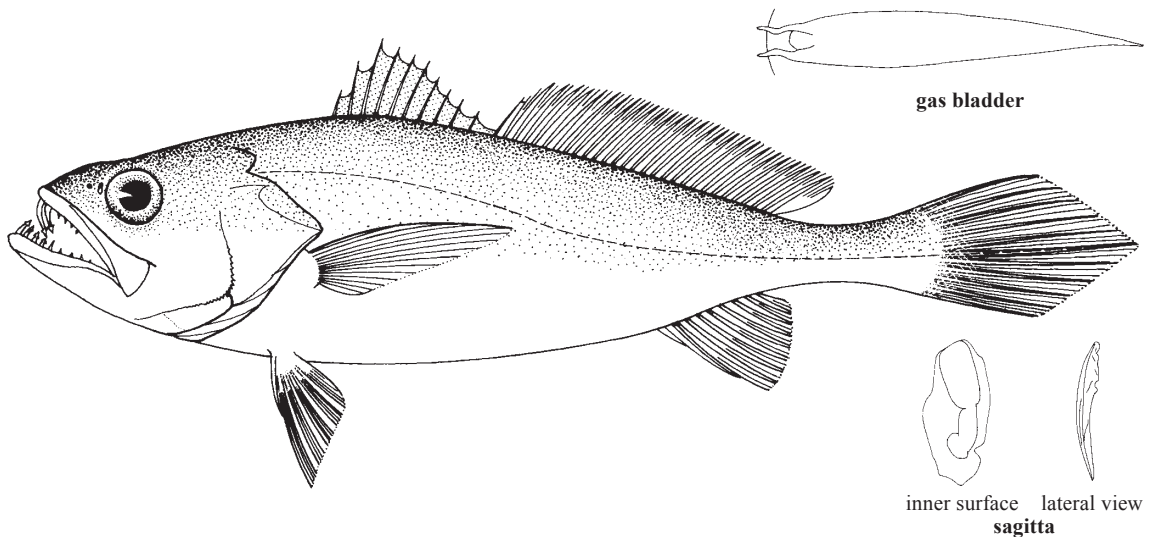


Macrodon ancylodon (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)

WKK

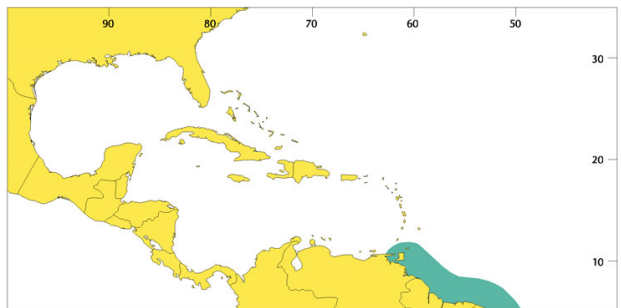
Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: None / None.**FAO names:** En - King weakfish; Fr - Acoupa chasseur; Sp - Pescadilla real.

Diagnostic characters: A large fish, body elongate and moderately compressed. **Mouth large, strongly oblique, lower jaw projecting**; maxilla extending beyond eye. **Teeth very sharp with arrowhead, set in narrow ridges on both jaws; upper jaw with a pair of large canine-like teeth at tip, and a row of sharp outer-row teeth; lower jaw with several large canine-like teeth at its tip, overlaying upper jaw and a row of widely spaced sharp inner-row teeth, middle ones larger.** **Chin without barbel or pore; snout with 2 marginal pores.** Gill rakers 9 to 12, much shorter than gill filament. Preopercle margin soft, weakly denticulated. Spinous dorsal fin with 10 spines, posterior portion with 1 spine and 27 to 29 soft rays; anal fin with 2 spines, 8 or 9 soft rays, second spine slender; caudal fin pointed. **Gas bladder with a pair of horn-like anterior appendages.** **Sagitta thin and with a notch on posterior dorsal margin**, lapillus rudimentary. Scales small and cycloid; soft portion of dorsal fin almost entirely covered with smaller scales. **Colour:** silvery greyish on back, pale to yellowish below; bases of pectoral fins dusky, lower fins pale to yellowish. Back punctuated in juveniles.

