



GUILI (rudderfish) *Kyphosus vaigiensis*

Methods such as the taláya (cast net), tokcha' (spear fishing), or etupak (rod and reel) are usually used to catch the rudderfish, known in Chamorro as guili. An important traditional food fish, guili have small mouths with small closely-set teeth, much like human front teeth. While they feed mainly on plants, including the filamentous algae, and larger seaweeds, they also eat small bottom-dwelling animals and sewage. Young guili commonly are found far out at sea beneath floating debris. Larger ones are most numerous along the reef margin and steep rocky areas which are often wave-swept and dangerous. It takes great skill with the taláya to catch them.

There are three kinds of guili in the Marianas, but only two are common: the high fin rudderfish (*Kyphosus cinerascens*) which reaches a length of about 19 inches (48 cm), and the low fin rudderfish (*K. vaigiensis*) which grows to about 26 inches (66 cm). They can be distinguished by the height of the soft-rayed portion of the dorsal or upper fin. On the high fin rudderfish, this part is nearly twice as high as the spiny part of the dorsal fin; on the low fin rudderfish, both parts are about equal in height. The third and not-so-common guili is the insular rudderfish or brown chub (*Kyphosus bigibbus*).

All three guili have light silvery-gray and dark color phases as well as a light-spotted phase occasionally seen underwater. Although the species of guili are not distinguished by local fishermen, the color phases are. The lighter phase is known locally as "guili" while the dark phase is known as "guilen puengi" (puengi is the Chamorro word for night). Small guili under about 10 inches (25 cm) are called "geppan" because they move rapidly about the upper portion of the reef.