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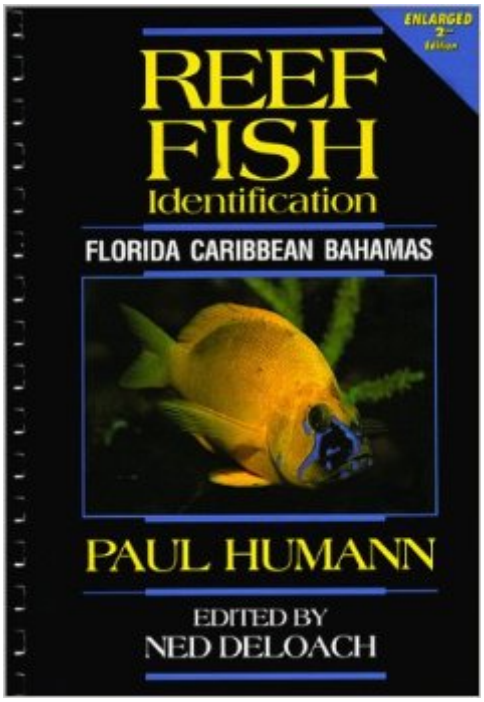
Reef Fish Identification: Florida, Caribbean, Bahamas



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Synopsis

Book by Humann, Paul

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Customer Reviews

I visit family in St. Croix (US Virgin Islands) yearly, and I have looked at a number of books in order to learn the names of the numerous fish I see when I’m snorkeling or diving. This one makes identification easy, with beautiful pictures and the all-important "Distinctive Features" sections, which give you tips on how to distinguish one fish from the next. Make no mistake: this book is the easiest to use and the most comprehensive one I’ve seen. I’m online to buy the other two books (Reef Coral and Reef Creatures).

When I first received this book as a christmas gift from my mother,I was shocked. It was spiral bound,but twice the size of a norma fish identification guide. At 424 pages & 670 photos,it is rather spectacular. Although I have only seen it in pictures,the west atlantic is my favourite underwater landscape,and therefore,it was a great honour to own this book.The book begins with an introduction to fishes in the caribbean and the ecology of the reefs. A massive ID book is needed to identify fishes on the world`s second largest reef area.Different from most other fish ID books,it is a rather special one that is dividing the fish into groups based on look rather than relationship. I`ll go through these groups one by one in this review.ID group 1 is Disks/Oval,featuring some of my favourite fish,making a perfect beginning of the book.Butterflyfish,angelfish,and surgeonfish can be

found here.Every description includes a short description of colors and gender differences,if any,distribution,family,size,depht and reaction to divers,and natural habitat.The photographs are accompanied by b/w drawings of the silhouettes.The second one is a rather large chapter,covering the silvery,stream-lined ocean hunters like barracudas,porgies,mojarras,dolphins,mullets,and the large predator cobia. Not very colorfull,but still majestic.The 3rd chapter includes Sloping Head/Tapered body,with snappers and grunts as the main families.The grunts can be rather varied.The 4th one includes Small Ovals,where the damselfish and chromis can be found. There are no anemonefish in the caribbean,but these are closely related to those. Also included here are the hamlets,which are all subspecies of one species.These are very colorfull and cute little critters. The next chapter is Heavy Body/Large Lips,including the largest bony fishes here - groupers,of which the jewfish can weigh 900 pounds!These are clumsy,but still charmy fishes. Except 30 species of those,the little fairy basslet,the most beautifull fish of the caribbean,is included here too,yellow and purple.Swim with Pectoral Fins,which is ID group 6,includes the varied family of parrotfishes and wrasses,which are very colourfull. The Hogfish can also be found here,the character of the caribbean. ID group 7 introduces Reddish/Big Eyes,with the big-eyed squirrelfishes and the small,but beautifull cardinalfish.ID group 8 treats the Small,Elongated Bottom-Dwellers,whose beauty is often underestimated,especially the cute gobies. The sailfin blenny is one of my favourites. Here,we can also find the yellowhead jawfish,which is a famous fish here too. Odd-Shaped Bottom Dwellers includes the toadfish and the funny-looking flounders & batfishes,who walks on their fins!I am very fascinated by the looks of the strange frogfishes. Odd-Shaped Swimmers (chapter 10) includes the pufferfish,which can fill themselves with air,and the funny-looking trumpetfish. Also found here are the boxfishes,who are covered with armor,except for their fins,eyes and mouth. They can have very beautifull colors. The triggerfish can be found too. They are colorfull,although agressive inhabitants of the coral reefs. So are their close relatives,the filefishes.And finally,the cutest fish in the Caribbean,can also be found here. It is the little yellow porcupinefish,less than an inch in size. The famous jack-knife is also found in this chapter. It looks like a cross between a scalare and a chromis!It is believed to be the juvenile form of the web burrfish.The 11th chapter is the Eel Deal of the book. Here comes the snake eels,beautifull but mysterious bottom dwellers. And last,but not least,the venomous moray eels also lurks in this chapter. The 8-foot green moray is the most famous,while the most scary one is the viper moray with huge teeth!I love moray eels,so this is a paradise for me!The final chapter "Sharks & Rays" deals with the ultimate UW predators. But not all sharks a fierce. In fact,the whale shark is one of the friendliest fishes in the world,reaching a size of 60 feet and harmless to everything but

