

WRASSES



Humphead wrasse
Cheilinus undulatus

Wrasses are marine fishes that belong to the Labridae family. There are more than 500 species of wrasses that can be found in tropical and subtropical waters of the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Wrasses inhabit coastal areas, rocky shores, coral reefs, tide pools and the sandy sea floor.

Wrasse species common to the tropical Pacific



Birdnose wrasse
Gomphosus varius



Blackstripe coris wrasse
Coris flavovittata



Bluestreak cleaner wrasse
Labroides dimidiatus



Christmas wrasse
Thalassoma trilobatum



Ornate wrasse
Halichoeres ornatissimus



Psychedelic wrasse
Anampses chrysocephalus



Pink flasher wrasse
Paracheilinus carpenteri



Rockmover wrasse
Novaculichthys taeniourus



Sixline wrasse
Pseudocheilinus hexataenia



Saddle wrasse
Thalassoma duperrey



Shortnose wrasse
Macropharyngodon geoffroy



Yellowtail coris wrasse
Coris gaimard

Are wrasses endangered?



Some species, such as the humphead wrasse, are listed as endangered due to over-fishing and destruction of coral reefs where they live.

How long do wrasses live?



Humphead wrasses can survive three to 30 years, most species live from three to five years.

Fascinating fact:

Wrasses are born female and are able to change sex to male during their lifetime. This is usually driven by the loss of the dominant male, allowing the largest (formerly) female to then take control of the harem.

What do wrasses eat?



Wrasses are carnivores. Their diets are based on small invertebrates (crabs, shrimp, mollusks, snails and sea urchins) and fish. Occasionally they follow large marine predators and collect leftovers of their meals. Cleaner wrasses collect and eat dead tissue and parasites accumulated in the mouths of large marine fish.

Who are wrasse predators?



Natural enemies of wrasses are lionfish, barracudas and sharks. Some wrasses can bury themselves in the sand or quickly swim away, thanks to well-developed pectoral and caudal fins, to escape from predators. Some species hide among the large tentacles of mushroom coral and sea anemones.