



# Samuel Fallours: Tropical Fishes of the East Indies

*Theodore W. Pietsch*

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**Samuel Fallours: Tropical Fishes of the East Indies** Theodore W. Pietsch  
**Swimming with the big fishes: A zenith in zoological illustration**

One of the **first depictions of marine fauna** comes from **Samuel Fallours**, who was in the service of the **Dutch East India Company**. On the island of Ambon, one of the Moluccas, he made drawings of fish and other marine organisms of the Indian Ocean and brought them back to Holland in 1712. His drawings belong to a number of sets of similar drawings, depicting hundreds of animals, mostly fish but also crustaceans, insects, a dugong, and even a mermaid. Some of these became the basis for 18th-century publications, among them Louis Renard's *Poissons, Ecrevisses et Crabes* (1719) and François Valentijn's *Verhandeling der Ongemeene Visschen van Amboina*, a chapter in his *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien* (1724–1726).

These beautiful, elaborately detailed and brilliantly colored drawings bear extraordinary witness to the marine fish fauna of the East Indies and can still be interpreted in light of present-day scientific knowledge. From an artistic and historical viewpoint, **these drawings are among the finest natural history illustrations ever made.**

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