



The Wrasse Class; Back In School

Top 12 Wrasse of the Caribbean

Fishinar 5/17/2016, Jonathan Lavan – Instructor

Questions? Feel free to contact me at jonathan@REEF.org

Wrasse 101:

- Typically cigar shaped
- Swim constantly using pectoral fins
- Typically have three phases: Juvenile (JP), Initial (IP) and Terminal (TP)
- Carnivores/Omnivores



- Bluehead- 6- 80ft.
 - TP- Blue head, 2 dark bars behind head separated by white bar.
 - IP- Broken midbody stripe pattern, yellowish back.
 - JP- blob on blue.



- Yellowhead Wrasse- 10- 50ft.
 - Almost all phases but most juvenile- “eye lashes”
 - JP- brilliant blue midbody stripe.



○ **Creole Wrasse- 30- 80ft.**

- Dark purple to violet or lavender. Snout usually dark purple. Does not have dramatic color phases of other wrasse.
- TP & IP identical. Prefer deeper reefs, open water above reefs in long trailing schools.



○ **Slippery Dick- 6- 40ft.**

- ALL PHASES- small green and yellow bi-colored spot above pectoral fin. Darkish to black midbody stripe. Dark triangular corners on tail.
- TP- shades of green.
- IP- Colors and markings vary greatly ranging from shades of green to med. brown,
- JP- usually white, with midbody stripe.
- Prefer shallower water, over sand & grass beds.



○ **Puddingwife- 10- 50ft.**

- Large body w/ sloped head, shy & often solitary.
- TP- Blue to green, yellowish margin on tail, dark dot at base of pectoral fin.
- IP & JP- 5 white dots across upper back (pudding blobs).
- JP- 2 yellow to gold stripes down midbody w/ white stripe between. Navy to blue spot on mid-back & dorsal fin.



○ **Clown Wrasse- 10- 40ft.**

- TP/IP- "Clown" make-up on face. Dark midbody blotch.
- 2 dark spots (IP) on foredorsal fin merge to form an elongated oval.
- JP- Thin gold stripe above, thicker black below.



- **Rainbow Wrasse- 15- 80ft.**
 - TP- black blotch on base of tail (pot of gold), orange streak on center of tail, blue stripes on head above and below eye.
 - IP/JP- black to dark brown stripe from snout, through eye, to tail, becomes less distinct toward tail especially in JP.



- **Blackear Wrasse- 3- 30ft.**
 - ALL PHASES- small orange to purplish red spot adjacent to upper rear of eye. Black spot at base of rear dorsal fin. Have ability to pale or darken rapidly.
 - IP/JP- shades of green to chartreuse.
 - Inhabit grassbeds and shallow reefs usually swimming about but will hide in grass.



- **Yellowcheek Wrasse- 20- 100ft.**
 - ALL PHASES- yellow runs from mouth across nape to foredorsal fin, brilliant blue below.
 - TP- 2 wavy lines radiate from upper rear of eye.
 - JP- deep blue spot on mid dorsal and another on base of tail.
 - IP- in between.
 - Seldom seen shallower than 60ft.



- **Mardi Gras Wrasse (Greenband)- 90- 510ft.**
 - Quite rare; lives in deep reefs just above reef structure.
 - TP- Purple, gold, green and black; “mardi gras” colors, fins have blue margin. Small orange spot just above pectoral.
 - IP/JP- black blotch at base of tail.
 - JP- reddish with white midbody stripe and yellow/gold cast on nose.



○ **Green Razorfish**- 5- 35ft.

- Green color overall, margin of tail rounded, bright red iris & green pupil. Hover above sandy bottoms often near rocks, gorgonians or other cover. Dive into sand when alarmed.
- Male- dark spot (or 2) at midbody.
- Female- no distinct marks (may have bars),
- Juveniles- 1st & 2nd dorsal spines are long w/ pigmented tissue between.



○ **Rosy Razorfish**- 5- 45ft.

- Hover above sandy areas, often near or in sea grass patches. Dive into sand when alarmed.
- ALL PHASES; margin of tail straight.
- Male- darkened area at base of pectoral.
- Female- white belly patch with reddish line markings, darkish bar on gill cover.