



PUFFERFISH & PORCUPINEFISH

ORDER: TETRAODONTIFORMES

DID YOU KNOW?

As far back as 2,700BC ancient Egyptians has hieroglyphics warning of the dangers of eating pufferfish.

WHERE AT AQWA?

Look out for these spiked wonders in our Perth Coast and Dangezone exhibits.

SIZE: <100CM

DIET: ALGAE, SMALL INVERTEBRATES

MAIN PREDATOR: SHARKS, ORCAS

HABITAT: MARINE & FRESHWATER

FOUND: TROPICAL & TEMPERATE WATERS WORLDWIDE

BONE BREAKING TEETH

Tetraodont means 4 teeth. Members of this group of fish have fused all their teeth into 4 powerful chompers (two on the top and two on the bottom) to grab and crush their food. Bites from the northwest blowie are so powerful they have broken surfers toes!

ABLE TO INFLATE

These slow swimmers need another strategy to escape being eaten - instead of being hard to catch, they are hard to swallow! By gulping water or air these fish can inflate their elastic bodies, becoming rounder and nearly twice as tall! When inflated their sharp spines also stick out. Porcupinefish have large, visible spines while pufferfish have thin, hidden spines that can only be seen when they are puffed up.

PACKED WITH POISON

Bacteria from their food is stored in their body as tetrodotoxin, the world's deadliest natural poison. If a pufferfish is eaten, symptoms can vary from numbness around the mouth to death. Tetrodotoxin blocks messages from our brain to our heart and lungs, and there is no antidote. Serving pufferfish is banned in Australia and the European Union, however it is considered a delicacy in Japan, China, Korea and Cebu.

GLOBAL FASHION

The porcupinefish pictured is called a globefish. Found only in the southern waters of Australia, it is one of the smallest species of porcupinefish in the world. Interestingly only our west coast fish have yellow spines!

“THE GREATEST ANIMAL ARTISTS”

The male white-spotted pufferfish attracts his mate by creating sand sculptures, featuring circular patterns, that are up to 2m in size.