



STONEFISH

SYNANCEIA HORRIDA (ESTUARINE STONEFISH)
SYNANCEIA VERUCOSA (REEF STONEFISH)

DID YOU KNOW?

Stonefish antivenom is the second most frequently administered antivenom in Australia (after red back spiders)

WHERE AT AQWA?

Enter the DANGERzone to try and distinguish fish from rock - it's harder than you think!

SIZE: <60CM

DIET: FISH, CRABS

**MAIN PREDATOR:
SHARKS, SEA
SNAKES**

**HABITAT: ROCKS,
REEF, ESTUARIES**

**FOUND: COASTAL
REGIONS OF INDO-
PACIFIC**

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Vercosa means 'warty' while *horrida* means 'dreadful, horrid, frightful'.

THE WORLD'S MOST VENOMOUS FISH

Hidden amongst the warty slime covered skin of a stonefish are 13 venomous spines. Used only in defence, these needle-sharp spines lay flat along the stonefish's back until it is disturbed.

At the base of each spine are two venom sacs. If you step on a stonefish the pressure of your foot injects their venom into your body. The venom can cause instant and excruciating pain, rapid swelling around the wound, temporary paralysis, difficulty breathing, shock and even death from cardiac failure.

The reef stonefish is the deadliest of the 5 species of stonefish in the world. It is found here in Australia, along with the estuarine stonefish.

DOUBLE DANGER

Stonefish spines may be dangerous to us but fish and crabs have to watch out for their amazing camouflage and their ability to leap up and engulf passing prey in just 0.015 seconds. While not every strike is on target the energy expended is less than that used in a high speed chase.

SLIMEY SECRET

Sand and algae stick to the stonefishes' slimy skin, making their rock shaped body look even more like their surrounds.

IN POSITION

Stonefish don't just look like a rock - they act like one too! They use their large side fins to perch on, or dig into, the sand. As they lie in wait their trap door-like mouth points up - ready to grab food from above. Stonefish can even stay out of water for upto 4 hours!