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John E. "Jack" Randall, considered a leading authority on coral reef fishes, has written a 560-page book, "Reef and Shore Fishes of the Hawaiian Islands." [CLICK FOR LARGE](#)

## 1 fish, 2 fish, red fish, book of fish

Expert Jack Randall writes a tome about fauna under the sea

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John E. "Jack" Randall, a leading authority on coral reef fishes, says he has been working 47 years on his newest book, "knowing that one day I'd try to put it all together."

"Reef and Shore Fishes of the Hawaiian Islands" is a 560-page volume that Randall said includes everything he knows about fishes found in Hawaii waters from the shallows down to 656 feet.

Yet, the Bishop Museum senior ichthyologist and UH graduate faculty member in zoology said with a laugh, "The book was obsolete two days after it was printed.

"Hawaiian Fishing News sends me pictures to identify fish claiming new state records," he said. "One is a man showing a grouper 4 ounces heavier than the state record. So, two days later it was outdated."

Still, the book provides detailed descriptions of 612 species and 1,007 illustrations, with 944 in color. Randall did most of his own underwater photography.

He said E. Gordon Grau, former director of the University of Hawaii Institute for Marine Biology at Coconut Island, called him about 15 years ago and said, "I want you to do a better book on Hawaiian fishes."

"Handbook of Hawaiian Fishes," published in 1960 by Randall's mentor, William A. Gosline, and Vernon E. Brock was out of date, Randall said.

"It was marvelous for the time. It had no color pictures, except in a later edition. ... In time, species were discovered they didn't know about, and names changed as a result of systematic research. It doesn't take long for that to get out of date."

Grau tried to get some support for a new book from the state Department of Land and Natural Resources and the UH Sea Grant Program but "came up with nothing," Randall said. "About 13 years later, guess who's director of Sea Grant?"

Grau, who moved into that position in February 2000, said, "The first day I sat in the chair, I called him."

He said he obtained a grant from the Castle Foundation for the project and matched it with Sea Grant money.

"It is a beautiful book," Grau said, "and it will be a legacy that Jack Randall can be proud of. ... Jack is a unique treasure of Hawaii and a unique resource."

Randall said Richard Pyle, a graduate student, showed him how to put the book together on the computer.

"It was a lot more fun than writing," Randall said. "The beauty is, if you're the author and designer ... you can give yourself more space."

Randall goes beyond identifying and illustrating Hawaii's colorful and rare shore fishes. He presents a historical review of Hawaiian fish fauna and describes Hawaii's zoogeography, marine introductions from other areas, external features of fishes and marine conservation efforts.

"It has been proposed that 20 percent of the coast of the Hawaiian Islands be set aside as complete reserves. I hope we will be wise enough to have this plan implemented," he writes.

The UH Sea Grant College Program published the book, available for \$140, including shipping and handling. An order form can be downloaded from [www.soest.hawaii.edu/seagrant](http://www.soest.hawaii.edu/seagrant).

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