

Porkfish

Anisotremus virginicus

Range /Habitat

- Porkfish occurs in the western Atlantic from Florida to Brazil, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. It is abundant in Florida, especially the Florida Keys. It is considered an introduced species in Bermuda.
- Found in shallow inshore waters over reefs and rocky bottoms at depths from 6 to 65 feet (2 - 20 m).
- Juveniles are common on seagrass beds.

Physical Characteristics

- Porkfish is a deep-bodied fish with a blunt snout, thick lips and a small mouth positioned low on the head.
- Body is bright yellow-gold with two conspicuous black bars on the head and front part of the body. There are alternating blue and yellow stripes on the upper part of the body and whitish with yellow stripes below. The fins are yellow.
- Adults can grow to 14 inches (38 cm) in length and weigh 2 lbs. (900 gm).
- Young porkfish do not have black bars, but do have a large dark spot near the base of the caudal fin.

Diet/Feeding

- Feeds at night on a variety of invertebrates, such as mollusks, echinoderms, annelids, and crustaceans.

Conservation Status

- "Not Evaluated" on the IUCN Red List.

Additional Information

- Porkfish is a member of the grunt family (Haemulidae), which is characterized by the ability to make grunting sounds using its pharyngeal teeth and swim bladder.
- Young porkfish can be reared in human care and is a popular aquarium fish as it removes ectoparasites from other fish.
- This species relatively unafraid of divers and can often be closely approached.
- In Florida, porkfish drifts in large inactive schools over reefs in the daytime and disperses to feed at night. It is usually found alone or in small groups throughout the rest of its range.
- The porkfish is a good game fish for light tackle, but has been linked to ciguatera poisoning.

Sources

www.fishbase.org

www.enature.org

www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish

Reef Fish Identification, Florida, Caribbean, Bahamas. Humann, P. and DeLoach, N.

Peterson Field Guides - Atlantic Coast Fishes. Robins, C. R. and Ray, G. C.



GEORGIA AQUARIUM

at Pemberton Place

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