2018 WINTER PRINT: GOLDEN HAMLET

Each year, we choose a photo to share with our most generous donors during the winter solicitation period. This year's limited-edition photo is of a Golden Hamlet (*Hypoplectrus gummigutta*) photographed by REEF Co-Founder, Paul Humann.

Here Paul shares our inspiration behind choosing the Golden Hamlet as this year's print, as well as some interesting information about where this rare fish has been reported by REEF surveyors.

"As surveyors know, the Golden Hamlet is featured on the cover of Ned and Paul's "REEF FISH Identification – Florida, Caribbean, Bahamas" field guide. This book has been used as a reference guide by REEF surveyors since the very first surveys were conducted in 1993. Consequently, as this is REEF's 25th Anniversary of the Volunteer Fish Survey Project, it seemed appropriate to use this iconic photo to celebrate this milestone event.

Knowing the Golden Hamlet is a rare species, I decided to do some research in the REEF database to see just how often and where the species has actually been seen over the last 25 years by expert surveyors. To my surprise the vast majority were spotted in only five locations! They have been recorded in: The Bahamas between New Providence and the Exumas – 60 sightings; Cuba – 18; Cayman Islands – 17; St. Vincent – 20; and Tobago – 15. REEF also recognizes the symbolism of this species by the creation of the "Golden Hamlet Club" which is made up of our most dedicated volunteers, those who have submitted at least 1,000 surveys.

For you photography buffs, the picture was taken way back in the late 1970's in Grand Cayman with an old Nikonos II film camera and a 28mm lens. Hope you enjoy!"

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Volunteer Fish Survey Project, the Golden Hamlet serves as a tribute to the effort and dedication of REEF citizen scientists worldwide. We hope that Paul's photo of this exceptional fish reminds you of how your efforts as a REEF member can make a difference for marine conservation.

Thank you for supporting REEF!