

FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL

The Bumphead Parrotfish



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WIDE-RANGING FISH IN DRAMATIC DECLINE

The Bumphead Parrotfish occurs in the Indo-Pacific Ocean, with a wide range including several U.S. territories and coastal areas of several continents: Australia, Africa, and Asia. This extensive range, however, has not protected the species from dramatic decline. It has vanished or dramatically decreased in many areas, including portions of the Great Barrier Reef and remote Pacific islands. The leading threats to this irreplaceable species are fishing and climate change, but it faces a slew of other dangers as well, including destruction of coral reefs and marine pollution.

PROTECTING COASTAL REEFS

The Bumphead Parrotfish needs healthy coral reefs for habitat and to meet its weighty dietary requirement: each individual Bumphead consumes more than five tons of coral per year, including living coral. It excretes the beautiful white coral sands that draw millions of tourists to vacation in the Pacific every year. Its grazing habits provide an important and unique ecological function: by being a major coral predator and the primary erosion agent where it occurs, this parrotfish fundamentally shapes coral reefs. This fish's trimming of coral reefs enables them to withstand fierce storms and sea urchin invasions and provides beaches for sea turtle nesting. Scientists believe it may be a keystone species for which there is no substitute.

KNOW YOUR PARROTFISH

- **Unique:** in one study, biologists found the Bumphead Parrotfish to be the only one of nearly 3,000 Indo-Pacific reef fishes to perform a key ecosystem role by grazing on coral.
- **One Hungry Fish:** Bumphead Parrotfish bite coral six times a minute when actively feeding.
- **Vulnerable:** fishing has been an enormous threat to this species, as it sleeps near reefs in large groups at night and can be dramatically reduced by scuba-diving spearfishers.
- **Size Matters:** the Bumphead Parrotfish is the largest type of parrotfish, reaching up to four feet in length and making it an easy target for humans.

CLIMATE CHAOS

Rising water temperatures and increased ocean acidification due to climate change cause catastrophic bleaching, disease, and slowed growth rates of coral reefs, the Bumphead Parrotfish's lifeline.



The Bumphead Parrotfish's Range

