

GEORGIA AQUARIUM ANIMAL FACT SHEET

Garibaldi Damselfish

Hypsypops rubicundus

Range/Habitat

- The garibaldi damselfish is commonly found in the eastern Pacific Ocean, from Monterey Bay in California to Guadalupe in Mexico.
- It is a reef-associated fish, found in clear water, often near crevices, small caves and occasionally in kelp in depths to 98 feet (30 m).

Physical Characteristics

- Measuring 12 to 14 inches (31 – 36 cm) in length, it is the largest of the damselfish.
- Its most distinguishing feature is its bright orange color as an adult. Juveniles are red-orange with bright iridescent blue spots on the body and blue edges on the fins.
- This species has a small, narrow mouth and an oval shaped body.

Diet/Feeding

- The garibaldi feeds on a wide range of invertebrates including worms, anemones, sea stars, shrimp, sponge and small shellfish.

Conservation Status

- The garibaldi is not included in the IUCN Red List.
- In 1995, the California Legislature placed a moratorium on garibaldi collecting for either sport or commercial purposes.

Additional Information

- The garibaldi is solitary in nature and does not school. It is most active during the day and generally retreats to a protected spot at night.
- When disturbed, a garibaldi emits a thumping sound that is audible to divers.
- Its life span may be up to 17 years but it will usually live 12 years or less.
- It is a fiercely territorial fish, especially the male, and will attack larger animals that threaten its eggs.
- The male will select a home territory that includes a feeding area, a protective hole and a nesting site. It will protect its territory year round.
- The female also establishes a home but doesn't defend it as vigorously as the male.
- One of the most interesting things about the garibaldi is its courtship and mating behavior. In the early spring, the male will prepare a nest by cleaning out the debris from a small area of a red algae bed. Then, he will work hard to attract females with swimming displays. If the female is enticed to stay, she will release a trail of eggs, which stick to the algae nest. The male then fertilizes the eggs and chases away the female so that she won't eat the eggs. He will continue to clean and guard the eggs until they hatch with no assistance from the female. A female can lay between 50 to 1000 eggs, which incubate for two to seven days until they emerge into transparent, 1/6 inch hatchlings. Several females may spawn in the same nest and each female may lay eggs in several nests.

Sources

www.fishbase.com

Passport to the Pacific. Aquarium of the Pacific, pgs. 10 - 11