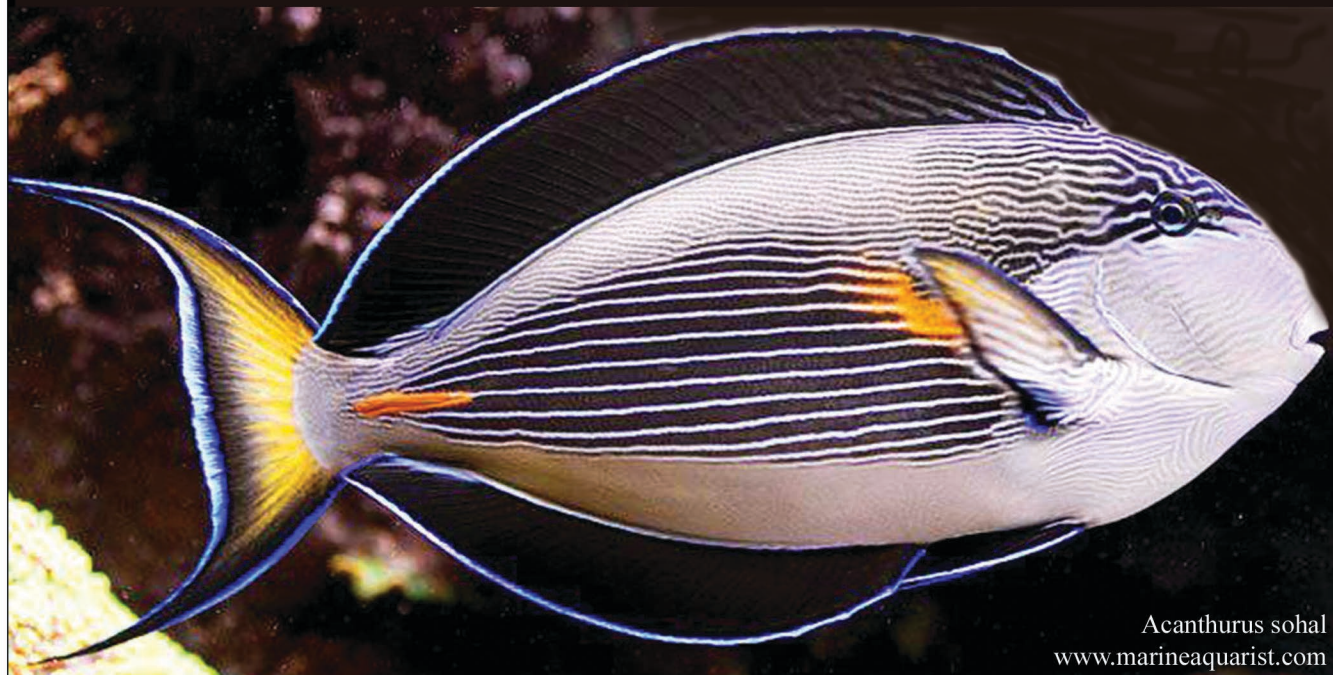


Zebra Surgeon *Acanthurus sohal*



Acanthurus sohal
www.marineaquarist.com

This magnificent surgeon fish (named for the razor sharp spines on the rear of the body just ahead of the tail fin) is indigenous to the Red Sea. Its unique and distinctive color pattern is unmistakable. Although it is related to the colorful Indo-Pacific *Acanthurus lineatus*, the coloration differences are obvious when placed side by side. Smaller *A. sohal*'s have lengthwise bands in the dorsal fin with a broader blue-white margin to the caudal fin.



Acanthurus lineatus
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The Red Sea has a higher salinity, about 40+ ppt. / SG 1.032, than the majority of oceans. Special care must be taken to acclimate all Red Sea fish to a lower salinity of specific gravity prior to mixing these animals with fish from other oceans. A minimum of six weeks should be allocated to the gradual adjustment to a lower salinity, for example, the common salinity of 35 ppt. / SG 1.026 for the Indo-Pacific, Atlantic, & Indian Oceans.

Sohal larvae feed mostly on animal matter found in plankton and later change their diet dramatically to become almost strict herbivores. A variety of high quality vegetable based foods are essential to the keeping of this and other *Acanthurus* and *Zebrasoma* fish (tangs or surgeon fish). Hikari® Seaweed Extreme™ and Mini Algae Wafers™ are excellent choices for maintaining health, color, vigor & disposition.

Spawning of this fish occurs in groups, with the release of eggs into the open water. Development occurs in open pelagic waters. The larvae eventually grow to what is called the "acronurus" stage, where the larvae are transparent with the exception of the anterior portion around the vital organs. These organs are protected and disguised by a silvery coating. At a length of around 3/4 of an inch / 21 mm, the acronurus larvae return to the reef. Here, they undergo their metamorphosis into the surgeon fish that we recognize. Adult sohal shown is 17 inches.

Extra caution must be exercised when handling this and other surgeon fish. They have acquired the "surgeon fish" name from their sharp spines on the sides of the caudal peduncle. These spines can be compared to the keenness of a surgeon's scalpel because of their ability to inflict painful wounds to both their unsuspecting tank mates and to the uncareful aquarist. ♦