



Those Darn Damsels!

Fishinar 1/17/2013, Jonathan Lavan – Instructor

Damselfish 101- Small/Med. oval shape, 1st- Standard size: Genus; *Stegastes* (Cocoa, Dusky, Longfin, Threespot most aggressive, Beaugregory & Bicolor less so)

2nd- Larger size: *Microspathodon* (Yellowtail) &

Abudefduf: (Sergeant Major & Night Sergeant)

3rd- *Chromis*- (Yellowtail Reeffish, Sunshinfin, Purple Reeffish)

- **Bicolor Damselfish**- 4 in., black fore-body, white rear-body. Juvenile: tri-color (yellow to orange) varies greatly. Inhabit patch reefs and low profile reef tops; 20-80 ft. Common throughout range.
- **Yellowtail Damselfish** – 7 ½ in., large black body with yellow tail. Juvenile (Jewelfish); blue with bright blue iridescent dots- tail, clear to yellow. Inhabit reef tops where they maintain a small territory; 10- 40 ft. Common throughout range.
- **Longfin Damselfish** – 6 in., Dorsal and anal fins extend beyond tail base. Thin bright blue edge on anal fin. Juvenile: yellow-gold; brilliant blue lines run from snout to back usually over dusky undercolor. Like calm water at shallower depths; 2- 80 ft. Common throughout range.
- **Dusky Damselfish** – 5 in., Dorsal and anal fins do not extend beyond tail base. Narrow dark edge on anal fin. Juvenile: brilliant orange wash (sunset) from snout across nape continuing to rear of dorsal fin. Prefer shallow, surgy reefs and rocky areas; 1- 25 ft. Occasional throughout range.
- **Beaugregory** – 4 in., Diagonal dark lines soft (not hard like Cocoa), blunt snout; somewhat concave above lips. Often blue spots centered on scales of body. Juvenile; spot contained entirely on dorsal fin. Blue wash on head (under brilliant blue strips) unlike dusky undercolor on Longfin juvenile. Inhabit flat back reef areas associated with dead coral, algae and rock rubble; 3- 40 ft. Common throughout range and N. to Maine.
- **Cocoa Damselfish** – 5in., Commonly black spot (Coco puff) on tail base. Distinct diagonal lines, follow scale edges, extend down side. Smoothly pointed snout. Juvenile; spot on dorsal fin continues on to back.. Blue wash on head (under brilliant blue strips) unlike dusky undercolor on Longfin juvenile. Inhabit living corals in higher profile areas; 5- 100 ft. Common throughout range and S. to Brazil.
- **Threespot Damselfish**– 5 in., Spot 1; yellow gold crescent above eye, Spot 2; dark spot on base of pectoral fin, Spot 3; Black saddle on base of tail. Juvenile; yellow with spot on back and lower dorsal and second spot on saddle of tail. Inhabit reef tops particularly Staghorn coral; 0-130 ft. Abundant to common throughout range.

- **Sergeant Major**- 7 in., 5 black body bars; "stripes" like stripes on a Sergeant Major's uniform; black with yellow wash. Upper lip does not overhang lower. Male guarding eggs- blue body wash overall. Swim in all habitats most often in mid-water; 1-40 ft. Abundant throughout range; N to R.I., S. to Uruguay.
- **Night Sergeant**- 10 in., 5 dark body bars, little to no yellow. Upper lip slightly overhangs lower. Shy & elusive. Prefer shallow, rocky inshore surge areas often around wave cuts; 1- 15 ft. Occasional throughout range.
- **Yellowtail Reeffish**- 4 in., Yellow to clear tail. Bright, iridescent blue "V" on snout continues across upper eye. Inhabit deep reef tops, artificial reefs and nearby sand patches; 80- 160 ft. Occasional Florida, uncommon in the remainder of range.
- **Sunshinefish** – 4 in., Yellow or transparent rear soft dorsal and wide margin on tail. Juvenile; Brilliant yellow to chartreuse upper body; brilliant blue to purple, lavender to dull olive below. Inhabit deep reefs and walls; 50 to 180 ft. Common within range, and N. to North Carolina.
- **Purple Reeffish** – 4 in., Slate blue to navy blue. Bright blue crescent around upper part of eyes (disappears with age). Juvenile; brilliant blue. Prefers deep reefs; 80- 160 ft. Occasional Florida; uncommon remainder of range, not reported Bahamas.

Questions? Feel free to contact me at jonathan_maureen@yahoo.com

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