Zebrasoma xanthurum (Blyth, 1852)

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Class: Actinopterygii  
Order: Perciformes  
Family: Acanthuridae  
Genus: Zebrasoma  
Species: Z. xanthurum

Zebrasoma xanthurum, the purple tang or yellowtail tang, is a species of reef surgeonfish. Purple tangs typically inhabit coral reef ecosystems. Purple tang found in groups in coral-rich areas or on rocky bottoms Z. xanthurum show varying degrees of habitat preference and utilization of coral reef habitats, with some species spending the majority of their life stages on coral reef while others primarily utilize seagrass beds, mangroves, algal beds, and/or rocky reefs. The majority of Z. xanthurum are exclusively found on coral reef habitat, and of these, approximately 80% are experiencing a greater than 30% loss of coral reef area and degradation of coral reef habitat quality across their distributions. They have been found at depths ranging from 2 to 20 m. Maximum length is 25 cm in Persian Gulf. We report for the first time from Iranian waters (Kish Island). Adults are typically found swimming in shoals, while juveniles remain solitary. At sunset individuals cease feeding and move to their night shelter at the reef wall. It takes cover among coral colonies as well as crevices. The sexes are separate. There is a possibility of sexual dimorphism in Z. xanthurum with cloacas bigger in females.

Food: Zebrasoma xanthurum is a herbivore grazer feeding mostly on benthic algae. They are found eating filamentous algae. It feeds mostly solitarily or in pairs during the day.

Distribution: Zebrasoma xanthurum is found from the Red Sea around the entire Arabian Peninsula, Persian Gulf with a single sighting in the Maldives, so records from Sri Lanka, Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park and Hong Kong.