



## HIYOK (blue-banded surgeonfish)

*Acanthurus lineatus*

Surgeonfish get their name from a pair of sharp, retractable blade-like spines at the base of the tail. These are used for defense and can easily cut the hand of a careless fisherman. The blade of the blue banded surgeonfish, or hiyok as it is called in Chamorro, is hidden in a groove located in the middle of one of its blue stripes. All of Guam's surgeonfish are good to eat.

Hiyok occur in shallow, clear water where there is some wave action. While they are most common along the seaward reef margin, they also can occur on outer reef flats and the upper edge of lagoon reefs. They are usually found in small groups, made up of a territorial male and several females. Hiyok feed on filamentous algae cropped from the surfaces of dead coral or rock. They are among the more aggressive of surgeonfish and defend a patch of reef against other algae-eating fish such as parrotfish, rabbitfish, and other surgeonfish. Small hiyok are popular aquariumfish, but they need a large tank with clear, well-oxygenated water. They grow to about 11 inches (28 cm). They are most often caught by spear (tokcha' guihan) although they can also be caught by cast net (talåya), gill net (tekken) and surround net (chenchulu).

There are several other kinds of surgeonfish, many of which are blue, brown, or black. They are known as "hugupão." The surgeonfish group consistently ranks at the top of the list of fish most caught on Guam's reefs.