

The Pier Aquarium presents the Celebrity Critter of the Week!



<http://www.colinackerman.freeola.com>

Pearly Jawfish

Scientific Name: *Opistognathus aurifrons*

Description: Head and upper body are light, but brilliant, yellow fading to a pearlescent blue-green hue on its lower body.

Habitat: Coral reefs and sandy, rubble-strewn areas in the Caribbean Sea, Bahamas, and Western Atlantic.

Top 10 Facts:

1. The Pearly Jawfish remains near its relatively small territory and is typically seen with only the head and upper body protruding from its burrow.
2. It uses its mouth to carry sand, shells or small rocks from one location to another or to recover them from its burrow.
3. The Pearly Jawfish is a mouth brooder. The male carries the eggs in his mouth until they hatch, usually in 5-7 days. Until then, he will perform "churning," spitting the eggs out and sucking them back in to help aerate the eggs and remove waste.
4. Pearly Jawfish prefer to burrow in substrate that is at least 5-8 inches deep. They can build entire systems of tunnels beneath the floors of their tanks in captivity.
5. This fish can reach lengths of up to 5 inches in the wild and 4 inches in captivity.
6. Pearly Jawfish are shy feeders that eat very small live foods such as brine shrimp, copepods, larvae and daphnia, that wander near its burrow.
7. These fish will defend their territories by opening their mouths wide as a warning to potential predators.
8. Pearly Jawfish will form symbiotic relationships with certain types of shrimp, which they let live in their burrows and may feed in exchange for additional protection.
9. Colonies of 2-10 jawfish (and occasionally upwards of 20) are often found in sandy areas near coral outcroppings at depths of 10-160 feet.
10. As night draws, Jawfish may retreat into their burrows and "close the front door" by pulling a rock or shell over the entrance.