GEORGIA AQUARIUM ANIMAL FACT SHEET

Longnose Butterflyfish

Forcipiger flavissimus

Range/Habitat

- The longnose butterflyfish is found in the Indo-Pacific from the Red Sea and East Africa to the Hawaiian and Easter islands, north to southern Japan, south to Lord Howe Island, and throughout Micronesia. It also inhabits the eastern Pacific from southern Baja California, Mexico, to the Revillagigedo and Galapagos islands.
- It is common in exposed seaward reefs but also occurs in lagoon reefs at depths to 374 feet (114 m).

Physical Characteristics

- The longnose butterflyfish is bright yellow with a black and silvery-white head. It has a long snout.
- This species can reach lengths of 8.7 inches (22 cm).

Diet/Feeding

- The longnose butterflyfish feeds on hydroids, fish eggs, and small crustaceans. It prefers to nip off the tube feet and pedicellaria of echinoderms or the tentacles of polychaetes.

Conservation Status

- The longnose butterflyfish is not on the IUCN Red List.

Additional Information

- This species is very similar in appearance to the big longnose butterflyfish (*Forcipiger longirostris),* a much less common species, for which it is often mistaken.
- It is the most widely distributed butterfly species.
- The adults are usually found in pairs, particularly during breeding, but may also be solitary or in small groups.
- Butterflyfish as a group have an elaborate courtship ritual. The female and one or more males rapidly swim in tight circles and move up near the ocean surface to release their eggs and sperm into the water. Fertilized eggs hatch in the sea in about 24 hours and the larvae drift as plankton for 3 to 8 weeks, depending on the species. The young fish then seek shelter on shallow reefs, where the juveniles develop into adults.

Sources

www.fishbase.org
Micronesian Reef Fishes. Myers, R. F., pg. 298
A Guide to Angelfishes & Butterflyfishes. Allen, G. R.; Steene, R. and Allen, M., pgs. 13-18, 183