Size: Maximum 45 cm; common to 35 cm.

Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found over mud or sandy mud bottoms in coastal waters to about 60 m; juveniles enter estuaries and coastal lagoons. Feeds mainly on shrimps and small fishes. Caught mainly with bottom trawls and beach seines. Reported to make up sometimes about 18% of trawl catches in Guyana; outside the area, a major fishery off southeastern Brazil. Medium and large specimens marketed mostly fresh; an esteemed foodfish.

Distribution: South American coast from Gulf of Venezuela to Mar de Plata, Argentina.

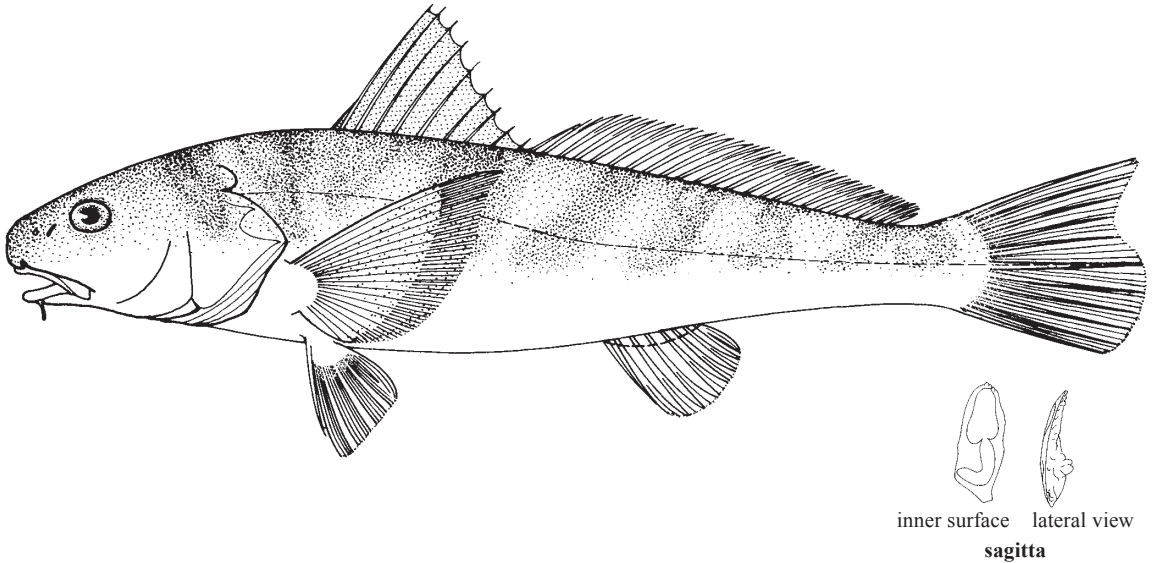


Menticirrhus americanus (Linnaeus, 1758)

KGB

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: None / *Menticirrhus littoralis* (Holbrook, 1847); *Menticirrhus saxatilis* (Bloch and Schneider, 1801).

FAO names: **En** - Southern kingcroaker (AFS: Southern kingfish); **Fr** - Bourrue de crique; **Sp** - Lambe caletero.

