

Zanclus cornutus (Linnaeus 1758)
Moorish Idol



Photo by J. Randall, Bishop Museum

Identification: The body is deep and strongly compressed, with three wide black and two pale yellow bars. The protruding, tubular snout has a yellow saddle across the top. Short horn-like projections arise above the eyes; these are larger in males. Dorsal spines elongated into a whip-like filament. Grows to about 23 cm TL. Dorsal fin VII (40-43), anal fin III (33-35); pectoral rays 19. Grows to about 20 cm TL. From Galván-Magaña et al. (1996), Allen et al. (2003), and Randall (2005).

Similar Species: No similar species in Florida.

Native Range: Wide-ranging in the Indo-Pacific and tropical Eastern Pacific, from East Africa to Micronesia, Hawai'i, Polynesia, México, and the Galápagos Islands. From Galván-Magaña et al. (1996), Allen et al. (2003) and Randall (2005).

Ecology: This reef-associated species occurs in a variety of hard-bottom habitats, from turbid harbors to reef flats and seaward reefs to 180 m. Usually, the species occurs in small groups, but it can form large schools of over 100 individuals. The species feeds on algae, sponges, and other benthic invertebrates. From Randall et al. (1996), Myers (1999), Allen et

al. (2003), and Randall (2005).

Nonindigenous Occurrences: The species was observed in 2001 in the Pompano Beach area.

