

Gascoyne Wetline Fish Identification Field Guide

B.Rome, S.J.Newman, G.Jackson, J.Norriss



Government of Western Australia
Department of Fisheries



Fish for the future

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Information about this guide

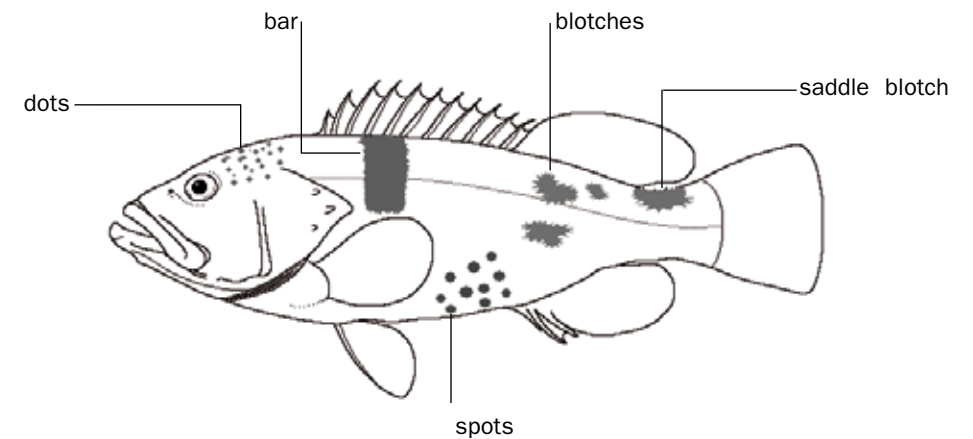
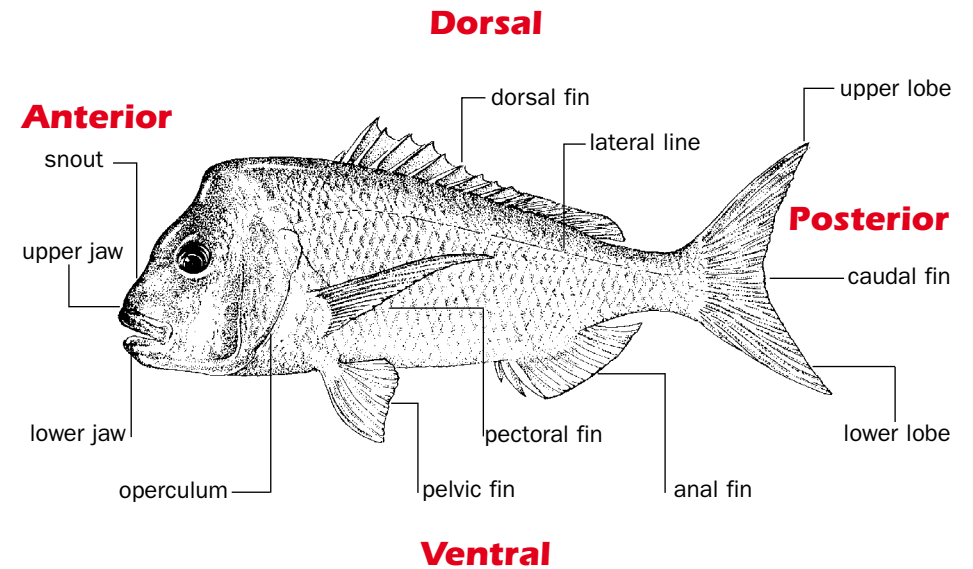
The aim of the *Gascoyne Wetline Fish Identification Field Guide* is to provide a simple, easy to-use manual for commercial operators and recreational fishers to help identify the most commonly caught marine finfish species in the Gascoyne. This guide is not intended to be a comprehensive taxonomic fish ID booklet.

The Gascoyne Coast bioregion is an area which contains a mixture of tropical and temperate finfish species. Although most species occur widely across the Indo-West-Pacific region, the fish photographed for this guide were caught in Western Australian waters, predominantly the Gascoyne region. They should therefore show any subtle variations peculiar to this region.

Fish have been grouped into their respective families and identified down to the species level. Australian standard common names have been used. Other common names which are often used by the fishing industry and markets have also been included.

Photos are not to scale and the distinguishing features of each fish are highlighted to help fishers identify fish to species level. For some species the adult and juvenile stages of the fish have been included to demonstrate the changes that occur over their life cycle.

Fish body parts and markings



Glossary

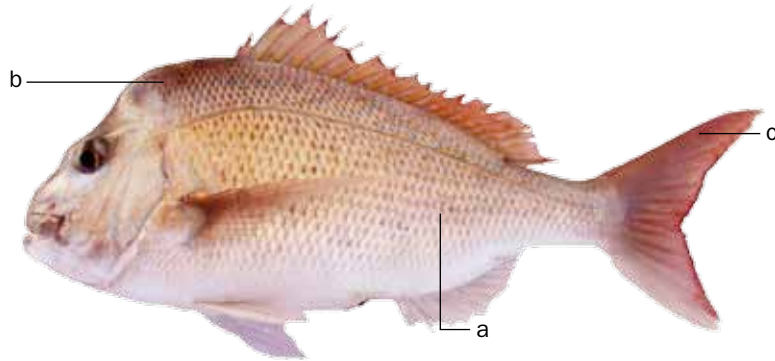
Anal fin:	the fin located on the belly behind the anus
Anterior:	situated more to the front end of the fish
Concave:	used to describe the curved shape of the caudal fin
Caudal fin:	the back end tail fin
Dorsal fin:	the fin that run along the back (on top) of the fish
Elongate:	extended in length
Lateral line:	is a sensory canal system, can be identified by a series of specialised scales which run along the side of the fish's body
Lunate:	shaped like a crescent moon (refers to the shape of the caudal fin)
Lobe:	refers to the roundish projection or division of an organ
Longitudinal:	running the length of the body from the head to tail
Operculum:	gill cover consisting of opercule and preopercle bones
Oblique:	refers to bars or lines on a fish, which are not straight or parallel, instead are slanting or sloping
Pectoral fins:	paired fins located on the sides of the fish behind the gill openings
Pelvic fins:	the paired fins located ventrally on the fish below the pectoral fins
Posterior:	towards the tail end or rear of the body
Radiating:	to spread or disperse from a central point
Reticulate:	refers to a network of lines over the body of a fish
Snout:	the part of the head in front of the eye (snout runs from the front of the upper lip to the anterior edge of the eye)
Thorax:	chest area
Truncate:	used to describe a mainly straight posterior edge of the caudal fin
Ventral:	pertaining to the abdomen or bottom of the fish

Gascoyne Wetline Fish Identification Field Guide

Seabreams

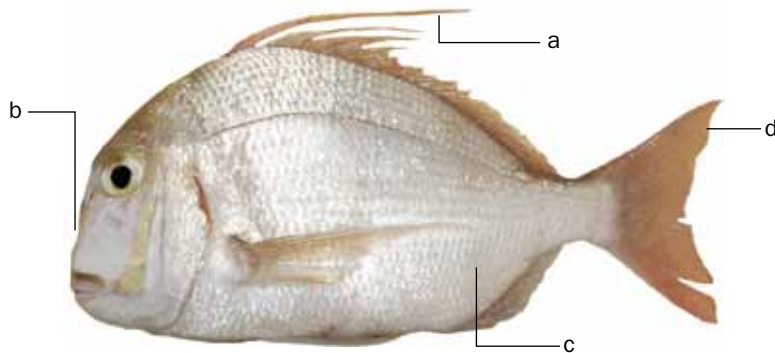
Family: Sparidae

Pink Snapper (*Pagrus auratus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body varies in colour from bright pink to deep brick red fading to white on the ventral surface (b) distinct blue spots on the body predominantly concentrated above the lateral line (c) caudal fins are light pink in colour with reddish orange margins.

