

## *Hypoplectrus aberrans* (Yellowbelly Hamlet)

Family: Serranidae (Groupers and Sea Bass)

Order: Perciformes (Perch and Allied Fish)

Class: Actinopterygii (Ray-finned Fish)



**Fig. 1.** Yellowbelly hamlet, *Hypoplectrus aberrans*.

[<http://biogeodb.stri.si.edu/caribbean/en/pages/random/3612>, downloaded 8 October 2016]

**TRAITS.** *Hypoplectrus abberans* is characterised by its ventral areas, including the fins, being yellow, with its head bearing blue markings (Fig. 1). The dorsal areas are brown or a mixture of brown and blue, with black spots at the caudal peduncle (tail base). These hamlets can reach a maximum size of 13cm (IUCN, 2015). The juvenile hamlets are distinguished by black and white markings on the tail base.

**DISTRIBUTION.** Found in the western central Atlantic including the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, the Bahamas and Florida (Fig. 2).

**HABITAT AND ECOLOGY.** Yellowbelly hamlets are mainly found in coral reefs. They are generally uncommon, and tend to occur in inner and outer areas of complex reefs (rocky and coral reefs). The yellowbelly hamlet is a solitary hunter moving just above the sea bottom, and can swim to depths of 3-12m, mainly feeding on shrimp and other crustaceans (IUCN, 2015). They are

potential prey to the harmful lionfish. *Hypoplectrus aberrans* are hermaphrodites and tend to mate at night; during spawning individuals alternate gender roles.

**REPRODUCTION.** The mature hamlets possess both male and female sex organs and once one finds a mate the pair alternate male and female roles over multiple mating sessions. This is done over a period of several nights, with up to 3-10 spawnings daily (Fig. 3).

**BEHAVIOUR.** They are a solitary species (Fig. 4), observed hunting almost at the bottom of the reef, generally preferring moderate depths in reef structures. Mature hamlets tend to mimic behaviour of non-predatory reef fish, allowing them to target and capture prey easily.

**APPLIED BIOLOGY.** *Hypoplectrus aberrans* is not an endangered species and so is listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (IUCN, 2015). No conservation methods are in place for this species and they tend to be uncommon among aquarium trade.

#### REFERENCES

- Anderson, W., Carpenter, K.E., Gilmore, G., Milagrosa Bustamante, G. and Robertson, R. (2015). *Hypoplectrus aberrans*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2015: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.20152.RLTS.T190173A16510737.en>.
- IUCN. (2015). Yellowbelly Hamlet. IUCN Red List <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/190173/0>.
- Wikipedia. (2016). Yellowbelly Hamlet. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamlet\\_\(fish\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamlet_(fish)).

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**Fig. 2.** Yellowbelly hamlet geographic distribution.

[[http://www.discoverlife.org/nh/maps/Vertebrata/Fish/Serranidae/Hypoplectrus/map\\_of\\_Hypoplectrus\\_aberrans.jpg](http://www.discoverlife.org/nh/maps/Vertebrata/Fish/Serranidae/Hypoplectrus/map_of_Hypoplectrus_aberrans.jpg), downloaded 18 October 2016]



**Fig. 3.** Yellowbelly hamlet seen with mate.

[<http://carlosetape.photoshelter.com/image/I0000u8mGx7WST0s>, downloaded 19 October 2016]



**Fig. 4.** Yellowbelly hamlet solitary among reef rocks.

[[http://static.wixstatic.com/media/f0fa14\\_a2bed74b0e834489959b197417d2d3e5.jpg/v1/fill/w\\_229,h\\_235,al\\_c,q\\_80,usm\\_0.66\\_1.00\\_0.01/f0fa14\\_a2bed74b0e834489959b197417d2d3e5.jpg](http://static.wixstatic.com/media/f0fa14_a2bed74b0e834489959b197417d2d3e5.jpg/v1/fill/w_229,h_235,al_c,q_80,usm_0.66_1.00_0.01/f0fa14_a2bed74b0e834489959b197417d2d3e5.jpg), downloaded 19 October 2016]