plancton!The nurse shark is also a character of the Caribbean. Other ones included here are the manta ray,lemon shark,mako shark (the fastest fish in the world)and the dangerous tiger & bull sharks.This is a chapter I would have liked to expand a bit,but as many sharks are not reef dwellers,I understand why they did not included the great white and/or the Megamouth.Over all,now I have gone through all chapters fastly,but you have to see this book to really enjoy it. When I go to the Caribbean or Florida,I will bring this book and see how many fish I can identify.So go get it!

This is a fantastic book, and along with the other two books by this author you should be able to ID any marine creature you encounter!The book lists virtually all types of fish, including angels, tangs, butterfly, damsels, clowns, and more!Each entry has an excellent picture, the name, family, size, depth, and other information.The pictures alone are worth the cost of the book!This is definitely the book you want to have with you when you dive or snorkel. Buy it today, you won't be disappointed!

This is a reef fish identification book. This sounds obvious, but that really is the focus here. It's not a book to teach you about fish behavior, biogeography, community ecology, or population trends. Author, diver, captain, photographer, and attorney (!) Paul Humann took most of the 670 photographs in this book, a real accomplishment for any diver, since the result of a blurred or indistinct photograph of a fish is to... go get another.The organization of this ID book is by fish shape. He's got 12 "identification groups":- disks and ovals (colorful)- silvery- sloping head and tapered body- small ovals- heavy body and large lips- swim with pectoral fins, and with obvious scales- reddish and big eyes- small, elongated bottom-dwellers- old-shaped bottom dwellers- odd-shaped swimmers- eels- sharks and raysAny fish watcher would see the "logic" of this organization, although it could make some ichthyologists squirm with these sets of artificial groupings.The book is spiral-bound so that the pages, when opened, stay open. And the clay content in the paper makes it more resistant to water dripping from your wetsuit or your hair. Just make sure you wipe it off, pronto.Now the photos... They are very high quality, and Humann is to be commended for taking, or selecting from other photographers, pictures that really pull out the details of the various fish . For example, the Sergeant Major has the delicate yellow along the base of its dorsal fin, and those frogfish must be viewed in both a camouflaged condition and in a setting where they are contrasted with the background.Any amateur photographer will soon discover the difficulty in getting a full, close-up and lateral view of a fish. They tend to swim away from you as you get close, giving you a great view of the tail sweeping away. These photos are the result of a truly amazing amount of patience.In an appendix, he throws in some sea turtles and dolphins or good

measure, as well as a checklist for keeping track of the reader’s sightings.My ocean diving has all been in the Pacific, and it was interesting seeing species related to my own "friends." If I get the opportunity to dive in Florida, the Caribbean, or the Bahamas, this will be the book I throw in my dive bag... in a zip-lock bag, of course.

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