Frypan Bream (*Argyrops spinifer*)



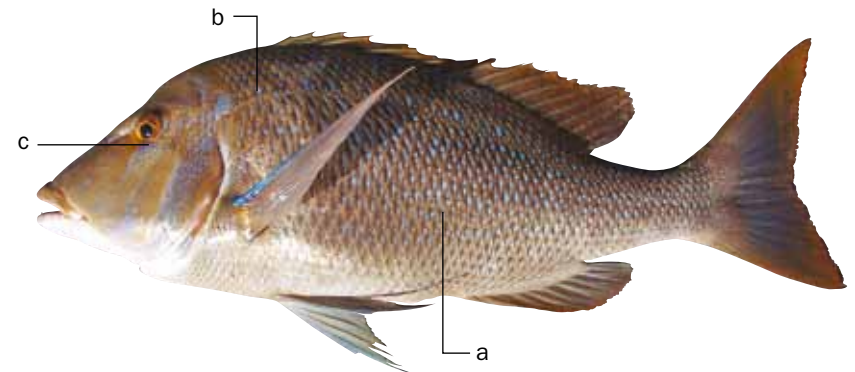
Distinguishing Features: (a) contains elongated filamentous dorsal spines (b) angular steep forehead profile (c) head and body are silvery deep pink (d) dorsal and caudal fins are pink to orange with red margins.

Other Common Names: Long-spinned snapper, pan snapper

Emperors

Family: Lethrinidae

Spangled Emperor (*Lethrinus nebulosus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body golden bronze in colour (b) scales on the upper body contain blue spots (c) blue bars or lines radiating from eyes over cheeks and snout.

Other Common Names: North-west snapper

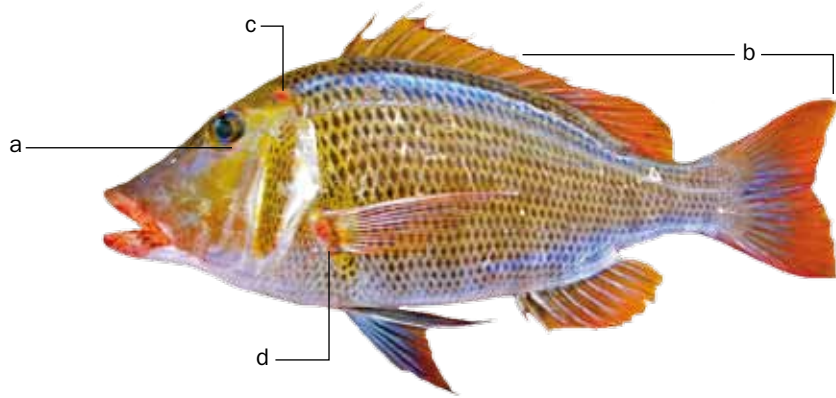
Blue spotted Emperor (*Lethrinus Sp 3*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains red margins on caudal, dorsal and pectoral fins (b) blue spots visible on head; blue banding less distinct than other related species *Lethrinus nebulosus* and *Lethrinus laticaudis*.

Other Common Names: Small north-west snapper, grass emperor

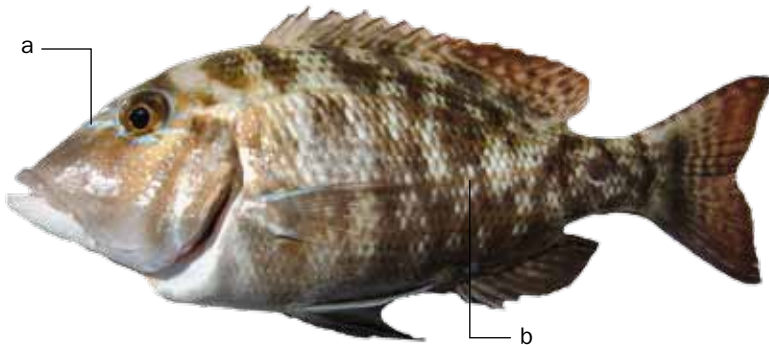
Redthroat Emperor (*Lethrinus miniatus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) orange area around eye (b) caudal and dorsal fins are reddish in colour (c) red streak is present on the upper operculum (d) red patch at the base of the pectoral fin.

Other Common Names : Sweetlip emperor

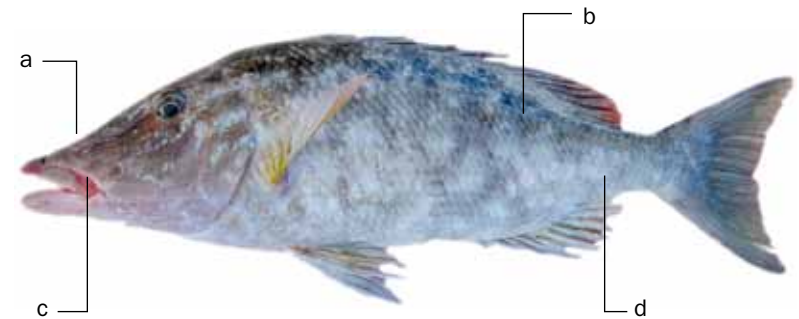
Grass Emperor (*Lethrinus laticaudis*)



Distinguishing Features:(a) contains distinct blue lines which radiate from the eye (b) body is often brown or gold yellow in colour with irregular dark blotches, which can often form indistinct bands across the body.

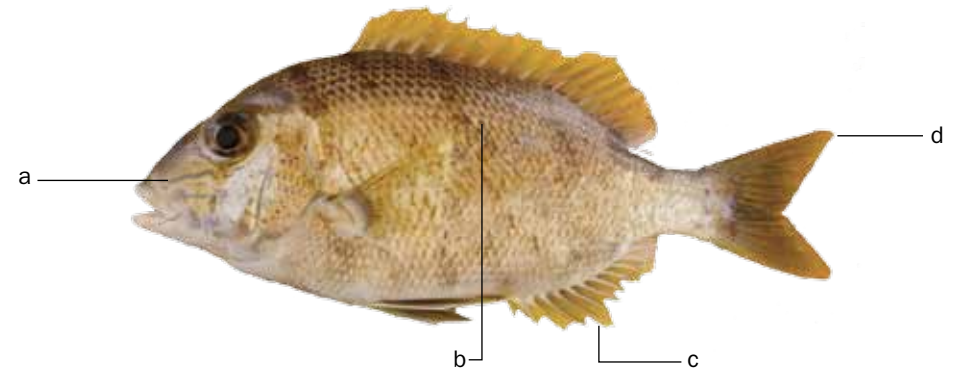
Other Common Names : Black snapper, blue lined emperor

Longnose Emperor (*Lethrinus olivaceus*)



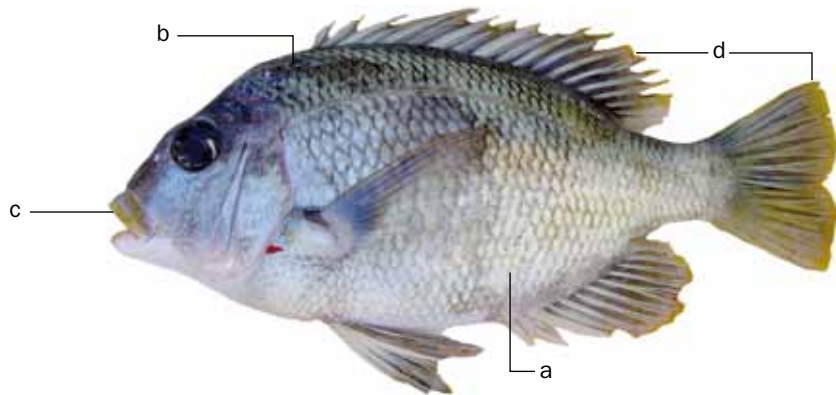
Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a distinct long elongate pointed snout (b) greenish or olive in colour and dark brown blotches are present over entire body (c) upper lip is often red in colour (d) body relatively elongate.

