

## *Parablennius marmoratus* (Seaweed Blenny)

Family: Blennidae (Combtooth Blennies)

Order: Perciformes (Perch and Allied Fish)

Class: Actinopterygii (Ray-finned Fish)



**Fig. 1.** Seaweed blenny, *Parablennius marmoratus*.

[<http://www.realmonstrosities.com/2013/03/the-blenny-in-his-den-ny.html>, downloaded 20 October 2016]

**TRAITS.** This species of fish has a narrow body that does not normally grow past 8cm long. The seaweed blenny comes in many shades of colour from tan to rusty orange to green or gold or even purple and blue (Figs 1 and 2) with some fish having dark marks running horizontally along the body. There is no sexual dimorphism (no external difference in the sexes), but these fish can be distinguished from similar species by the tuft of cirri (projections) above their eyes (Fig. 3). It has a blunt head with a beak like mouth with 32-45 sharp comb-like teeth (FishBase, 2016; FIMNH, 2016).

**DISTRIBUTION.** Found along the coastal areas of the Caribbean Sea and along the Gulf of Mexico, south to Brazil and as far north as the state of New York (Fig. 4) (FIMNH, 2016).

**HABITAT AND ECOLOGY.** The seaweed blenny lives to maximum depth of 30m. It can be found living among limestone rocks, reefs, sea grass beds and among man-made structures, with

these sites containing lots of hiding places. The seaweed blenny is an omnivore and feeds on algae and several forms of crustaceans, polychaete and hydroids. The seaweed blenny is diurnal and feeds during the day. It is also a demersal fish meaning they are bottom feeders and they move between rocks and seagrass beds searching for algae and small crustaceans (FIMNH, 2016).

**REPRODUCTION.** The seaweed blenny reproduces sexually and being oviparous lays eggs, in cracks or holes in rocks. The male seaweed blenny is territorial and contains several females within his territory. After copulating with the females all the fertilized eggs are laid in a particular site where the male would protect the eggs until they hatch. The larvae are about 2mm long when they hatch (FIMNH, 2016; IUCN, 2016).

**BEHAVIOUR.** The seaweed blenny tends to be a solitary fish with males fighting over territories (Fig. 5). Their predators are larger bottom feeding fish and large crustaceans like crabs and lobsters. They avoid these larger predators by staying near hiding places. The seaweed blenny has also adapted itself for protection by being able to lighten or darken their appearance as a way to blend into their habitats. Very little is known about the juvenile behaviour, except that they may be found living in seagrass beds or sargassum weed (FIMNH, 2016; IUCN, 2016).

**APPLIED BIOLOGY.** The seaweed blenny being a very colourful fish is often sold as pets for saltwater aquariums. Its colourful appearance and large population make it a prime target for pet stores. However its abundance allows the IUCN to categorize the seaweed blenny as Least Concern (IUCN, 2016).

#### REFERENCES

- FIMNH. 2016. Florida Museum Of Natural History, *Parablennius marmoreus*, <https://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/discover/species-profiles/parablennius-marmoreus/>, downloaded 19 October 2016.
- Fish base. 2016. *Parablennius marmoreus*, <https://www.fishbase.org/summary/3769#>, downloaded 20 October 2016.
- IUCN. 2016. *Parablennius marmoreus*, <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/46104109/>, downloaded 20 October 2016.

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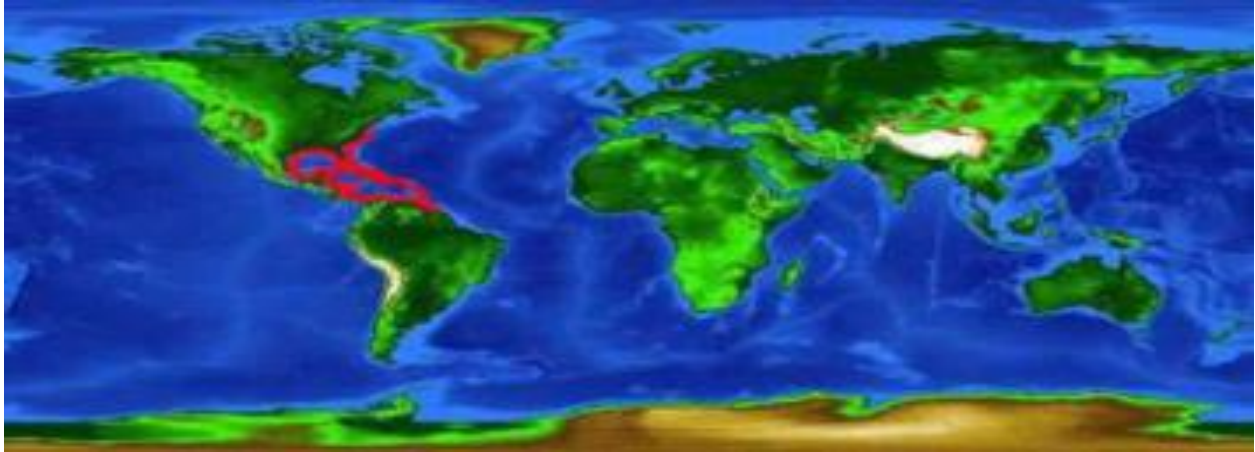
**Fig. 2.** One variation of seaweed blenny coloration.

[<http://www.forestventure.com/speciesdetail.cshtml?id=77959> , downloaded 20 October 2016]



**Fig. 3.** Cirri above the eyes of a seaweed blenny.

[<http://www.forestventure.com/speciesdetail.cshtml?id=77959> , downloaded 20 November 2016]



**Fig. 4.** Distribution of the seaweed blenny.

[<https://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/discover/species-profiles/parablennius-marmoreus/>, downloaded 20 October 2016]



**Fig. 5.** Male seaweed blennies fighting over territory.

[[http://suzanmeldonian.photoshelter.com/image/I0000Umwjx\\_KJiTI](http://suzanmeldonian.photoshelter.com/image/I0000Umwjx_KJiTI), downloaded 20 October 2016]