

***Acanthurus guttatus* Forster 1801**  
**Whitespotted Surgeonfish**



*Photo by J. Randall, Bishop Museum*

**Identification:** Body is deep with small caudal fin. Grey-brown in color with white bars towards the head. One bar reaches from nape across operculum and the other reaches from dorsal to pelvic just behind the pelvic fin. Numerous white spots toward the posterior are scattered across body. Pelvic fins are bright yellow. Caudal fin is pale yellow towards the caudal peduncle. Grows to about 26 cm TL. Also called Mustard Surgeonfish or Spotted Surgeonfish. Dorsal fin IX (27-30), anal fin III (23-26), pectoral fin (15-17). From Randall et al. (1996) and Randall (2005).

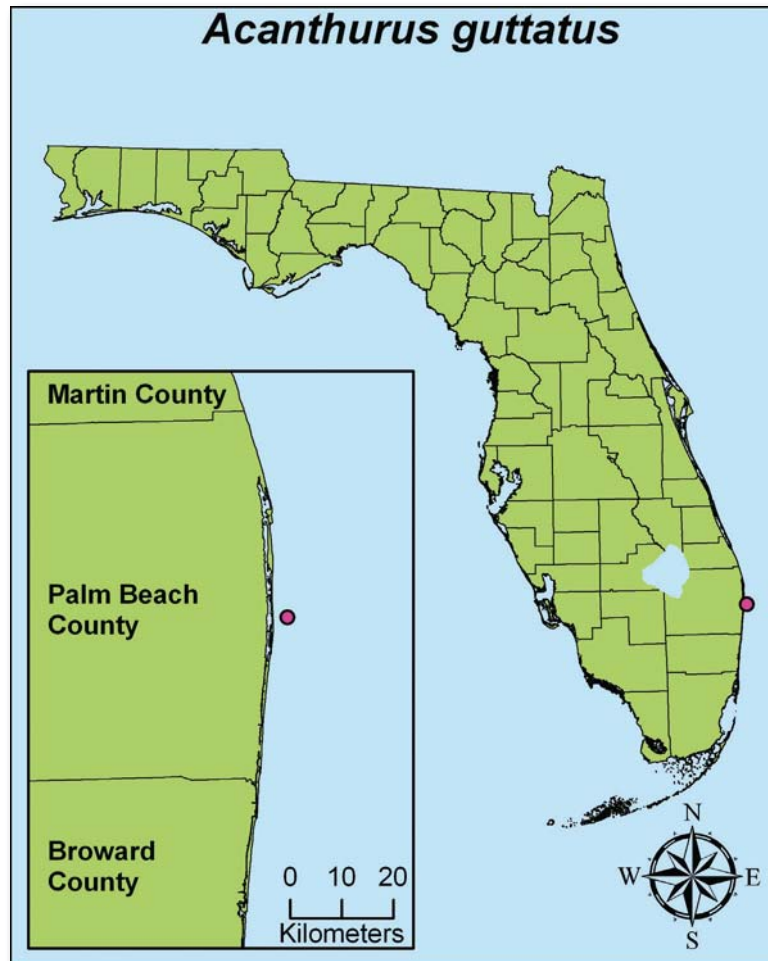
**Similar Species:** No Atlantic surgeonfishes are known to have similar spots.

**Native Range:** The Whitespotted Surgeonfish is distributed in the Indo-Pacific from Mauritius to Indonesia, Micronesia, Hawai'i, and French Polynesia and southwest Japan to Great Barrier Reef and New Caledonia. From Allen et al. (2003).

**Ecology:** The Whitespotted Surgeonfish is typically found in schools within the surge zone of exposed reefs and rocky shores (Randall 2005). White spots on posterior body might help conceal them in the turbulent bubble-filled waters of the surf zone (Myers 1999). The diet of Whitespotted Surgeonfish consists largely of filamentous algae (Randall 2005). The species has been known to provide a critical trophic link between primary production (algae) and the detrital food web in the Pacific (Chartock 1983). Year-round spawning has been reported in American Samoa where Whitespotted Surgeonfish has been observed to reproduce

at dusk in channels draining fringe reefs (Craig 1998).

**Nonindigenous Occurrences:** The species was observed in 2003 at Horseshoe Reef, near West Palm Beach.



Acanthuridae (surgeonfishes, tangs, unicornfishes)