Robinson's Seabream (*Gymnocranius grandoculis*)



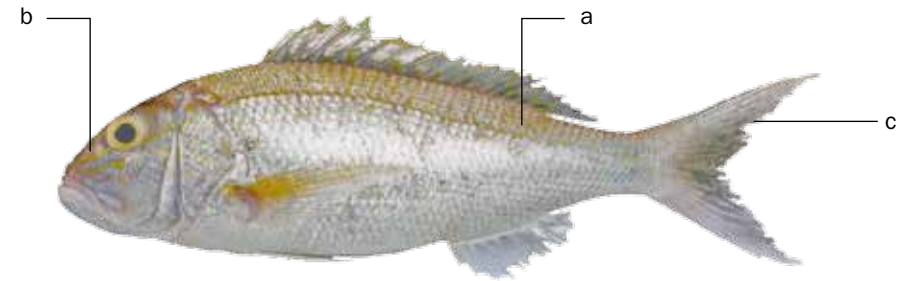
Distinguishing Features: (a) distinct undulating blue lines and spots on snout, cheek and operculum (b) body is generally golden brown yellow in colour (c) fins are orange-yellow in colour (d) caudal fins contain an orange margin.

Mozambique Seabream (*Wattsia mossambica*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body is relatively deep in shape (b) the body has indistinct dark blotches or bars (c) upper lip is yellow and possesses a longitudinal denticulated ridge (d) the margins of caudal, anal and dorsal fins are yellow.

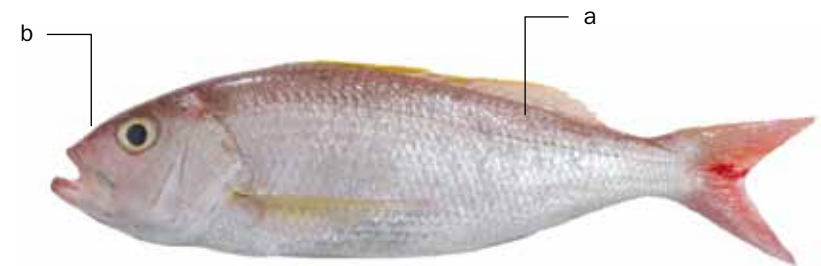
Goldband Snapper (*Pristipomoides multidens*)



Distinguishing Features : (a) body colour is yellowish to rosy (b) contains two to three distinct yellow or gold bands with blue margins over snout below the eye (c) caudal fin is pale yellow-pink in colour.

Other Common Names: Goldband jobfish, king snapper

Sharptooth Snapper (*Pristipomoides typus*)



Distinguishing Features : (a) overall colour is rosy pink to reddish with pale underbelly (b) contains reticulated fine diffuse yellow-to-gold bands on head and snout. Often misidentified as *Pristipomoides multidens*.

Other Common Names: Sharptooth jobfish

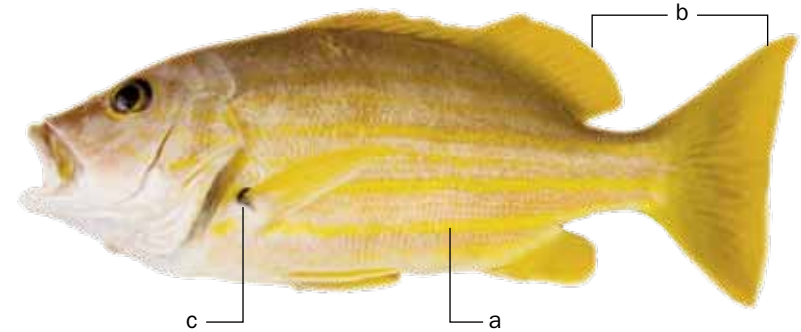
Rosy Snapper (*Pristipomoides filamentus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body is elongate and robust, deep reddish brown in colour more pronounced above the lateral line (b) dorsal and caudal fins are light blue or lavender in colour with reddish-orange margins.

Other Common Names : Rosy jobfish, crimson jobfish

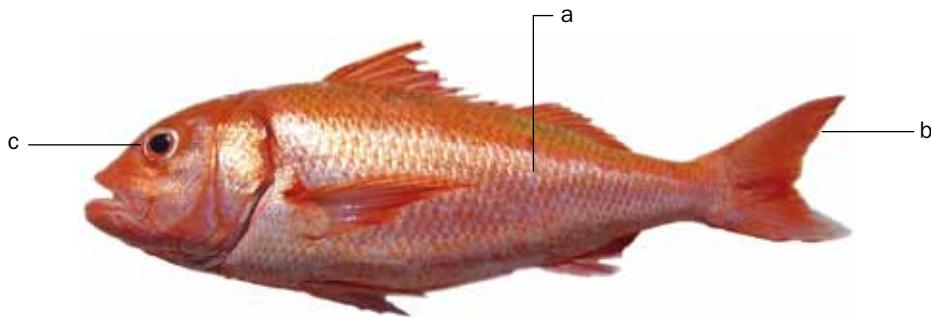
Stripey Snapper (*Lutjanus carponotatus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body is predominantly yellow with a series of eight to nine yellow, golden brown stripes on the side of the fish (b) caudal and dorsal fins are yellowish (c) black spot is present at the base of the pectoral fin.

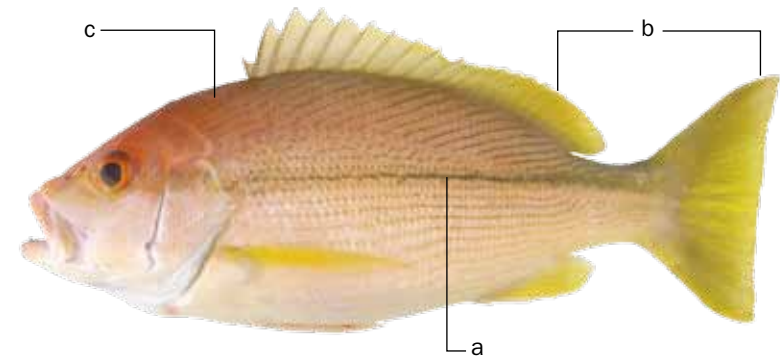
Other Common Names: Spanish flag, flagfish

Ruby Snapper (*Etelis carbunculus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body is relatively elongate bright reddish pink in colour becoming white on the lower sides and belly (b) caudal fin is deeply forked the lobes are relatively short compared to other species in the *Etelis* genus (c) head is small, eyes are large.

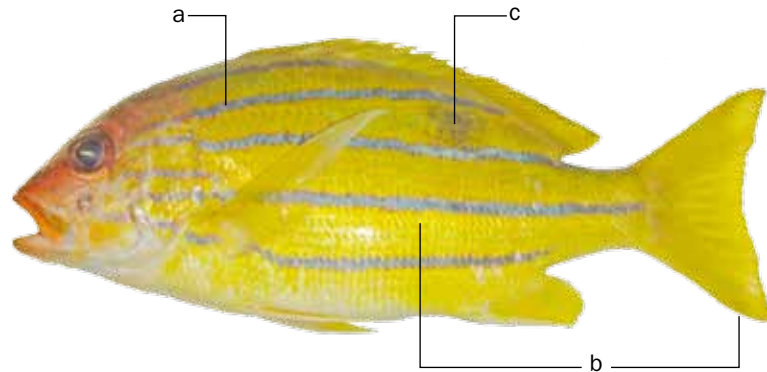
Brownstripe Snapper (*Lutjanus vitta*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a distinct olive or brown band that runs longitudinal from the eye to the caudal fin (b) fins are yellow to orange, anterior dorsal and anal fin have white margins (c) thin brown strips are oblique above lateral line and are horizontal below the line.

