

Argus fish (Scatophagus argus)

The Argus fish, commonly known as the *Spotted Scat* or *Spotted Butterfish* (*Scatophagus argus*), is a species of fish belonging to the family Scatophagidae. It is found in the Indo-Pacific region, including coastal waters, estuaries, and sometimes freshwater environments. Here's a detailed description:

Physical Characteristics:

- ***Size*:** Typically grows to about 30 cm (12 inches) in length, though some individuals can reach up to 38 cm (15 inches).
- ***Shape*:** The body is laterally compressed and rhomboid-shaped, giving it a somewhat boxy appearance.
- ***Coloration*:** The body is silvery with numerous dark spots, which can vary in size and density. The spots are more prominent in younger fish and may fade slightly with age.
- ***Fins*:** The dorsal fin is spiny, and the anal fin is also well-developed. Both fins are often spotted, matching the body pattern.

Habitat:

- ***Range*:** Found in the Indo-Pacific, from the Red Sea and East Africa to the Pacific Islands, including Japan, Australia, and the Philippines.
- ***Environment*:** Prefers brackish waters such as estuaries, mangroves, and coastal lagoons, but can also adapt to freshwater and marine environments.

Behavior:

- ***Diet*:** Omnivorous, feeding on algae, small invertebrates, detritus, and occasionally small fish.
- ***Temperament*:** Generally peaceful but can be territorial, especially in confined spaces.
- ***Reproduction*:** Spawns in marine environments, with larvae migrating to estuaries and mangroves to grow.

Aquarium Care:

- ***Tank Size*:** Requires a large tank (at least 75 gallons) due to its size and active nature.
- ***Water Conditions*:** Prefers brackish water with a salinity of 1.005–1.015 SG, but can adapt to freshwater. pH should be between 7.5–8.5, and temperature between 22–28°C (72–82°F).
- ***Compatibility*:** Can be kept with other brackish water species of similar size and temperament. Avoid very small fish, as they may be seen as prey.

Interesting Facts:

- The name *Scatophagus* means "dung-eater," as it was once believed to feed on human waste, though this is not its primary diet.
- It is a hardy species, making it popular among aquarists interested in brackish water setups.