

Zebrasoma flavescens (Bennett 1828)
Yellow Tang



Photo by J. Randall, Bishop Museum

Identification: Deep body with a slightly protruding snout and large dorsal and anal fins toward the posterior. Bright yellow in color with white caudal spine (scalpel) (Allen et al. 2003). White stripe along the lateral line in some specimens. Grows to about 20 cm TL. Dorsal fin V (23-26), anal fin III (19-22). From Lieske and Myers (1994).

Similar Species: Juvenile Blue Tang (*Acanthurus coeruleus*) has a yellow scalpel and less-protruding mouth.

Native Range: The Yellow Tang is found in the Northwest and Central Pacific Ocean from southwest Japan to Marianna Islands, Marshall Islands, Marcus Island, Wake Island, and Hawai'i. From Allen et al. (2003).

Ecology: The Yellow Tang is found in lagoonal and seaward reefs (Lieske and Myers 1994). It is diurnally active, exhibiting a wide variety of social organization. The species can be found in social groups ranging from solitary to hundreds of individuals while feeding during the day, but can also be found solitary in shelter sites during the night (Atkins 1981). The

Yellow Tang is the most frequently collected aquarium fish in Hawaii (Tissot et al. 2004). It has been observed to spawn seasonally, timing its reproduction to periods when the oceanographic currents are favorable for local recruitment to island populations (Lobel 1989). The caudal spine is erectable as a defense mechanism (Winterbottom 1971).

Nonindigenous Occurrences: The species has been observed off Boca Raton, Pompano Beach, and Delray Beach from 2001 to 2005.



Acanthuridae (surgeonfishes, tangs, unicornfishes)