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Cover Legend: Plate LVI: hand-painted engraving from *Natural History of the Rarest Curiosities of the Seas of the Indies* (Amsterdam, 1718) by Louis Renard (1678–1746). One of the few pre-Linnaean tomes on fish to be published in vibrant color, Renard's book is a real rarity, with only six extant copies. Consisting of 100 colored engravings of 460 specimens, it includes 416 fish, 40 crustaceans, two grasshoppers, one dugong, and one mermaid. These fanciful creatures, considered scientifically accurate at the time of publication, are now relegated to the realm of surrealistic folk art. Renard himself was a very colorful figure: a member of the Amsterdam Guild of Booksellers; a spy for the British Crown; and an agent of King George I (to whom his book is dedicated.) On-the-spot drawings and accompanying descriptions were sent to him by Samuel Fallours, an artist in the employ of the Dutch East India Company who was stationed in Ambon (now Jakarta.) Renard added his own embellishments, including faces, arbitrary appendages, and decorative details. "The Emperor of Japan" (top) was described as "the most delicious and most beautiful fish in the world, but very rare." "The Painted Canvas Fish" (bottom) was re-categorized as *Chaetodon ephippium* (saddled butterflyfish) by Baron Cuvier in 1831. Cuvier was one of Renard's fans, and wrote in his classic *Histoire Naturelle des Poissons* (1828) that "these drawings are indispensable, either for providing the natural colors of known species, or for helping to recognize new forms." (Legend by Ann Weissmann, exhibitions curator, MBLWHOI Library, <http://www.mblwhoilibrary.org>)