



2013 BHB: The I.D. Tools of the Trade

Fishinar 4/15/2013, Lureen Ferretti – Instructor

Yellowfin Mojarra- relatively deep silvery body with 7-8 dark bluish, brownish, or pinkish bars. The anal and pelvic fins are yellow, the pectoral fins are long and pale yellowish, and the dorsal and caudal fins have yellowish coloration near their bases, reaches a length of 16 inches.

Habitat and Behaviour: It inhabits shallow water (to 40 feet) in a variety of inshore habitats, including sand flats and seagrass beds near patch reefs, bays, tidal creeks, and rocky surf areas.

Abundance and Distribution: Range extends from Bermuda to Brazil, including Florida, the Bahamas, the Antilles, all coastal waters of the Caribbean, and the northern Gulf of Mexico. Common at BHB.

Butter Hamlet – It is pale gray to yellowish (darker above than below) with yellowish fins,. There are light blue dots and scrawls on the head , often with a blue-ringed black spot on the snout just in front of the eye. There is a characteristic black blotch (saddle) on the upper part of the caudal peduncle. It grows to a length of 5 inches.

Habitat and Behaviour: It inhabits shallow reefs (10-50 feet), swimming about near the bottom close to protective crevices. Shy but approachable.

Abundance and Distribution: Florida Keys, Bahamas, the Antilles and most of the Caribbean. Occasional at the BHB

Northern Stargazer – The upper head and body are dark brown and covered uniformly with small white spots, with the spots being smallest and most densely grouped on the snout. The lower head and body are pale. Distinguishing feature - The caudal fin has 3 longitudinal blackish-brown stripes on a whitish background, with the central one being an extension of the blackish stripe extending from the rear of the body and along the middle of the caudal peduncle. This fish grows to a length of 22 inches.

Habitat and Behaviour: A bottom-dwelling inshore species found on sandy, silty, or rubbly bottoms in depths from near the surface to 120 feet. It wiggles its body partially into the bottom sediment and blends with the background while waiting for unsuspecting prey to come near. Because of the possibility of a painful electrical shock, physical contact with this fish should be avoided.

Abundance and Distribution: It is found along the coast from southeast Florida to New York. Occasional at BHB.

Hairy Blenny – Males are usually dark with red fins, chin, and belly, but can fade considerably and show some reticulations when over a light-coloured bottom. Females are paler with light brown body bands and spots. There is an ocellus on the opercle (black spot with a pale ring) and a dark blotch near the front of the dorsal fin. As the fish grows, the latter spot becomes less distinct. There are cirri on the nasal flaps, above the eyes, and a transverse row of cirri on each side of the top rear of the head. The largest inshore blenny in the Caribbean, it grows to 8.5 inches.

Habitat and Behaviour: Found on shallow (to 20 feet) patch reefs, rocky areas, sand, and seagrass beds.

Abundance and Distribution: Its range extends from Florida to Brazil, including Bermuda and all parts of the West Indies. Currently common at BHB.

Sailfin Blenny A long, slightly compressed body, with a blunt head (no spines), short snout, and long pelvic fins. Above the eye there is a cirrus with a 3-lobed tip, and a small unbranched cirrus at the edge of the nostril. In the adult male, the anterior portion of the spinous dorsal fin is highly elevated (spines 1-5 are about a quarter of the body length), and has alternating light and dark broken diagonal lines. The adult male is usually dark, while young males and all females are pale with scattered small brown and gray spots on the upper half of the body. It grows to 2 inches in length.

Habitat and Behaviour: Found on patch reefs, rocky areas, and near coral rubble, where it inhabits small holes in depths to 35 feet.

Abundance and Distribution: Occasional to locally abundant in southern Florida and Bahamas, the northern Gulf of Mexico (Florida to Texas), and throughout the Caribbean. Common at BHB

Scrawled Filefish – Covered with blue to blue-green spots, irregular lines and black dots. Elongated body with long broom-like tail. Common to uncommon within range and north to Massachusetts, Bermuda and south to Brazil, circumtropical.

Black Seabass—robust body, large mouth, slightly projecting lower jaw, large eyes, and no scales on the top of the head. the anal fin is dusky and has a narrow white margin. Adults are a mottled dusky brown or black with bluish highlights and pale horizontal lines along the scale rows. They sometimes display a pattern of about 7 dark bars and may have a dark spot at the base of the posterior-most dorsal spines. Juveniles have a blackish mid-lateral stripe which breaks up with increasing age. This fish grows to a length of 18 inches.

