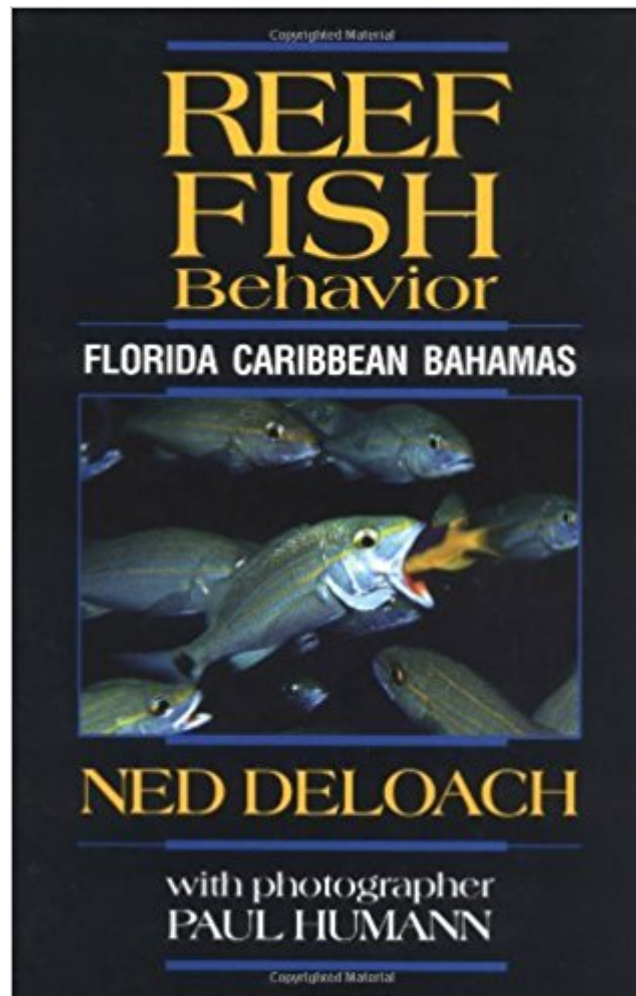




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Reef Fish Behavior: Florida, Caribbean, Bahamas



Synopsis

A detailed overview of what is presently known about the behavior and ecology of reef fishes inhabiting the waters of Florida, Caribbean and Bahamas. The enjoyable fact-filled text is lavishly illustrated with 475 marine life photos, many capturing spectacular fish behaviors never before documented.

Book Information

Turtleback: 360 pages

Publisher: New World Publications; 1 edition (November 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1878348280

ISBN-13: 978-1878348289

Product Dimensions: 9.2 x 6.3 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 31 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #590,478 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 in [Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Ecosystems > Coral Reefs](#) #19 in [Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Field Guides > Fish](#) #139 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Scuba](#)

Customer Reviews

"If you are an inquisitive diver, or an underwater photographer wishing to learn more about where to find and how to photograph your subjects, buy this book." -- Stephen Frink, Underwater Photographer
"Reef Fish Behavior will likely become one of the most important books ever written about the sea for divers." -- David Taylor, editor Rodale's Scuba Diving Magazine (appeared in Nov/Dec 1999 issue)..this is a classic reference that will enhance your appreciation of the complexities of the coral reef. -- Rodale's Scuba Diving Magazine
It's the book that we've all been waiting for....it is by far the most informative and engaging collection of marine life observations ever assembled for divers and underwater naturalists. -- Ocean Realm Magazine
We've followed the evolution of their reef fish, creature and coral id books... now we're ready for more and after five years of research, so are DeLoach and Humann. --Sport Diver Magazine

The information included in the text came from two primary sources - four summers of underwater observation and photography in Bimini, Bahamas and many hours of research in the library at the

Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami. Extended stays in Bonaire, Belize, the Florida Keys and shorter visits to Roatan, the Cayman Islands, Puerto Rico, Walker Cay Bahamas, New Providence Island Bahamas, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados rounded out five years of research and regional travel. Video images, recorded by my wife Anna, were used extensively to analyze behavior described in the text. Anecdotal observations gleaned from conversations with fish aficionados in the scientific, marine management, conservation, aquarium and diving fields add insight and spice to an otherwise data-dominated narrative. Entries beginning with "we" were personal observations made by Anna, my partner Paul Humann or me. In the text, I chose to do the following: capitalize common fish and invertebrate names to set them apart from descriptive adjectives; enter a species' scientific name only the first time it appears in a section; and, in all but two instances (the common names of the Fairy Basslet and the Yellowtail Parrotfish), we followed the recommendations of Common and Scientific Names of Fishes published by the American Fisheries Society. Anna and I thoroughly enjoyed every facet of gathering material for this book but our four extended stays in South Bimini were magical times, when, as John Steinbeck wrote "the world spun in well-greased grooves." While in Bimini we had the luck of living at Wen-Mar - a rustic, thick-walled white concrete cottage built in the 1940s at the very edge of the sea. Our times there revolved around a small, brightly-lit sitting room that faced west toward the Gulf Stream. On clear nights we could see the glow of Miami from the room's glass doors and, while enjoying coffee in the cool of morning, we watched Brown Pelicans dive and Eagle Rays jump in our front yard. Afterwards, I would settle into an ocean-facing futon surrounded by stacks of copied research papers and dog-eared references and read about fishes or hammer away at my laptop until noon. We dived seven days a week, except during prolonged westerly blows. Our borrowed boat (the Pocahontas, the Blenny or the Big Hellie - depending on the year) invariably pulled away from the dock at one with Capt. Anna at the helm. Thirty-minutes later, we were happily underwater. From among the dozens of excellent dive sites that edge the islands, we consistently returned to the same six. The locations, ranging in depth from 14 to 55 feet, allowed us to observe several different fish communities on a semi-regular basis over extended periods of time. When we were studying new behavior or trying to capture a difficult image, we often returned to the same location daily for weeks. During these periods, when we were "on to something," we worked the hardest, stayed underwater the longest and were the happiest. Although we observed interesting fish behavior throughout the day, we found fish watching best at sunset when the large predators prowl and many fishes court and spawn. Our most productive dusk dives had a marked tendency to occur on the evenings of the seventh through the ninth day after the full moons of early spring to

early summer. Anna carried a Sony 3-chip video camera, and I lugged along a Nikon F 3 with a 60 mm macro lens and a Nikonos III with a 20 mm lens both connected to a single Ikelite Substrobe 200. We typically made three dives each afternoon, the last beginning 45 minutes before sunset and ending with just enough light left on the horizon to help Anna navigate home. Even before showering, we had the day's videotape turning in the VCR and reviewed our afternoon's exploits while sipping rum and taking notes. When we began our research we had little idea how much, or what, is known about reef fishes. At the Rosenstiel Marine Library, we dived into the journal-packed stacks with the same enthusiasm that kept us underwater for hours on end. We quickly discovered that, unlike terrestrial animals that have been observed and documented for centuries, the study of coral reef animals is in its infancy. With little choice before the birth of Scuba, just a half-century ago, marine biologists based much of their early research on preserved specimens fished from the reef. Their inability to observe the fishes and invertebrates in their natural habitat left large gaps in our understanding of the behavior and ecology of reef animals. Today's diving naturalists, whether scientifically trained or inquisitive amateurs, are pioneers chronicling the last great undocumented natural history on earth. It is an exciting time to be a diver.

Saw the little guide at our resort's dive shop in one of our dive trips in Bonaire. I was flipping over its pages before (shore) dives, sometimes between dives. I was quite impressed by its diversity and thoroughness, not to mention the beautiful pictures in it. Impressed enough to put it in my wish list and get it once we got back home! Great to peruse / read at my leisure and further my aquatic education (you must have guessed already that as a scuba diver I love this kind of reading :) But another great bonus is that by reading this great book and looking at the pictures I mentally travel in an instant underwater to beautiful places I've been, even to ones I long to be and then by being in that blue Universe I love to be - and good books are such great frigates that take us places as the poet has put it - offers me such great joy, such great joy... and you can't really put a price on this!...

Very useful.

While on vacation in Florida, I read Reef Fish Behavior by Ned DeLoach and Paul Humann. It is a fascinating, well researched book on the behavior of reef residents in the wild, based on many months of observation on dives. There are incredible pictures here showing life and death on the reef. The writing is well done, and lets readers feel like they are observing along with the authors. Witness, for example, these few sentences taken from the section on Sailfin blennies: "...late one

afternoon we saw a Sailfin making a mad dash across the seafloor. The little fellow looked vulnerable and out of place in the open....This was our first observation of what we came to call runners. After several minutes of crazy zigzags, the runner arrived at a hole occupied by a slightly smaller male, and a miniature version of a marine Jurassic Park commenced."

I was expecting to learn which species are dangerous, whether they swim using mostly their tail fin, or other fins, and how they react to humans when you approach them scuba diving or snorkeling. That is not what this book is about. The primary behavior is sexual and asexual reproduction processes of different species. If you want to learn about fish sex over and over thru 350+ pages go for it. A marine biologist might enjoy it, but I will pass. Wish I didn't waste the money on it as it is an expensive book.

really cool to read, a lot of info! Going scuba diving in the keys! Lets you read about what you will probably see, everything from feeding to courtship to symbiosis and everything in between

Honestly, probably my favorite Ned DeLoach book. More than any other this one really illuminated what I was seeing and made my dives so much more meaningful.

I bought this book because it's required for a study abroad class (on coral reef ecology) that I'm attending in Belize this winter. I looked through it as soon as I got it, and from what I can tell, it seems to be a very informative book..with amazing pictures! I can't wait for my trip so I can put my book to good use!

This book and his others are superb. I live in the Cayman Islands and his books help me identify and understand the fishes behavior on my dives. I would choose his books over any other that I have read. They are informative, great pictures, easy to remember the identification information from juveniles to adults.

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