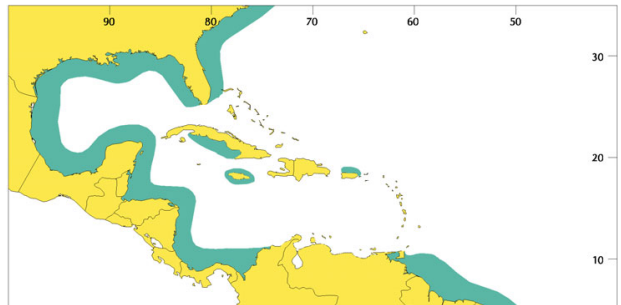


Diagnostic characters: A medium- to large-sized fish, distinctly elongate and rounded, with a broad, flat belly. Mouth small, inferior; maxilla reaching below hind margin of eye. Teeth villiform, set in broad bands on jaws, upper jaw with a distinctly larger, widely spaced outer row teeth. **Chin with a single, short, and rigid barbel, perforated by a pore at tip and with 2 pairs of lateral pores;** snout with 8 pores (3 rostral and 5 marginal); rostral fold (on lower margin of snout) deeply notched. Gill rakers short, knob-like, at most 10 (gradually disappearing with growth). **Spinous dorsal fin with 10 spines (rarely 11), when pressed back, longest spine seldom extending beyond base of first soft ray,** posterior portion with 1 spine and 22 to 26 soft rays; anal fin with 1 spine and 6 to 8 soft rays (usually 7); caudal fin S-shaped in adults. **Gas bladder vestigial in adult.** Sagitta oval elongate with thicker posterior half; lapillus rudimentary. **Scales rather small, ctenoid on body and head, those on breast not distinctly reduced in size;** soft dorsal fin naked except 1 row of small scales along its base. **Colour:** silvery grey, darker on back, belly white; overall darkness varying with habitat, often with 7 or 8 faint oblique bars, second and third bars form a faint V below predorsal and spinous dorsal fin. Pectoral, pelvic and anal fins dusky often with darker tip; pelvic, anal, and caudal fins sometimes yellowish. Inner side of gill cover black.

Size: Maximum over 60 cm; common to 35 cm.

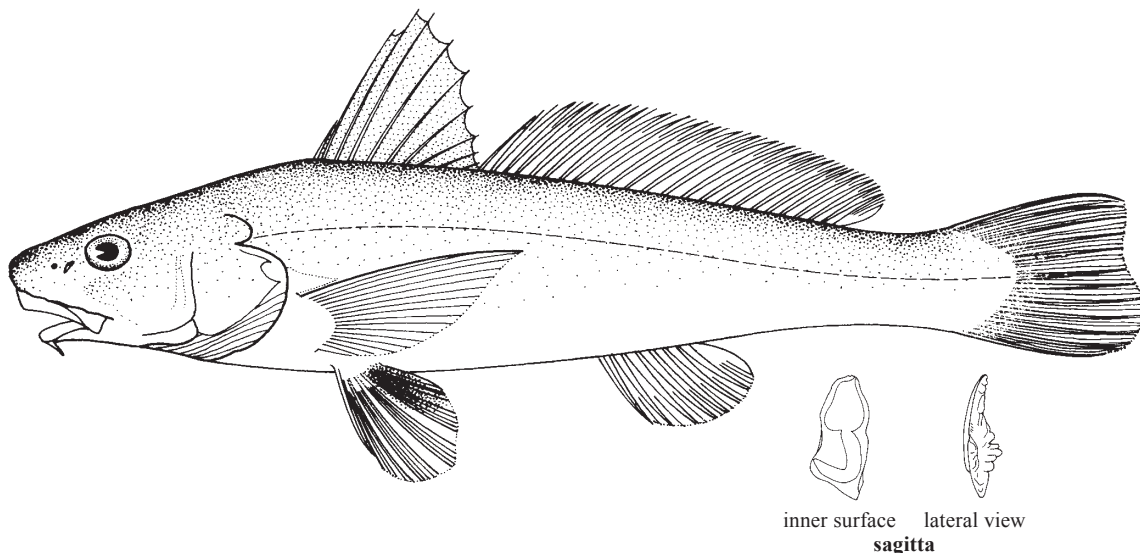
Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found over sandy mud to hard sand bottoms in shallow coastal waters, as well as in the surf zone and estuaries; juveniles often occurring in brackish waters. Feeds on bottom-dwelling organisms, mainly worms and crustaceans. Jaw teeth can produce clicking sounds. Caught mainly with bottom trawls, pound net, and seine; also by anglers. An excellent foodfish.