Other Common Names: Striped seaperch, flagfish

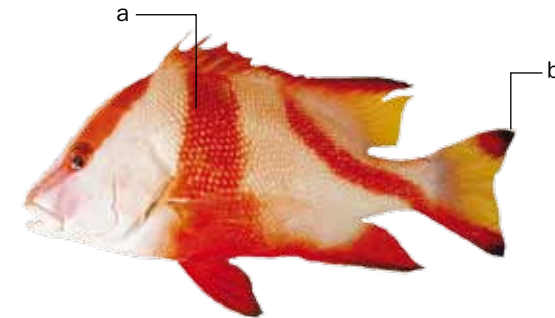
Five line Snapper (*Lutjanus quinquelineatus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains five distinct blue lines which run longitudinal from the head to the caudal fin (b) body and fins are bright yellow in colour (c) black spot is generally visible above the lateral line and below the anterior end of the dorsal fin.

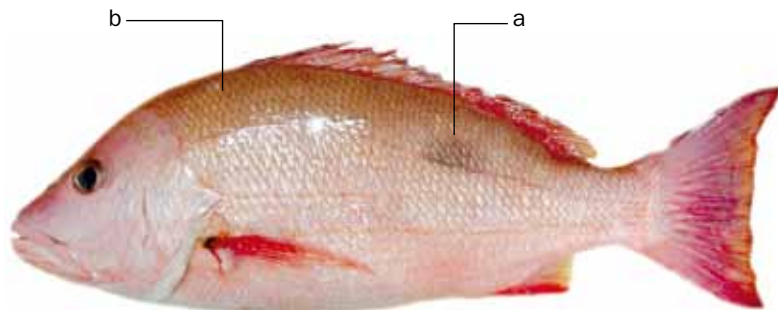
Other Common Names : Five lined seaperch

Red Emperor (*Lutjanus sebae*)



(i) Juvenile

**Moses Snapper (*Lutjanus russelli*)
(Indian Ocean form)**



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a distinct black spot on the back of the body generally above the lateral line (b) body is red in colour, often gets confused with *Lutjanus johnii*.

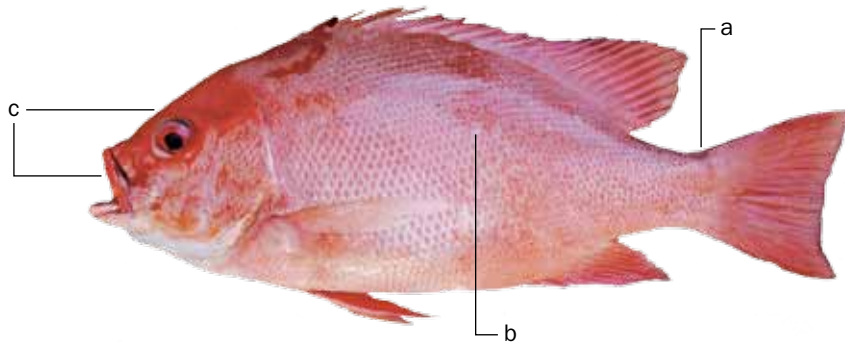
Other Common Names: Moses perch, Fingermark bream



(ii) adult

Distinguishing Features: (a) juvenile and young adults contain broad dark red bands. These bands fade with age and the fish becomes pink/red all over its body (b) the dorsal, anal and top of the caudal fin all contain a fine white posterior margin.

Crimson Snapper (*Lutjanus erythropterus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a large black spot at the dorsal side base of the caudal fin (b) Pink/red in colour over entire body (c) head and mouth are relatively small. Often misidentified as *Lutjanus malabaricus* but has a different head profile, much smaller jaw than this species.

Other Common Names: Crimson seaperch, red snapper

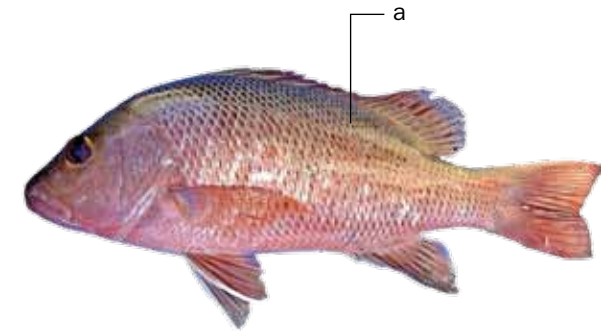
Saddletail Snapper (*Lutjanus malabaricus*)



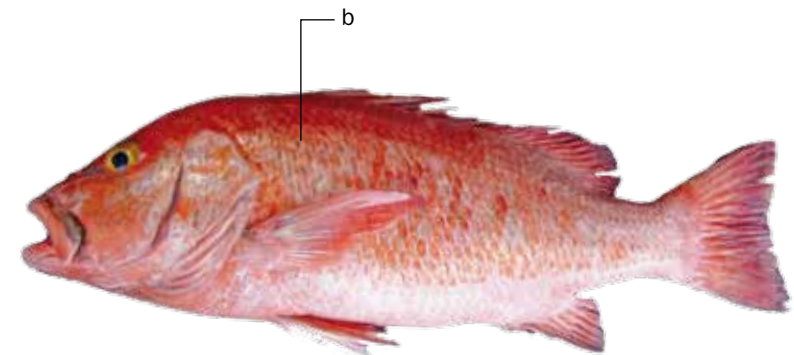
Distinguishing Features: (a) head and mouth is much larger than *Lutjanus erythropterus*. Head profile is straight or very slightly concave. (b) contains a dark black band at the base of the caudal fin.

Other Common Names : Scarlet perch, Saddle-tailed seaperch, malabar snapper

Mangrove Jack (*Lutjanus argentimaculatus*)



(a) Juvenile fish are generally greenish, brown on the dorsal surface, deep red below the lateral line.



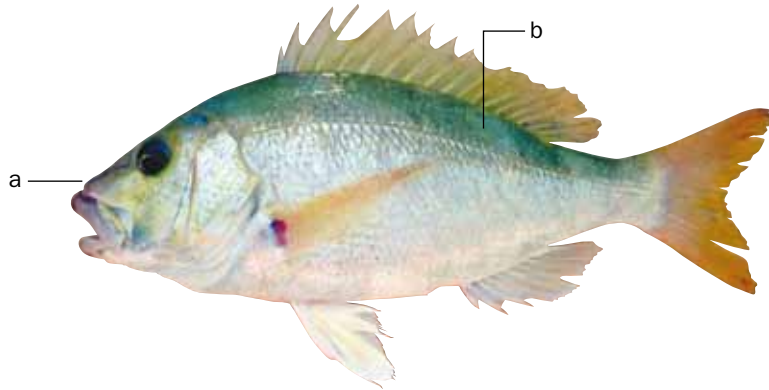
(b) Adult fish become more reddish in colour once they leave the mangrove systems.

Distinguishing Features: Body colour changes over their life cycle. Often confused with *Lutjanus johnii* but can be distinguished by a dark mark on the back of the dorsal surface.

