

# *Cheilinus lunulatus* (Forsskål, 1775)

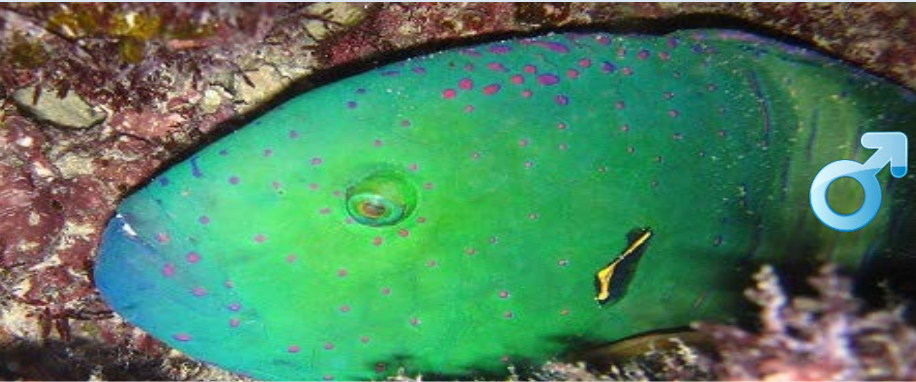


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Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Class: Actinopterygii  
Order: Perciformes

Family: Labridae  
Genus: *Cheilinus*  
Species: *C. lunulatus*

The *Cheilinus lunulatus* (broomtail wrasse) is a species of wrasse native to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. It is another one of the big wrasses which has a very low abundance on the local scale and in this case a limited geographical distribution. Broomtail wrasses lives in shallow waters, but also at 2 to 30 m of depth on the outer side of the reefs. It is often going around on the sandy bottoms, at the limit of the madreporic formations, in the prairies of submerged grasslands looking for shells it crushes easily, like a nutcracker. *C. lunulatus* can reach an average length of about 40 cm in female, with a maximum of 60 cm in males (**Iran, Persian Gulf, Kish Island**). In adults, the head is large and bright green, with small spots. The lips are large and blue. Females and juveniles show large, dark stripes on their flanks. It is oviparous. It nourishes of benthic animals, mainly molluscs, but also of crustaceans. It lives alone or in small groups of 4-8 individuals headed by a big male. As often is the case in the world of the labrids, it is a protogynous, hermaphrodite species, with females that, while growing, can transform into males. The fecundated eggs are entrusted to the currents and the young have a life expectancy of almost 20 years. Juveniles are found in shallower water. Adult depth distribution ranges from 5-45m.

**Food:** *Cheilinus lunulatus* feeds mainly on molluscs and hard-shelled invertebrates (snails, worms, crabs, shrimps and eggs).  
**Distribution:** *Cheilinus lunulatus* occurs in the Red Sea to the Gulf of Oman, **Persian Gulf**. In the Indo-Pacific, it is replaced by the closely related *Cheilinus trilobatus*.