Distribution: Cape Cod to northern Argentina, common from Chesapeake Bay to Florida, and in Gulf of Mexico from Cape Sable, Florida to Bay of Campeche, Mexico, Caribbean coast to southern Brazil, not common in Venezuela, few records from the greater Antilles, none from the lesser Antilles.



Menticirrhus littoralis (Holbrook, 1847)

KGG

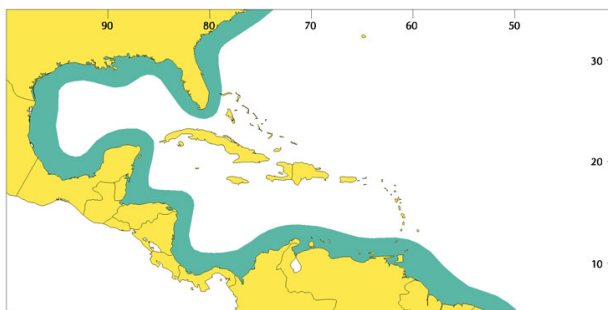
Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: None / *Menticirrhus americanus* (Linnaeus, 1758).**FAO names:** **En** - Gulf kingcroaker (AFS: Gulf kingfish); **Fr** - Bourrugue du Golfe; **Sp** - Lambe verrugato.

Diagnostic characters: A medium- to large-sized fish, distinctly elongate, rounded with flat belly, ventral profile nearly straight. **Mouth small, inferior;** maxilla reaching below middle of eye. Teeth villiform, set in broad bands on jaws, outer-row teeth in upper jaw slightly enlarged, closely set. **Chin with a single, short, and rigid barbel, perforated by a pore at tip,** and 2 pairs of lateral pores; snout with 8 pores (3 rostral and 5 marginal); rostral fold (on lower margin of snout) deeply notched. Gill rakers short, knob-like, 3 to 12, those on lower limb of gill arch gradually disappearing with growth. Spinous dorsal fin with 10 or 11 spines, **longest spine seldom extending beyond base of first soft ray when depressed;** posterior portion with 1 spine and 19 to 26 soft rays; **anal fin with 1 spine** and 6 to 8 (usually 7) soft rays; caudal fin S-shaped in adults. **Gas bladder vestigial in adult.** Sagitta elongate with thick posterior half, lapillus rudimentary. Scales moderately small, all ctenoid on body and head, **those on breast distinctly reduced in size;** soft dorsal fin naked except 1 row of small scales along its base. **Colour:** silvery white, slightly darker above, without bars on sides; fins usually pale or dusky; inner side of gill cover dusky.

Size: Maximum: 60 cm; common to 35 cm.

Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found in coastal waters over sandy and sandy mud bottoms, most abundant in surf zone, especially the juveniles; sometimes entering estuaries, but rare at salinity lower than 21‰; feeds on bottom-dwelling organisms, mainly worms and crustaceans. Jaw teeth can produce clicking sound. Caught mainly with bottom trawls, seines and pound nets, and by anglers. Marketed mostly fresh, an excellent foodfish.

Distribution: Chesapeake Bay to Florida, and in Gulf of Mexico and continental coast of the Caribbean Sea; extending southward to southern Brazil.