Trevallies

Family: Carangidae

Tang's Snapper (*Lipocheilus carnolabrum*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a distinct thick fleshy protrusion at the front of the upper lip (b) body is golden brown particularly above the lateral line, the ventral part of the body is more silvery in colour.

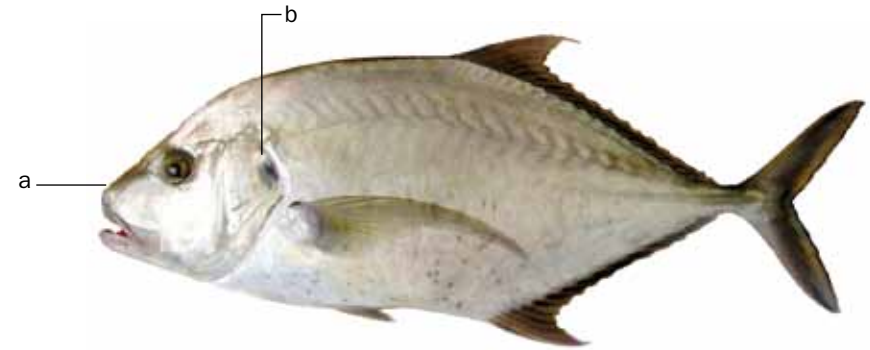
Dark tail Snapper (*Lutjanus lemniscatus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body is dark red or deep maroon on the upper part of the body above the lateral line, becoming whiter towards the ventral surface (b) distinctive head profile is steeply sloped and the snout is long and slightly concave (c) the dorsal and caudal fins are red with a distinct white margin (d) orange spots are visible on the head. Often misidentified with mangrove jack *Lutjanus argentimaculatus*.

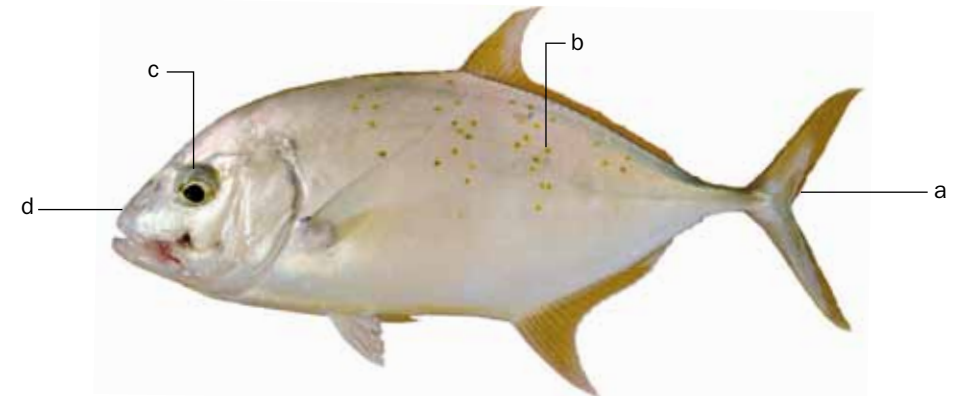
Other Common Names : Maroon seaperch, dark-tailed seaperch

Longnose trevally (*Carangoides chrysophrys*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a gently sloping head profile except between the snout and the mouth where there is vertical slope (b) contains a black spot on the upper operculum.

Turrum (*Carangoides fulvoguttatus*)



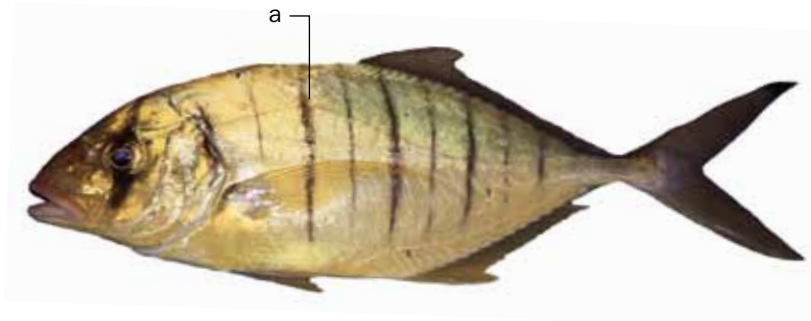
Distinguishing Features: (a) body is relatively elongate in shape (b) contains yellow and brown spots on the side of body (c) eye is located high above the mouth (d) the snout is tapered. Often misidentified as the bludger trevally *Carangoides gymnostethus*.

Other Common Names : Gold-spotted trevally

Cods and Groupers

Family: Serranidae

Golden Trevally (*Gnathanodon speciosus*)



(picture of a juvenile golden trevally)

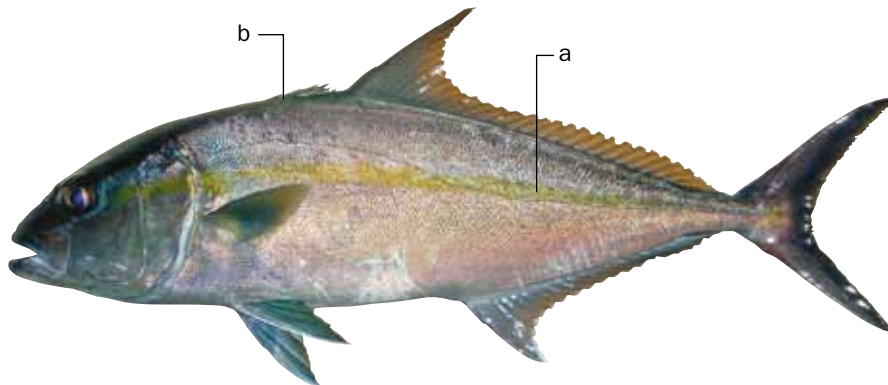
Distinguishing Features: (a) juvenile fish - body colour is bright yellow golden over entire body contain distinct dark bars (b) adult fish - the yellow golden colour fades and is generally only evident under the belly of the fish, the dark bars are also less distinct.

Yellow spotted Rockcod (*Epinephelus areolatus*)



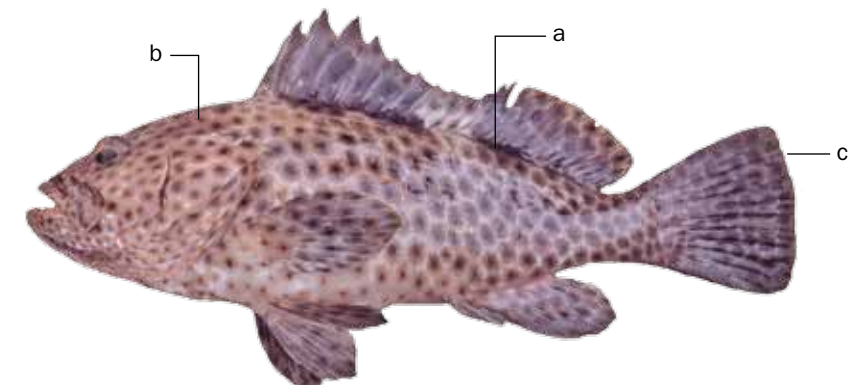
Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a dense pattern of large round yellow/brown spots on body (b) caudal fin is truncate with a distinct white margin, does not contain dark blotches on the dorsal ridge of the body as found in *Epinephelus bilobatus*.

Amberjack (*Seriola dumeril*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a distinct yellow band which runs mid lateral from the caudal fin to the eye (b) body colour above lateral line bluish grey to bronze, below line is silver/white.

