

Hanauma Bay Education Program's Creature Feature

Hawaiian Name: **Weke 'ā**

Common Name: **Yellowstripe Goatfish**

Scientific Name: ***Mulloidichthys flavolineatus***



Indigenous

Family: Mullidae

Name Origin: The Hawaiian name for weke'ā means staring goatfish. The scientific name means yellow stripe.

Size: Can grow up to 43 cm.

Current Fishing Regulations: Min. size 7 in.
('Oama are weke under 7 in.)

Description: Weke 'ā have barbels that look like a goat's beard. They use their beards to feel for worms, mollusks, and other invertebrates in the sand. They have a forked tail and 2 dorsal fins. Many can change their color. They usually have a black or dark spot on its side embedded in the yellow stripe running from their head to their tail. The black spot is more visible when feeding and sometimes disappears. Their body is whitish and their fins are whitish to yellowish.

Habitat: Weke 'ā are found near the reef in shallow parts in aggregations during the day in around the same area and will not go deeper than 110 meters. They can be found all over the Indo-Pacific. **Diet:** Weke 'ā are benthic feeders who usually eat small crustaceans, fish, and worms more often during the night hours.

Reproduction: Weke 'ā spawns from December to September, peaking in March and April.

Cultural Significance: Both red and light-colored weke were popular as offerings to the gods to turn away curses. Some kinds of weke are said to produce temporary illness with hallucination. Pahulu meaning nightmare is named for a chief of evil spirits on Lā-na 'i who was killed by Ka-ulu-lā 'au; his spirit enchanted certain fish, especially weke; if the head of a weke is eaten near bedtime, nightmares are said to result; the closer to Lā-na 'i, the weke is caught, the worse the nightmare. A person who has had such a nightmare is said to have been under the influence of Pahulu. Weke pahulu, also known as weke pueo, usually refers to *Upeneus arge*, commonly known as Bandtail goatfish.

'Ōlelo No'eau:

He weke , he i'a pahulu. *It is a weke, the fish that produces nightmares.* The head of the weke fish is said to contain something that produces nightmares.