

Queen Triggerfish Bred by Aquarium and University

Collaborative efforts result in successful captive breeding of the threatened queen triggerfish (*Balistes vetula*).

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Photo courtesy of New England Aquarium. The New England Aquarium in Boston, Massachusetts, and Rogers University in Bristol, Rhode Island, have teamed up to hatch and raise the world's first captive-bred queen triggerfish (*Balistes vetula*).

A pair of queen triggerfish inside of the New England Aquarium's Bahamian coral reef exhibit has been producing viable eggs since their early days in the aquarium. Although queen triggerfish lay up to 750,000 eggs every 18 to 20 days, the larvae are so small that they are difficult to feed and therefore keep alive.

The New England Aquarium and Rogers University decided to work together to hatch the queen triggerfish's eggs. Researcher Dan Laughlin collected and transported the eggs from the aquarium to the University's Ornamental Fish Laboratory. After Rogers University's first try, the eggs hatched successfully, largely due to Dr. Rhyne's research of culturing copepods, the critical live food for marine fish larvae. This food kept the young queen triggerfish larvae alive.

Successful captive breeding of this fish is critical because it is a threatened species. The queen triggerfish is important to food and aquarium industries, so sustainable triggerfish populations need to be created through captive-breeding programs.