

## Damselfishes

**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: ADULT & JUVENILE 1. Commonly black spot on tail base.** Lack of this spot causes confusion with Beaugregory [next]. **JUVENILE 2. Black spot ringed in blue that extends from the dorsal fin onto the back.** This may persist as a large spot or fade altogether with adulthood. Without this spot, adults are very difficult to distinguish from Beaugregory. **Adult clues; 3. Distinct diagonal dark lines, following scale edges, extend down side. 4. Smoothly pointed snout.**

**DESCRIPTION:** Robust, deep thick body. Greenish tints in areas of yellow and brown over yellow undertones dark areas, scattered blue spots on head, especially below eye. **JUVENILES:** Yellow with greenish tint with blue wash and brilliant blue lines running from snout to back and spiny dorsal fin. **ABUNDANCE & DISTRIBUTION:** Common South Florida; occasional Bahamas, Caribbean; also Gulf of Mexico, Bermuda and south to Brazil.

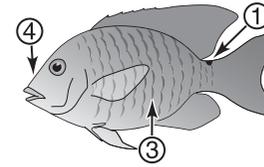
**HABITAT & BEHAVIOR:** Inhabit reefs, especially fore reef areas, with living corals, coral heads and other higher profile areas. Territorial, but not always aggressive, except males guarding eggs.

**REACTION TO DIVERS:** Not shy; can be approached with non-threatening movements.

### COCOA DAMSELFISH

*Stegastes variabilis*

**FAMILY:**  
Damselfishes –  
Pomacentridae



**SIZE:** 3-5 in.,  
max. 5 in.  
**DEPTH:** 5-100 ft.



#### Cocoa Damselfish Adult

Note lack of spot on  
dorsal fin or tail base.

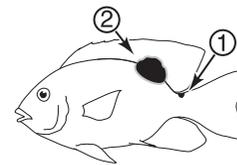
#### Adults

Displaying tail base  
spot [far left]

Not displaying tail base  
spot [near left]



#### Cocoa Damselfish Juvenile



**Older Juvenile**  
[near left]  
**Young Adult**  
[far left]

