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UnderWaterWorld 2023

Front page: Giant puffer – *Arothron stellatus* – Red Sea, El Quadim Bay, Egypt

Inhabits sandy areas in deep lagoons and outer reefs, often resting on sand or gliding along drop-offs. It occurs in the Red Sea, Arabian Gulf to Polynesia and South Africa.

January: Hemprich's soft coral – *Dendronephthya hemprichi* – Red Sea, El Quadim Bay, Egypt

By water absorption, the corpus of soft corals swells and appears to be transparent. The color ranges from red, yellow, blue, green to purple. It feeds on plankton, that is being filtered out of the water.

February: Purple-striped jelly – *Pelagia noctiluca* – Mediterranean Sea, Corsica, Calvi

The luminous jellyfish lives in warmer seas and usually occurs in swarms. The usual prey of this jellyfish are free-swimming sea squirts, smaller jellyfish and zooplankton.

March: Jewel fairy basslet – *Pseudanthias squamipinnis* – Red Sea, El Quadim Bay, Egypt

Jewel fairy basslet live in large schools in coral reefs, isolated coral blocks in lagoons and on outer reefs at depths of one to 40 metres. They feed on zooplankton. They are found in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea.

April: Feather duster worm – *Sabella spallanzanii* – Mediterranean Sea, Corsica, Calvi

Feather worms (Sabellidae) live on tiny organic particles and protozoa, which they filter out of the flowing water with their crown of tentacles.

May: Warty frogfish – *Antennarius maculatus* – Red Sea, El Quadim Bay, Egypt

The Warty Frogfish is covered with numerous warts, resembling a rock or sponge overgrown with calcareous algae. The first dorsal spine is used as a fishing rod. Its extremity is endowed with a lure, which looks like a small fish. It lives in the Indo-Pacific.

June: Violescent sea-whip – *Paramuricea clavata* – Mediterranean Sea, Corsica, Ajaccio

The color-changing gorgonian grows vertically on rocks and steep walls exposed to currents. It feeds on plankton caught in the current by stinging polyps extending their tentacles.

July: Dreamfish– *Sarpa salpa* – Mediterranean Sea, Corsica, Porto-Vecchio

Sarpa salpa is a very sociable species and usually moves around in groups or larger swarms. The species is mostly found over rocky and sandy soils, as well as seagrass meadows. The adult animals are pure herbivores. They feed mainly on Neptune grass and other algae.

August: Clearfin lionfish – *Pterois radiata* – Red Sea, Ras El Quseir, Egypt

It lives in the Indo-Pacific from the Red Sea and the coast of South Africa in lagoons and on outer reefs at depths up to 30 meters. During the day, the crepuscular animal stays under ledges and in crevices. It feeds on crabs and other crustaceans.



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September: Dusky grouper – *Epinephelus marginatus* – Mediterranean Sea, Corsica, Porto-Vecchio

It is found in the reefs and rocky coasts of the eastern and western Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The fish are resident solitary and form territories in reefs and rocky coasts at depths of 8 to 200 meters. They feed on molluscs, especially octopuses, crustaceans and smaller fishes.

October: Christmas tree worm – *Spirobranchus giganteus* – Red Sea, El Quadim Bay, Egypt

The Christmas tree worm is found in most tropical waters. It lives in self-made calcareous tubes, which it never leaves during its lifetime. From the outside only the two coloured tentacle crowns or gills are visible. The animals filter plankton from the water.

November: Precious coral – *Corallium rubrum* – Mediterranean Sea, Corsica, Porto

The precious coral, also called red coral, is shy of light and grows mainly below a depth of 40 meters, to depths of over 100 meters (maximum 280 m), more rarely in shallower water in the protection of caves. The precious coral feeds on zooplankton.

December: Purple starfish – *Ophidiaster ophidianus* – Mediterranean Sea, Corsica, Porto-Vecchio

Ophidiaster ophidianus lives on rocky or sandy bottoms in shaded reef areas. It is found in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Its diet consists of the biofilms on rocks, crustaceans, small fish, detritus and other organic material.

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