

remoras

& SEA TURTLES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THAT THING RIDING THE TURTLES?

- *Echeneis spp.* also known as “**remoras**” or “**sharksuckers**” are a type of fish that belong to the family *Carangiformes* and are well known for their **hitchhiking abilities**
- These fish have a **modified dorsal fin** adapted to suction to the surface of larger marine animals
 - Sea turtles, whales, sharks, manatees, manta-rays, large fish

DO THEY HURT THE TURTLES?

- The suction does not harm the host or leave an impression

ARE THEY PARASITES?

- No. The relationship between these fish and their host is a type of symbiotic relationship called **commensalism**
 - One organism (remora) benefits, while the other (turtle) *is neither harmed nor helped*
 - However, turtles have been observed displaying behaviors that can be interpreted as aggravation such as swatting remoras with their fins and swimming away from them

WHAT DO THEY EAT?

- Scraps of the host's meal & their fecal excrements

HOW BIG DO THEY GET?

- Most range between 1-3 feet

DOES EVERY TURTLE HAVE ONE?

- In Maho Bay, we have found an average of 1.6 remoras per individual. *Each turtle typically has 1-3 attached*, usually with the larger turtles having more than the smaller juveniles.

