

Fun Fact Sheet: Bumphead Parrotfish - Indian Ocean Territories

Region

North Coast, Indian Ocean Territories

Summary

Bumphead Parrotfish are one of the largest fish to be found on the coral reefs of the Indian Ocean Territories.



Bumphead Parrotfish (*Bolbometopon muricatum*, or Humphead Parrotfish), are capable of

growing in excess of 1 m and 50 kg! They are easily recognised by the bump or hump (hence the name) on their forehead which is used to ram into coral to break it down for feeding. Male Bumphead Parrotfish have also been observed using their bony head plate to ram each other in territorial disputes.

Bumphead Parrotfish is a member of the parrotfish family (Scaridae) and are equipped with fused teeth that form a parrot-like beak. These teeth are so strong that they can grind ingested corals and limestone to a fine powder. When snorkeling, listen out for their 'biting sounds' and look for their characteristic 'chisel' marks on coral reefs.

Parrotfish live in groups consisting of one male and many females. If the male dies, the dominant female will undergo a sex change (which happens over five days) to become the dominant male.

Bumphead Parrotfish are highly vulnerable to overfishing as they are slow growing and long-lived (up to 40 years of age) with late onset of reproduction.