



Hamlets: To Be or Not To Be (Counted that is!)

Fishinar 2/12/2013, Jonathan Lavan – Instructor

Hamlets 101- Triangular sea bass, all average around 5 ins. Genus *Hypoplectrus* thought to be all one species with different colors. Solitary hunters move just above the bottom. Prefer complex reef structures in moderate depths. The genus is unique to the tropical western Atlantic. Simultaneous hermaphrodites- 3- 10 spawning clasps daily, egg trading at dusk. Mimic behavior as predator. Juveniles tend to have prominent black and white markings on tail base.

- **Butter Hamlet-** Large black saddle blotch on base of tail. Grayish white to yellow. Most common hamlet in Florida Keys, occasional balance of range.
- **Barred Hamlet** – Broad V-shaped bar on midbody. Brown body bars over pale white to yellowish background. Most common hamlet in Caribbean.
- **Indigo Hamlet** – Blue and white bars. Wide medium blue to indigo bars separated by narrower white bars. Blue ventral fins; pectoral fins white or clear. Common Cayman Islands, Jamaica, and Bay Islands; occasional Belize and Bahamas; rare balance of Caribbean and Florida.
- **Shy Hamlet** – All fins bright yellow. Yellow on face and chest (yellow area does not extend over base of tail as on similar Yellowbelly). Occasional Cayman Islands and eastern Caribbean; uncommon Bay Islands and Jamaica; rare to absent Florida, Bahamas and balance of Caribbean.
- **Yellowbelly Hamlet** –Yellow underside extends to tail. Dark brown to slate blue upper body. Dorsal fin yellowish brown lightening toward rear; other fins yellow. Uncommon South Florida and Caribbean; rare Turks & Caicos; not reported Bahamas.
- **Golden Hamlet** –Gold to Yellow. Iridescent blue and black markings on face. Generally found deeper than other hamlets. Occasional eastern and northwest Caribbean including Cuba; rare Bahamas, S. Florida and central Caribbean; can be common in localized areas. Not reported S. Caribbean.
- **Yellowtail Hamlet**– Yellow tail. Dark Body. Juvenile fish may have clear tail. Occasional south to southeastern Caribbean; rare balance of Caribbean and Bahamas; also northeastern Gulf of Mexico.
- **Black Hamlet-** Solid dark bluish black to brown color. Pelvic fins unusually long. Occasional Caribbean, Bahamas; uncommon Florida.
- **Blue Hamlet-** Bright iridescent blue. Thin dark borders on tail. Common to occasional S. Florida and Keys; rare Bahamas and Belize. Not reported balance of Caribbean.

- **Tan Hamlet**- Shades of tan to golden brown overall. First spine of ventral fin blue. Occasional S. Florida, southern Bahamas, USVI, BVI, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts & Nevis and Bonaire. Not reported balance of Caribbean, Florida, Bahamas.
- **Masked Hamlet** – Black mask extends triangularly down from eyes. Pale with bluish or brownish cast. Black borders on tail and upper part of pectoral fins. Black blotch on upper base of tail. Uncommon Cayman Islands, Belize and Honduras. Not reported balance of Caribbean, Florida, Bahamas.
- **Hybrid Hamlet** – Markings vary greatly depending on hybridization and region.

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

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