



TARAKITU (bluefin trevally) *Caranx melampygus*

The bluefin trevally is Guam's most common reef-dwelling jack. Jacks are fast-swimming, silvery fishes which roam open waters above the deep and shallow reef. They have a series of bony scales called scutes, which reinforce the keel at the base of the tail. Some jacks look like tunas, but tunas do not have scutes.

There are many kinds of jacks in Guam's waters, including the trevallies, pompanos, amber jacks, round scads, rainbow runner, and bigeye scad (called atulai in Chamorro). Trevallies have wide, streamlined bodies and are quick and active predators. Typically, they feed on other fish or crustaceans, such as crabs and lobsters.

Jacks of all sizes and species are popular food fishes. Young jacks, called i'e', measure about three inches and migrate from the open sea to shallow shoreline waters during the summer months, feeding on small invertebrates and fish. They are easily caught with light tackle using a thin, triangular piece of opaque rubber as a lure. It is not an uncommon sight to see scores of anglers, young and old, fishing with their rods and reels at or around the Agana Boat Basin area.

Immature jacks of four to 10 inches (10 to 25 cm) in length are called "tarakitiyu" in Chamorro; those larger than 10 inches are called "tarakitu." The bluefin trevally reaches a length of about 30 inches (76 cm). Another kind, the giant trevally (*Caranx ignobilis*), gets much larger, sometimes up to four and a half feet (1.4 m) long and 150 pounds (68 kg). When the giant trevally measures over three feet (0.9 m), it is called "mamulan." Other kinds of jacks in Guam's waters include the "tarakiton amariyu" or golden trevally (*Gnathanodon speciosus*), which is found in deep lagoons and outer reefs; the "tarakiton áttelong" or black jack (*Caranx lugubris*), found off steep drop-offs and offshore banks, and the "tarakiton tailas" or bigeye trevally (*Caranx sexfasciatus*), which is frequently caught when night-light fishing for atulai.