GEORGIA AQUARIUM ANIMAL FACT SHEET

Mandarinfish
Synchiropus splendidus

Range/Habitat
- Found in west Pacific waters from the Philippine Islands and Java to Pohnpei and New Caledonia, north to the Ryukus and south to the Great Barrier Reef.
- The mandarinfish is a bottom-living fish that is found among coral or in shallow protected lagoons and inshore reefs in depths of 3 –59 feet (1-18 meters).

Physical Characteristics
- Classified as a dragonet, it is a small, broad-headed and elongated scaleless fish.
- The mandarinfish has a separated dorsal fin; the first fin has spines and the second is soft-rayed.
- It is a small fish usually reaching three inches (eight centimeters) in length.
- It is a brilliantly colored fish, especially the male.

Diet/Feeding
- It feeds on small benthic (bottom-dwelling) invertebrates.

Conservation Status
- Not listed in IUCN Red List

Additional Information
- The mandarinfish, like other dragonets, is sexually dimorphic, meaning the males look different than females. The male is larger and exhibits a longer-spined dorsal fin that it uses for display.
- The mandarinfish's colorful body produces odorous, foul-tasting, toxic mucus to compensate for not having protective scales. This slime protects the fish from parasites and helps the fish to deter potential predators, which view the mandarinfish's coloring as a warning to its noxious taste.
- It is a popular aquarium fish but it may be difficult to feed, therefore it is only recommended for advanced aquarists.
- It is usually found in small groups spread over a small area.

Sources
Micronesian Reef Fishes. Meyers, Robert F., pg 232
Reef Fishes Volume 1. Michael, Scott W., pgs 56, 138
Fishes of the World- An Illustrated Dictionary. Wheeler, Alwyne, pg 343
An Encyclopedia of Fishes, 2nd Edition. pg 143
www.fishbase.org