

# GEORGIA AQUARIUM ANIMAL FACT SHEET

## Scalefin Anthias

*Pseudanthias squamipinnis*

### Range/Habitat

- The scalefin anthias is found in the Indo-West Pacific from the Red Sea and East Africa to the Solomon Islands and Fiji, to southwest Japan, and to Palau and East Australia.
- It occupies lagoons and outer reefs at depths of 6 to 66 feet (2 - 20 m) and is among the most common anthias species on shallow reefs.

### Physical Characteristics

- The female is orange with a violet-edged orange stripe that runs from the eye to the base of the pectoral fin. Females are less colorful than the males.
- There are two varieties of the male. The red variation has shades of red with yellow spots on its scales. The purple variation has shades of purple. The body may have tints of yellow or green. A purple blotch is on the outer pectoral fin on all male variations, as well as a long third dorsal spine.

### Diet/Feeding

- The scalefin anthias feeds on plankton in strong currents above the substrate.

### Conservation Status

- The scalefin anthias is not on the IUCN Red List.

### Additional Information

- In groups and aggregations females greatly outnumber the males.
- Anthias form huge schools that are actually made up of small coexisting social groups called "harems". Each harem is usually led by the largest, most colorful male, and includes several smaller, less dominant males, a group of females and juvenile fish. The dominant male constantly defends its place in the group's hierarchy by challenging the lesser males as well as other males from neighboring harems. At dusk, the dominant male anthias from each harem participate in "courtship dances" that entail frenzied, zigzag swimming patterns that attract the females from their group and lead to coincidental spawning in the aggregation.
- Like other member of the sea bass family, anthias are sequential hemaphrodites, meaning they can change sex from female to male. They all begin life as females. Due to environmental or social factors, such as the male dying, some of the females can become males. This sex-change ensures that there will always be a male and a female to reproduce. When the sex change occurs, the female that replaces the dominant male in a harem's hierarchy is capable of changing her sex to male in a period of 2 to 3 weeks.

### Sources

*Reef Fish Identification - Tropical Pacific*. Allen, G.; Steene, R.; Humann, P. and Deloach, N., pgs. 138, 147  
[www.fishbase.org](http://www.fishbase.org)