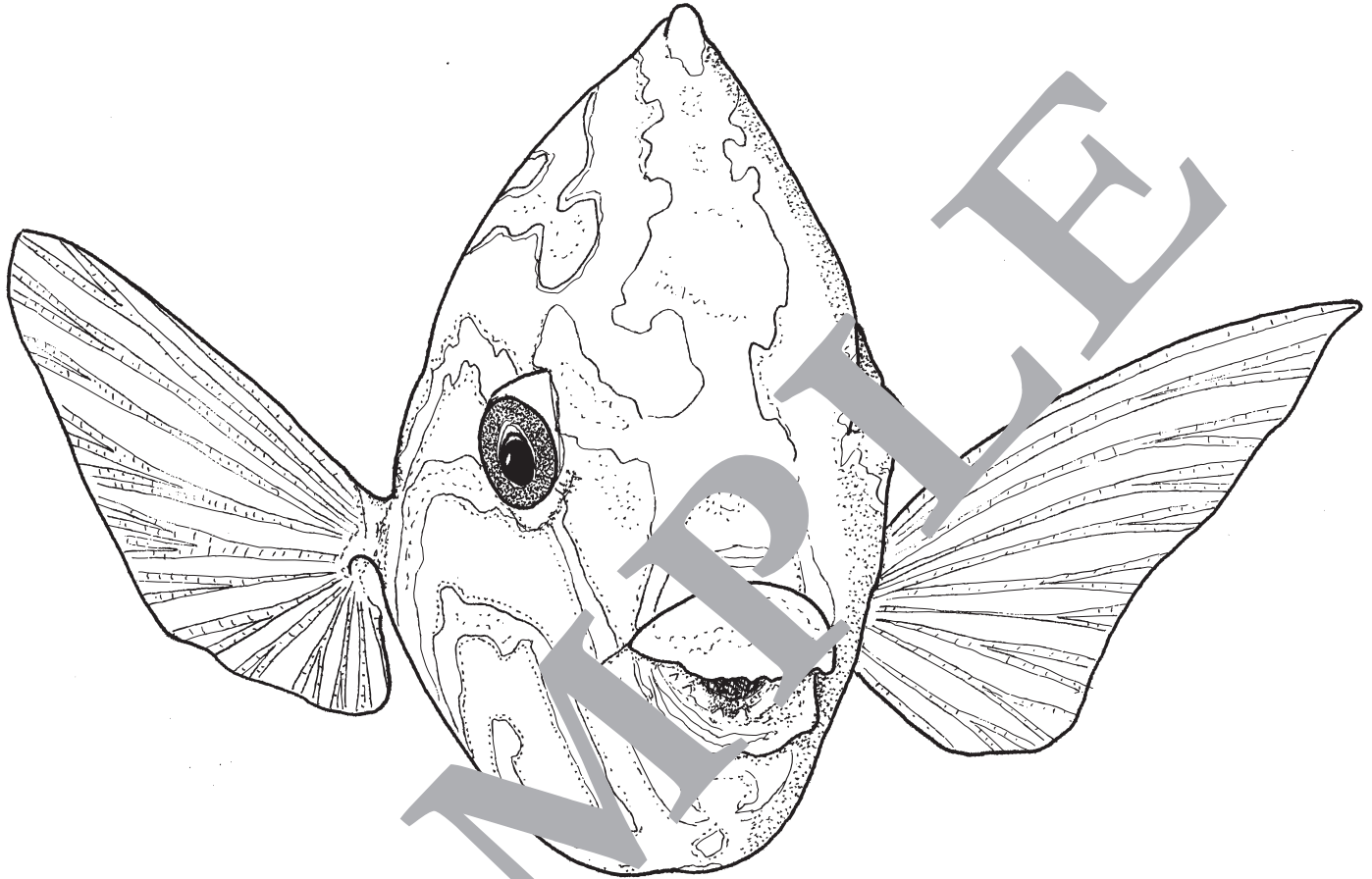

Wrasses



General Wrasse Facts

Wrasses represent one of the largest and most diverse families of fishes found in Hawaii. As such, they are often the dominant family on the reef. It is difficult to make general statements about this group because of their extreme diversity in both coloration and morphology. However, Wrasses are generally a vividly colored group with compressed elongate bodies. Color patterns may differ distinctively between the juveniles and the sexes. The males are often the most colorful while the juveniles are usually the most camouflaged. Some females have the

ability to change sex and therefore color; this change is often due to social and environmental cues.

Wrasses are mostly carnivorous bottom feeders who eat small benthic invertebrates as well as small fishes. Some Wrasses feed on zooplankton while others, such as the Cleaner Wrasse, feed primarily on ectoparasites found on other fishes. Their feeding habits may be reflected in their dentition; they often display protruding teeth. Wrasses are diurnal and can be found feeding by day. At night, they may hide by burying themselves in the sand.