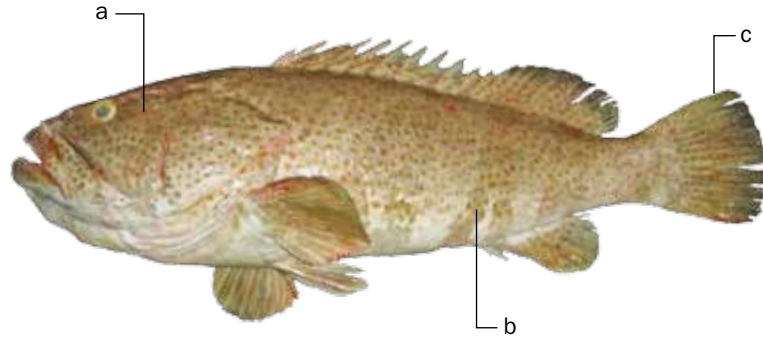
Frostback Rockcod (*Epinephelus bilobatus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains distinct dark blotches on the dorsal ridge of the body (b) contains a dense pattern of gold-brown large spots over entire body (c) caudal fin is lunate, similar in appearance to *Epinephelus areolatus*.

Other Common Names : Spotted cod

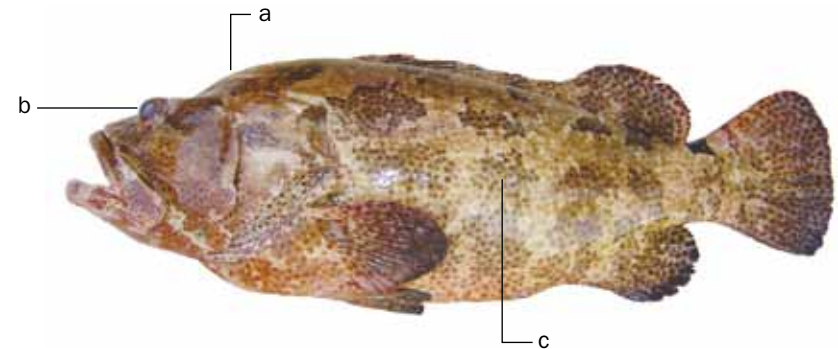
Gold spotted Rockcod (*Epinephelus coioides*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains dusky or orange spots over head and upper body (b) has six indistinct broad cross bands which run across the back of the body (c) fins are variegated in browns and yellows. Frequently misidentified as *Epinephelus malabaricus* and *Epinephelus tauvina*.

Other Common Names: Estuary cod, slimy cod

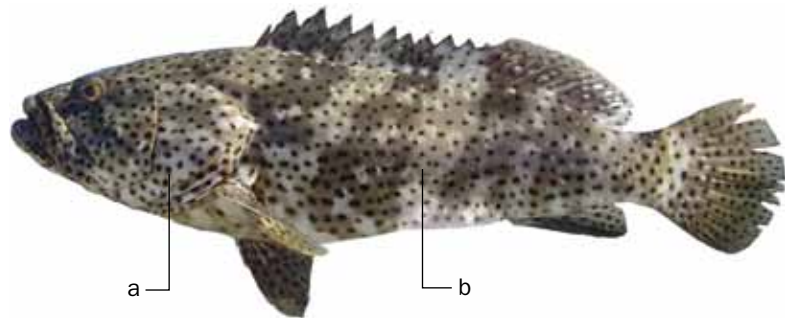
Flowery Rockcod (*Epinephelus fuscoguttatus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a distinct hump on the head (b) eye is very small (c) body is pale brown in colour with irregular brown blotches (flowers), often confused with *Epinephelus coioides*.

Other Common Names: Flowery cod

Black spotted Rockcod (*Epinephelus malabaricus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains dark brown or black spots (b) irregular white blotches over body. Often confused with *Epinephelus coioides*.

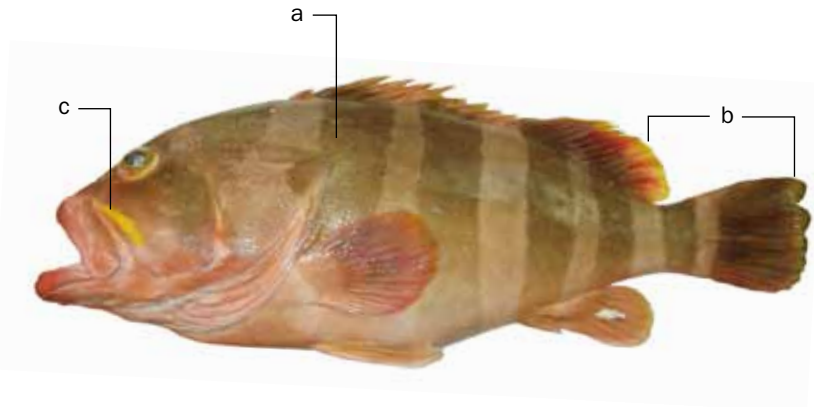
Other Common Names: Estuary cod, slimy cod

Rankin Cod (*Epinephelus multinotatus*)

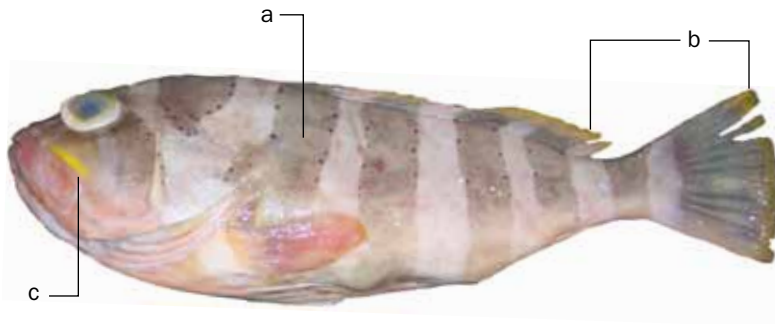


Distinguishing Features: (a) head and body are black-grey in colour (b) contains irregular white blotches over the entire body.

Banded Grouper (*Epinephelus amblycephalus*)



(i) Before being in a brine

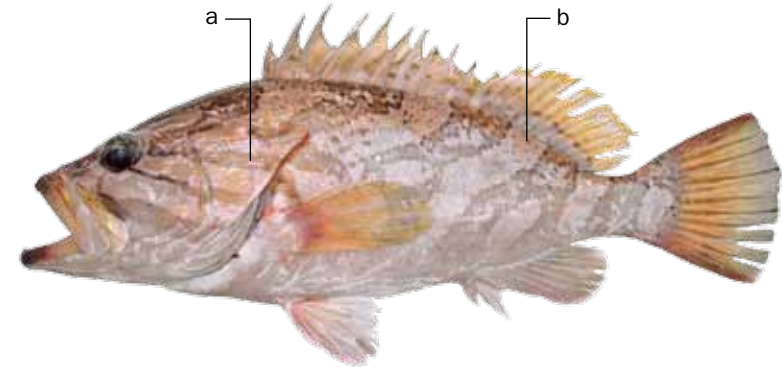


(ii) After being in a brine

Distinguishing Features: (a) contains five distinct dark bars over the body and tail plus similar patch on nape (b) dorsal and caudal fin have yellow margins (c) also has distinct yellow marking above upper jaw.

