

Rabbit fish grazes on scyphozoan cnidarians

Several marine fishes have short term symbiotic associations with scyphozoan and hydrozoan jellyfishes and few studies suggest that these associations were of ecological significance. Scyphozoan cnidarians are heavy consumers of zooplankton which in turn form the diet of larvae of commercially important finfishes and shellfishes. However, in certain cases, these gelatinous organisms are also part of the diet of some fish and turtles. Information pertaining to such diet contributions are absent in Indian context and Scuba assisted underwater surveys in the coral reefs of Netrani revealed rabbitfish *Siganus cf. fuscescens* (Family:



Fig. 1. Feeding attacks of *Siganus fuscescens* on the *Cephea* sp.

Siganidae), feeding on cepheid jellyfish on the reef at a depth of 8 m. Rabbit fishes are generally considered herbivorous, feeding on turf algae and a major ecological function of siganid fishes in coral reefs ecosystem is to removing algae. A school of 24-28 rabbitfish were found to gaze on *Cephea cf coerulea*, commonly known as cauliflower jellyfish. Jellyfish blooms were

common during the post-monsoon period and blooms of *Cephea* was observed in the off-shore waters of Karnataka in the month of December. *Siganus rivulatus* has previously been observed feeding on scyphozoan jellyfishes in the Red Sea.

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