

***Acanthurus sohal* (Forsskål 1775)**
Sohal Surgeonfish



Photo by J. Randall, Bishop Museum

Identification: Slightly compressed body shape with well-defined lunate caudal fin. Pale grey in body color gradually turning whitish ventrally. Narrow blackish stripes on head above the eye. Orange patch beneath pectoral fins and around the sheath and socket of caudal spine. Pelvic and median fins are blackish with blue outline. Grows to about 40 cm TL. Also known as the Red Sea Surgeonfish. Dorsal fin IX (30-31), anal fin III (28-29), pectoral fin (17). From Randall (1983).

Similar Species: No Atlantic surgeonfish is known to have stripes on the body. However, faint body lines can be seen on the Blue Tang (*Acanthurus coeruleus*), which has a solid blue body and yellow scalpel.

Native Range: Western Indian Ocean including the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf (Randall 1983).

Ecology: The preferred habitat of the Sohal Surgeonfish is the outer edge of reef flats that are exposed to surge (Randall 1983). The species grazes on *Sargassum* and filamentous green algae (Vine 1974; Lieske and Myers 1994). It is known to be a very aggressive territorial species (Alwany et al. 2005).

Nonindigenous Occurrences: The species was observed in 2002 in the Pompano Beach area.



Acanthuridae (surgeonfishes, tangs, unicornfishes)