

Porcupinefish (*Diodon hystrix*)



Relatives

Member of the Family Diodontidae (spiny puffers) which includes burrfish and balloonfish.

Description

A large bodied fish with green to yellowish color, black spots and spines covering whole body. Spines on top of head are shorter than those on the rest of the body. Has large eyes and "cheeks" with two brown vertical bars.

Habitat

Prefer to live in cave openings and reef bottoms.

Predators

Young are eaten by marlin, dolphinfish, wahoo and tuna.

Diet/Prey

Feed on mollusks (snails) and crustaceans (crabs and shrimp).

Reproduction

Young drift in open water until they are ready to develop into adults.

Adaptations

- Porcupinefish can inflate their body by swallowing water or air into their gut which can expand.
- Porcupinefish have spines all over their body that help to protect them from predators. When they are scared, they inflate themselves and their spines stick up all over their bodies.
- Porcupinefish have teeth that are fused into strong "beaks" for crushing their prey.
- Porcupinefish have fins that help the fish to swim through water.
- Porcupinefish have large eyes that help the fish to see predators and prey.
- Porcupinefish have internal organs that function in saltwater. They cannot survive in fresh water.