

## *Platygillellus rubrocinctus* (Saddle Stargazer)

Family: Dactyloscopidae (Stargazers)

Order: Perciformes (Perch and Allied Fish)

Class: Actinopterygii (Ray-finned Fish)



**Fig. 1.** Saddle stargazer, *Platygillellus rubrocinctus*.

[<http://biogeodb.stri.si.edu/caribbean/en/gallery/specie/4058> downloaded 16 October 2016]

**TRAITS.** *Platygillellus rubrocinctus*, commonly known as the saddle stargazer, has wide brown and white bars vertically across its elongated body, with bulging eyes on the top of its head (Fig. 1). These fish have a length up to 7cm (Chaplin, 1968). The saddle stargazer is one of many species of stargazer but they all share a common feature of submerging their bodies into the sea floor.

**DISTRIBUTION.** *P. rubrocinctus* are most likely to be found in the western Atlantic Ocean from Cape Canaveral to the Bahamas, in the Gulf of Mexico, Cuba and along the coastline of Central and South America, extending to Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean Sea (IUCN, 2016) (Fig. 2).

**HABITAT AND ACTIVITY.** *P. rubrocinctus* can be located in the coral reefs hidden in the sand, among corals, boulders and limestone slopes in waters ranging from 3-15m or less, but are never seen in the intertidal zone (Chaplin, 1968). They cover their bodies in the sand or gravel with their eyes left out (Fig. 3), using the sand as a camouflage from predators or to catch prey. Fimbriae (finger-like projections around the mouth) prevent sand particles from blocking the gill chamber while submerged in sand (Nelson, 1994).

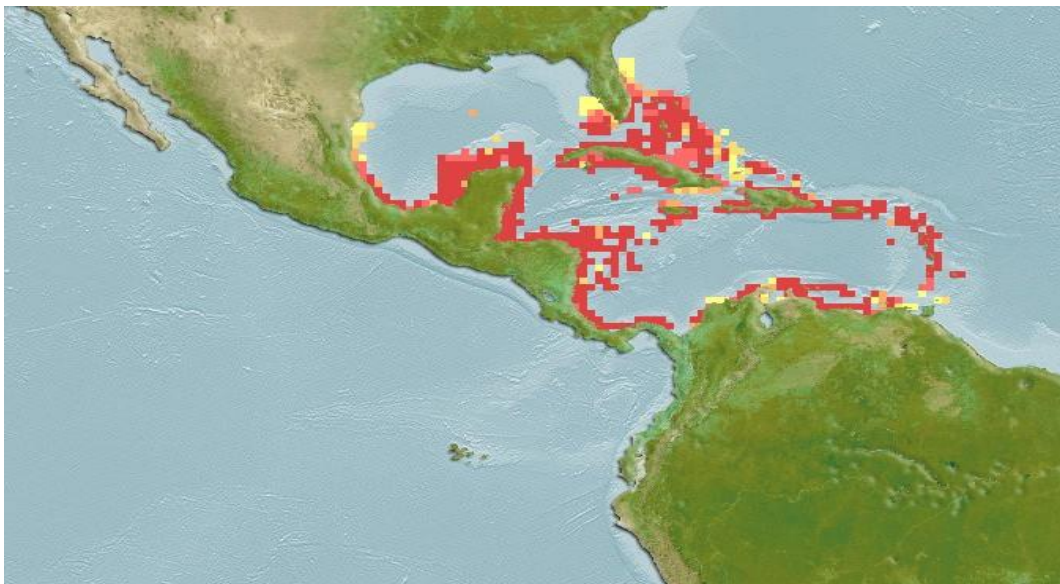
**FOOD AND FEEDING.** *P. rubrocinctus* are carnivores, and feed on small fish along with shrimps and crabs. Hidden beneath the sand, a surprise attack is carried out, catching its prey in its mouth and consuming it whole. These fish are hidden most of the time and are found in small numbers in their habitat, not in a large grouping known as a school of fish, usually a male and female or two males and one female share the same living environments (Aquapress, 2016).

#### REFERENCES

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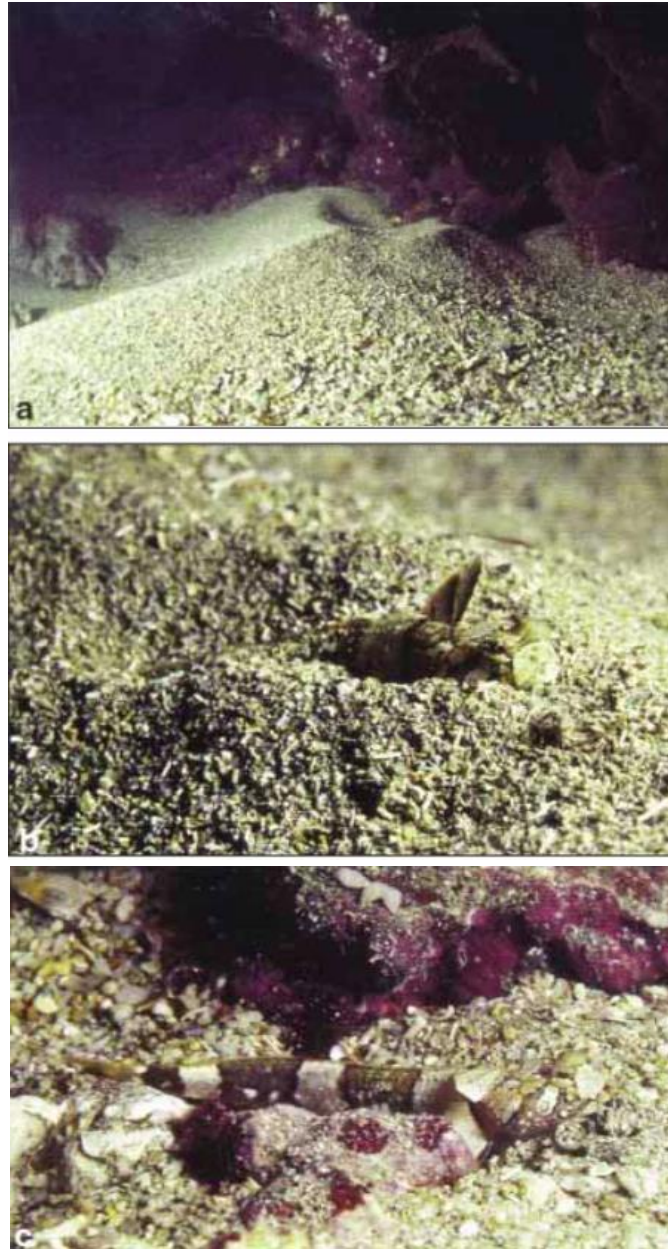
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**Fig. 2.** Map of distribution of *Platygillellus rubrocinctus*.

[[http://www.aquamaps.org/receive.php?type\\_of\\_map=regular](http://www.aquamaps.org/receive.php?type_of_map=regular), downloaded 22 October 2016]



**Fig. 3.** *Platygillelus rubrocinctus* covering its body with sand, and hidden in gravel.

[[http://www.aqua-aquapress.com/pdf/aqua6\(1\).pdf](http://www.aqua-aquapress.com/pdf/aqua6(1).pdf), downloaded 23 october 2016]

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