Other Common Names: Small-banded cod

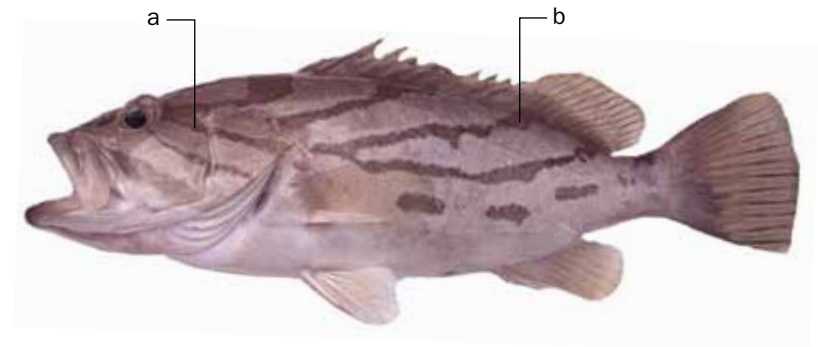
Radiant Rockcod (*Epinephelus radiatus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains five distinct brownish olive broad radiating bands on the head and body (b) small dark brown spots are visible between these bands. Often confused with comet grouper *Epinephelus radiatus*.

Other Common Names: Radiant cod

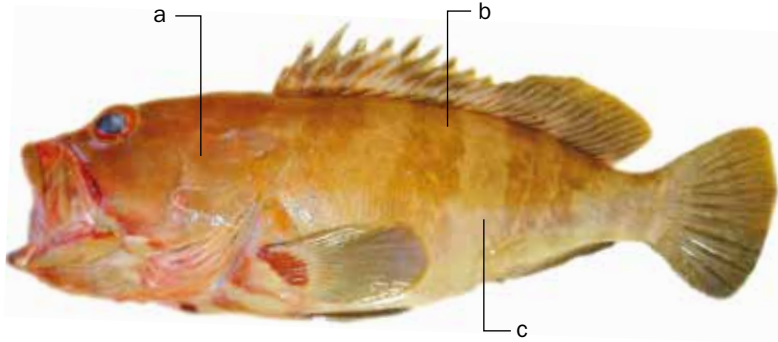
Comet Grouper (*Epinephelus morrhua*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains single lined oblique bands running from the snout to the upper body. These lines are curved and run more horizontally than the similar-looking radiant rockcod *Epinephelus radiatus* (b) no spots are visible between these bands.

Other Common Names: Comet cod

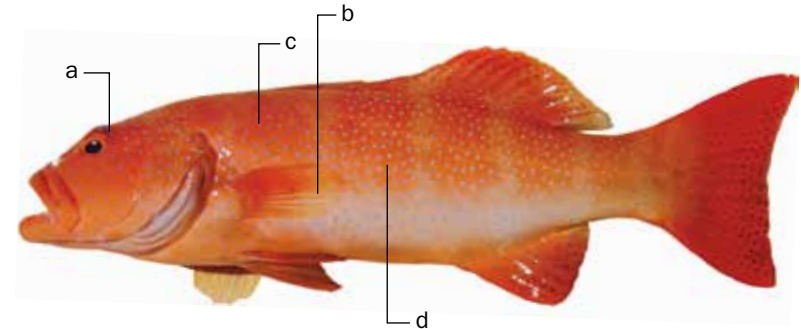
Chinaman Rockcod (*Epinephelus rivulatus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body red to brown in colour (b) contains irregular oblique brown bars on side of body (c) each body scale has a small white dot creating a peppered appearance.

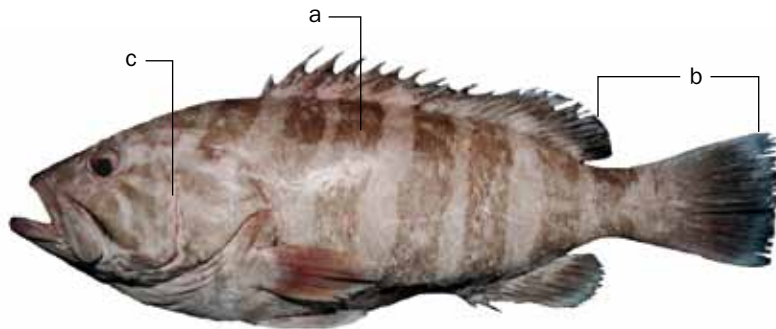
Other Common Names: Chinaman cod, Charlie Court

Common Coral Trout (*Plectropomus leopardus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a distinct blue ring around the eye (b) clear translucent pectoral fin (c) distinct small blue spots over head and body, except under the belly and thorax (d) body colour can vary from bright red to dark reddish brown, often misidentified as bar-cheeked coral trout *Plectropomus maculatus*.

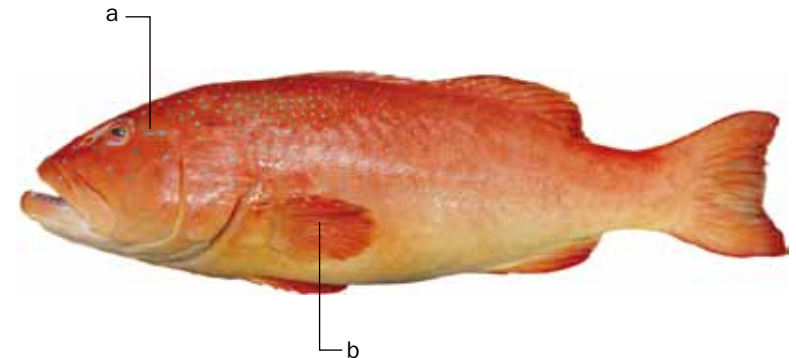
Eightbar Grouper (*Epinephelus octofasciatus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains eight distinct brown to black cross bands over the body (b) dorsal anal and pelvic fins are blackish brown in colour (c) contains a faint brown band from the eye to the operculum.

Other Common Names : Eightbar cod, grey-banded cod

Bar cheek Coral Trout (*Plectropomus maculatus*)

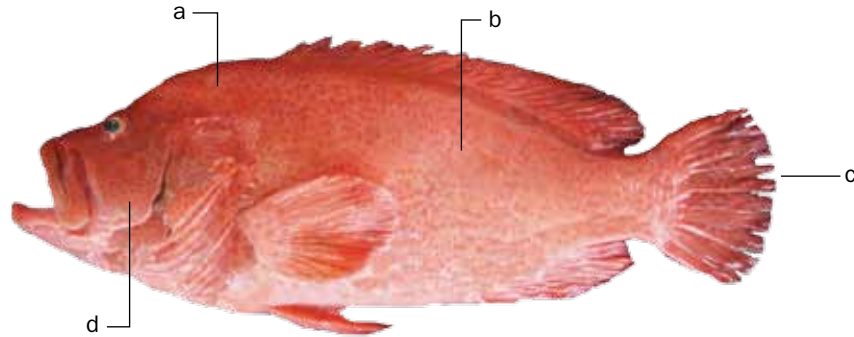


Distinguishing Features: (a) contains blue spots, some of which are horizontally elongate on head and operculum (b) pectoral fin is reddish. Often misidentified as *Plectropomus leopardus*, the blue spots found on this species are not elongated.

Wrasses

Family: Labridae

Tomato Rockcod (*Cephalopholis sonnerati*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body can vary from being bright red orange to reddish brown in colour (b) white blotches can be found over the entire body (c) caudal fin is rounded (d) red dots are more pronounced on the head.

Other Common Names : Tomato cod

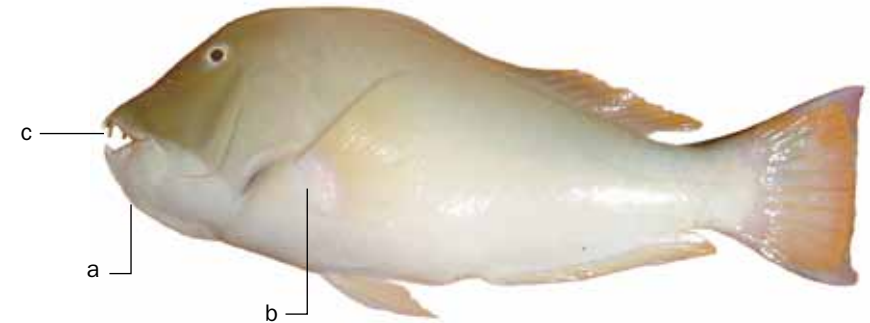
White Edge Coronation Trout (*Variola albimarginata*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a distinctive lunate caudal fin with a narrow white margin (b) body is deep red orange in colour (c) contains a network of red spots and yellow lines on the head and body.