Habitat and Behaviour: It is both an inshore and offshore fish, usually in shallow (to 120 feet) rocky areas, around wrecks and jetties, and in channels with hard bottoms.

Abundance and Distribution: Its range extends from Maine to northeast Florida and the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Juv. Are common at BHB.

Flying Gurnard- It has a moderately elongate body, blunt squarish head, small mouth positioned low on the head, Its colour varies with its surroundings, but is usually a yellowish-brown/gray with white spots. When fanned out, each pectoral fin shows some white spots on the inner parts of the fin, and a pattern of bright blue and light blue spots and lines, which parallel the fin margins, on the rest of the fin. Typically 12 inches, sometimes reaches 18.

Habitat and Behaviour: sandy or grassy bottoms in shallow water (to 35 feet)

Abundance and Distribution: Its range extends from Massachusetts to Argentina, including all coastal waters of the West Indies. Occasional at BHB

Gray Triggerfish- Its body is gray to greenish-gray, with light blue spots and irregular lines as well as three wide faint-to-dark (especially so in juveniles) bar-like blotches on its back, and whitish spots and lines on its lower sides. It grows to a length of 12 inches.

Habitat and Behaviour: It inhabits shallow reef waters (to 50 feet) where it drifts by day searching for food and to bite divers :o)

Abundance and Distribution: It is found along the Atlantic coasts from Nova Scotia to Argentina, including Florida, Bahamas, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean. Rare in the Caribbean, common along the mainland coasts of Florida, and uncommon in the Bahamas. Mean and Common at BHB

Sheepshead - steeply curved anterior dorsal profile. It is whitish to gray to yellowish-silvery with a dark bar crossing its nape and about 5-6 wide dark bars on its side angling slightly down and back from its back. The bars may fade with age. It is typically 1.5 feet in length, but can reach 3 feet.

Habitat and Behaviour: It is usually found in shallow coastal waters (to 40 feet) and in brackish estuaries, especially in rocky areas and around wrecks and dock pilings.

Abundance and Distribution: Common to occasional along the Atlantic coast from Massachusetts to Florida, along the Gulf Coast to the Yucatan Peninsula, and along the coast of Central and South America to Brazil. It has not been reported in the Bahamas or the Antilles. Common at BHB

Orangespotted Goby – An elongate grayish-white to tan body, darker dorsally, with 5 to 7 pairs of brownish blotches along midside and a scattering of irregular small orange spots on the rest of the body and fins. 3.5 inches in length.

Habitat and Behaviour: Found on silty, muddy, and sandy bottoms in shallow water (usually to 30 feet), where it lives in burrows with (and feeds with) alpheid shrimps. The shrimp digs the burrow; the fish watches for and signals danger with its fins. Shy and difficult to approach.

Abundance and Distribution: range includes Bermuda, south Florida, Bahamas, Antilles, the Yucatan Peninsula, and all Caribbean coasts. Uncommon. VERY COMMON at BHB

Sand Perch – The body is elongate, slightly compressed, dark brown dorsally, and tan on the sides with 7-9 long thin yellow-edged blue stripes (paler on the lower sides). Active juveniles have two sharply-delineated dark brown lateral stripes, while in adults (and resting juveniles) the stripes are discontinuous, each consisting of 5-7 dark vertical bars. On the upper half of the caudal peduncle, at the base of the caudal fin, there is a distinct eye-sized dark spot. There are several bright blue lines on the snout and cheek: 2 from the front of the snout back to the eye; 2 angling up from below the front of the eye and merging into one line that runs diagonally up and back across the cheek; This fish grows to a length of 12 inches.

Habitat and Behaviour: Found primarily off continental coasts. Juveniles usually inhabit shallow bottoms (<25 feet) but adults go as deep as 240 feet in areas of seagrass, coarse sand, and coral rubble

Abundance and Distribution: Common off Florida; occasional in the northeastern Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas, and Cuba; rare in the Caribbean (known in the southern islands), the northwestern Gulf of Mexico, and along the coasts of northern South America as far south as Sao Paolo, Brazil. VERY COMMON at BHB

Questions? Feel free to contact me at reenyb@comcast.net
www.DeepSeaPics.com
(also @ Lureen Ferretti on facebook)