

Chaetodon melapterus (Guichenot, 1863)



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Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Actinopterygii
Order: Perciformes

Family: Chaetodontidae
Genus: *Chaetodon*
Species: *C. melapterus*

Chaetodon melapterus also known as **Black-finned Melon Butterflyfish**, **Blackfin Butterflyfish** and **Arabian Butterflyfish** is a piscine so stunningly gorgeous, but we daren't look directly at it lest we succumb to its spell. This species is usually found in coastal reefs rich in coral growth interspersed with sand patches. *C. melapterus* lives in coral rich areas of shallow coastal reefs; occasionally in aggregations. They feed exclusively on coral polyps and nothing else. Maximum length is 13 cm in **Persian Gulf (Kish Island, Iran)**. It is found at depths between 2-16 m. *C. melapterus* are usually encountered in pairs, but sometimes observed in larger aggregations numbering in excess of 20 individuals. *C. melapterus* is oviparous breeders and monogamous, they form pairs during breeding. Monitoring of this species is needed in conjunction with coral monitoring, as well as determination of the degree of co-dependence between this species and corals. *C. melapterus* is not recommended for reefs as they will pick at or eat a wide variety of corals, fan worms, and other invertebrates. *C. melapterus* are known to pick at *Aiptasia*, a parasitic anemone.

Food: *C. melapterus* is mainly a coral feeder (Corallivore). It feeds exclusively or primarily on coral polyps.

Distribution: *Chaetodon melapterus* is restricted to the **Persian Gulf**, southern Arabian Peninsula (Gulf of Oman to Gulf of Aden), and southern Red Sea.