Other Common Names : Coronation trout, white edged lyretail

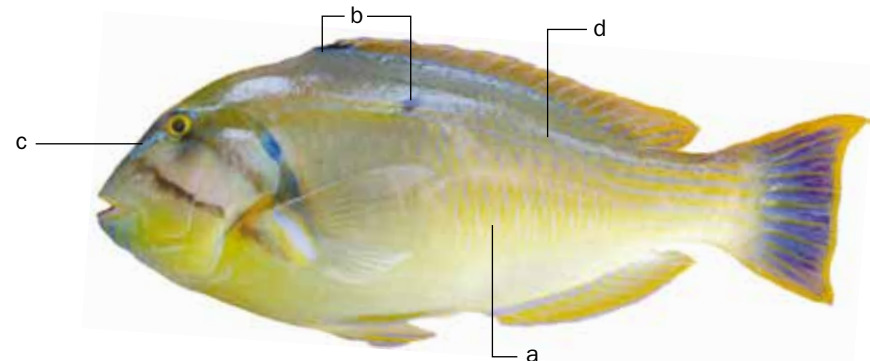
Baldchin Grouper (*Choerodon rubescens*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) can be easily identified by the pale chin (b) pale area around the base of the pectoral fin (c) large protruding teeth on the upper and lower jaw.

Other Common Names: Blue bone grouper, tuskfish

Blue spotted Tuskfish (*Choerodon cauteroma*)

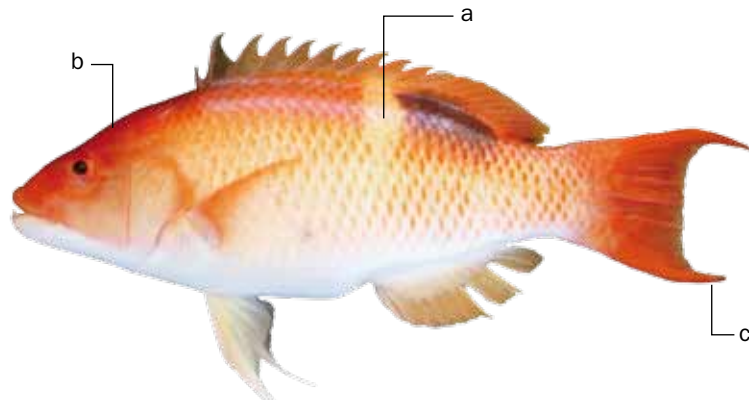


Distinguishing Features: (a) body colour is yellow in females, greenish yellow in males (b) contains a dark streak below the middle of the dorsal spine and at the front of the dorsal fin (c) contains several blue lines which radiate from eye along the snout across to the operculum and down to the pectoral fin (d) body scales contain a blue or purple bar.

Other Retained By-catch species

Family: Sciaenidae

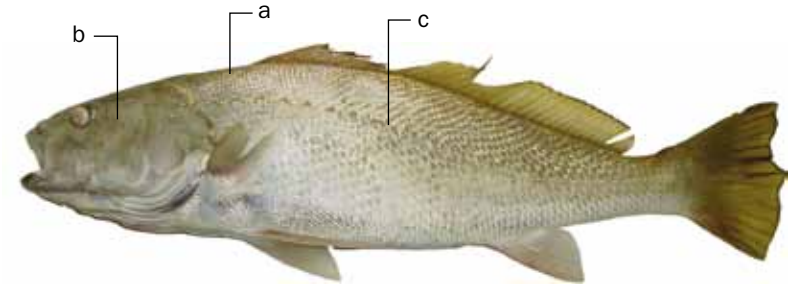
Goldspot Pigfish (*Bodianus perditio*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) contains a yellow patch on the middle of the body which runs down to the lateral line (b) head and body is a coppery red colour pale ventrally (c) truncate caudal fin.

Other Common Name: Foxfish, hogfish

Mulloway (*Argyrosomus japonicus*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) silver grey in colour, becoming darker above and lighter below, dorsal surface with bluish bronze sheen (b) head is copperish in colour (c) contains a characteristic line of silvery white spots along the lateral line.

Family: Glaucosomatidae

Northern Pearl Perch (*Glaucosoma buergeri*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body is silvery in appearance (b) contains a large eye (c) dorsal spines are largely posterior (d) caudal fin slightly truncate. Juvenile and young adults have 10 longitudinal thin dark bands along the body. These bands become less pronounced with the age of the fish. Closely related to the Western Australian dhufish *Glaucosoma hebraicum*. Often misidentified as this species.

Family: Pomatomidae

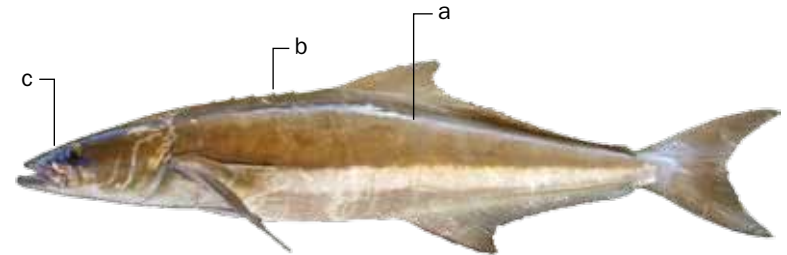
Tailor (*Pomatomus saltatrix*)



Distinguishing Features:(a) body is elongate bluish green in colour predominantly above the lateral line fading to silvery white on the ventral surface (b) contains very sharp pronounced teeth (c) dorsal and caudal fins are black in colour.

Family: Rachycentridae

Cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*)

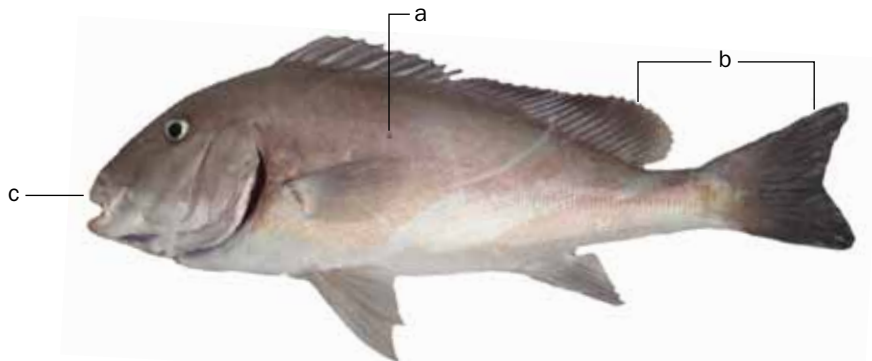


Distinguishing Features : (a) contains a characteristic black stripe which runs laterally over the body from the caudal fin to the head. This is flanked by greyish white stripes (b) it also has a series of very small dorsal spines (c) head is broad and flattened.

Other Common Names: Black kingfish

Family: Haemulidae

Painted Sweetlip (*Diagramma labiosum*)



Distinguishing Features: (a) body is silvery-grey in colour, contains scattered dark dots or blotches (b) black dots are present on the posterior dorsal fin and the caudal fin (c) contains a thick fleshy lip.

Other Common Names: Painted sweetlip, sand snapper

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