on dorsal and caudal fins. blue mustache and lines radiating from eye. Found on reef tops, in coral rubble or over sea grass beds. 8-16 inches in size.	
<i>Canthidermis sufflamen</i>	Ocean Triggerfish	397
	Uniformly gray with a black blotch at the base of the pectoral fin. Nest at the Arch in sand patches. 10-18in. Usually found alone.	
* <i>Melichthys niger</i>	Black Durgon	399
	Body appears all back with a white stripe at the base of dorsal and anal fins. may school above the reef. 6-12 inches.	

### **MONACANTHIDAE** – filefish

* <i>Cantherhines macrocerus</i>	Whitespotted Filefish	401
	Brownsh orange to dark body. Sometimes has white spots. Identifying mark is 4 orange spines on caudal peduncle. 10-15 inches.	
* <i>Cantherhines pullus</i>	Orangespotted Filefish	403
	Dark in color with orange markings on body. Identifying mark is a white saddle mark on caudal peduncle. 4-7 inches.	

### **OSTRACIIDAE** – Boxfishes

<i>Acanthostracion polygonia</i>	Honeycomb Cowfish	391
	Honeycomb pattern all over body. Horns above eyes. 7-15 inches. Often seen close to substrate.	
<i>Acanthostracion quadricornis</i>	Scrawled Cowfish	389
	Scrawled pattern of blue covering entire body. Horns above eyes. 8-15 inches. Often seen close to substrate.	
<i>Lactophrys triqueter</i>	Smooth Trunkfish	393
	Dark body with white spots. Can have a honeycomb pattern on center of body. No horns over eyes. 6-10 inches.	

### **DIODONTIDAE**

* <i>Diodon hystrix</i>	Porcupinefish	389
	1-2 feet. Olive to brown back, shading to white belly, Lone spines are erect only when inflated	

### **TETRAODONTIDAE**

<i>Canthigaster rostrata</i>	Sharpnose Puffer	383
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2-3.5 inches. Dark olive brown on upper body, white to yellowish gold below, with numerous blue spots. Blue lines around mouth, radiating from eye and on tail base