

# Surgeonfishes (Acanthuridae)



blue tang, *acanthurus coeruleus*

Surgeonfishes are a family of marine fish that are known for the sharp, blade-like spines on their caudal peduncles (tail base). These spines, which are called “surgeon’s blades,” are used as a defensive mechanism, and can be locked in an erect position when the fish is threatened. Surgeonfishes are found in the tropical and subtropical waters of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. They are typically found in coral reefs, lagoons, and other shallow marine habitats. Surgeonfishes are generally small to medium-sized fish, and they are known for their bright colors and distinctive patterns. Some popular species of surgeonfish include the yellow tang, blue tang, and orange clownfish.