

GEORGIA AQUARIUM ANIMAL FACT SHEET

Bird Wrasse

Gomphosus varius

Range/Habitat

- The bird wrasse is found in the Indo-Pacific from the eastern Indian Ocean to the Hawaiian, Marquesan and Tuamoto Islands, north to southern Japan, south to Rowley Shoals and the Lord Howe and Rapa Islands.
- It occurs in coral-rich areas of lagoon and seaward reefs to a depth of at least 98 feet (30 m).
- The bird wrasse is common in locations of branched cauliflower coral.

Physical Characteristics

- The adult bird wrasse is identified by its long snout. Small juveniles lack this feature.
- The adult is typically green-blue in color, while the juvenile is green on the upper body and white below with two black stripes along the length of the body.
- The female is smaller than the male, and the male is more colorful than the female.
- This species grows to 11.8 inches (30 cm) in length.

Diet/Feeding

- The bird wrasse feeds mainly on small benthic crustaceans, and sometimes on small fishes, brittle stars and mollusks.

Conservation Status

- The bird wrasse is not included on the IUCN Red List.

Additional Information

- The bird wrasse is often seen in small groups, as well as singly.
- Its snout is used to probe among the coral for prey.
- The common name of the bird wrasse refers to the fish's long snout that is thought to resemble a bird's beak.
- This species can be recognized from a distance by its characteristic swimming pattern of moving the pectoral (side) fins up and down in a "flying motion".
- Wrasses are well known for a life history that includes a gender change from female to male. The sex can be identified by its color pattern. During transformation, the color, behavior and reproductive organs will all change.

Sources

www.fishbase.org

<http://www.amonline.net.au/fishes/fishfacts/fish/gvarius.htm>

<http://waquarium.otted.hawaii.edu/MLP/root/pdf/MarineLife/Vertebrates/BirdWrasse.pdf>