

## *Entomacrodus nigricans* (Pearl Blenny)

Family: Blennidae (Combt tooth Blennies)

Order: Perciformes (Perch and Allied Fish)

Class: Actinopterygii (Ray-finned Fish)



**Fig. 1.** Pearl blenny, *Entomacrodus nigricans*.

[<https://www.flickr.com/photos/bonairereef/15840424808/sizes/1>, downloaded 19 November 2016]

**TRAITS.** The pearl blenny is pale with dark brown bands, with very bright white spots throughout its entire body (Stokes, 1994). The species has a blunt head with a high forehead and two moderately-sized eyes (Fig. 1). There are filaments above the eyes and nape known as cirri. During the mating season, the males display enlarged cirri and dorsal fins. Narrow, sharp comblike teeth are located in the jaws of these fish. The dorsal fin has 13 spines and 14-15 soft rays, the anal fin has 2 spines and 16 rays. They can grow to approximately 10cm in length (McEachran and Fechhelm, 2005).

**DISTRIBUTION.** The pearl blenny is found in the western Atlantic, from the island of Bermuda to southern Florida and the Caribbean Sea (Fig. 2) (IUCN, 2016).

**HABITAT AND ECOLOGY.** Shallow waters are the preferred habitat of this species. They are mainly found near the surface, in tide pools or by rocks, and tend to alternate between rock pools (IUCN, 2016). The smaller pearl blennies remain further away from the surface in order to avoid harsh environments. The pearl blenny feeds mainly during the day and its diet consists of algae. These fish are mainly active during the daylight. Blennies have amphibious adaptations which allow them to survive on land but this does not mean they intentionally move out of water. The species has a slightly flat eye that provides the species with almost birdlike vision. They can survive out of water in shady areas for approximately 2.5 hours, 3.5 hours at night, and only 7 minutes when exposed to very bright sunshine (Graham et al., 1985).

**REPRODUCTION.** The males clean out any small crevices or empty shells in which the female will proceed to lay her eggs. The eggs are usually sticky and adhere to the internal surface of the nest. The males guard the eggs and often fan them until they have hatched (Oliveira et al., 2001).

**APPLIED BIOLOGY.** This species is not jeopardised in any way, it is therefore classified as Least Concern. There are currently no conservation methods or laws regulating the protection of the pearl blennies as they are not under threat. These fish are used commercially in aquariums however this does not pose any serious risk to the population numbers of the species (IUCN, 2016).

#### REFERENCES

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**Fig. 2.** Map showing the distribution of the pearl blenny.

[<http://maps.iucnredlist.org/>, downloaded 28 October 2016]

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