

Small reeffish

The Great Barrier Reef is the home to at least 1625 species of fish, including 1400 coral reef species. The smallest reef fish on the Great Barrier Reef is the Goby which is just one centimetre long and has a life span of a few months. Reef fish use their colours to hide from predators and sneak up on prey. Some reef fish can change their colour patterns to suit the colour of the surface they are resting on.

Reef animals use their shapes, body parts and behaviour in many different ways to help them survive. Many fish have protective spines. Surgeonfishes (from the family Acanthuridae) have very sharp 'blades' at the base of their tails. Members of the scorpionfish family have poisonous spines on their dorsal fins that give powerful stings. The well-camouflaged stonefish have strong dorsal spines and a potent venom.



Reef fish can be divided into six broad categories:

- 1. Colourful coral associates, like anenomefish and butterflyfish
- 2. Cryptic fish, like blennies, gobies and sea horses that are hard to see because of their camouflage or where they live
- 3. Grazing fish, like blue tangs, parrotfish and wrasse
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- 4. Pelagic reef associates, like batfish and fusiliers
- 5. Reef predators, like snapper, emperors, cod and groupers
 6. Necturnel 8. cove dwellers
- Nocturnal & cave dwellers, such as eels, scorpionfish, squirrelfish and soldierfish