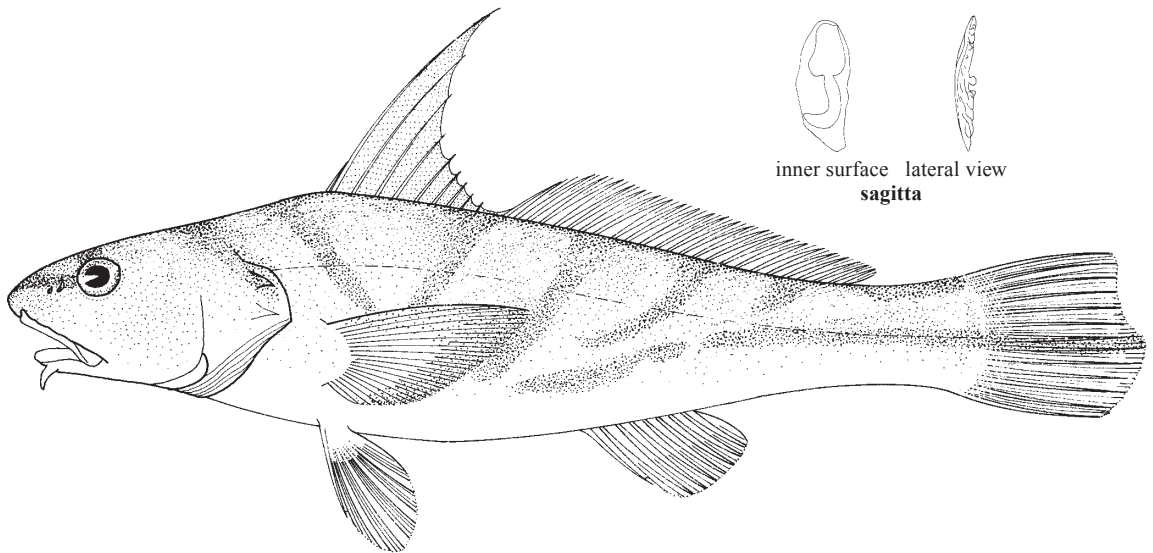


Menticirrhus saxatilis (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)

KGF

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: None / *Menticirrhus americanus* (Linnaeus, 1758).

FAO names: **En** - Northern kingcroaker (AFS: Northern kingfish); **Fr** - Bourruege renard; **Sp** - Lambe zorro.

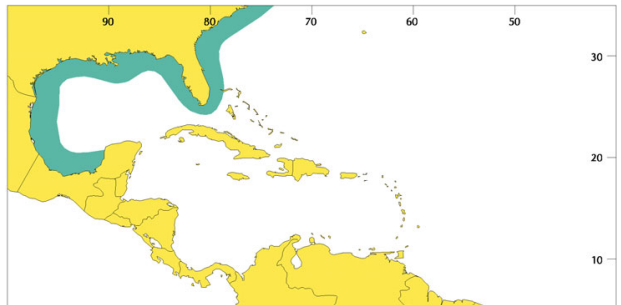


Diagnostic characters: A medium-sized fish, elongate, rounded with a flat belly, triangular in cross section. **Mouth small, inferior;** maxilla reaching below middle of eye. Teeth villiform, set in broad bands on jaws, outer-row teeth in upper jaw slightly enlarged, closely set. **Chin with a single, short and rigid barbel, perforated by a pore at tip,** and 2 pairs of lateral pores; snout with 8 pores (3 rostral and 5 marginal); rostral fold (on lower margin of snout) deeply notched. Gill rakers short, knob-like, 3 to 12, those on lower limb of gill arch gradually disappearing with growth. Spinous dorsal fin with 10 spines (rarely 11); **longest spine always extending well beyond base of seventh or eighth soft ray when depressed;** posterior portion with 1 spine and 22 to 27 soft rays; **anal fin with 1 spine** and 7 to 9 (usually 8) soft rays; caudal fin S-shaped in adults. **Gas bladder vestigial in adults, but moderately developed in young (to 11 cm total length).** Sagitta oval elongated and thin; lapillus rudimentary. Scales moderately small, all ctenoid, **those on breast not distinctly reduced in size;** soft dorsal fin naked except 1 row of small scales along its base. **Colour:** silvery grey, darkish on back and whitish on belly; **sides always with 5 or 6 conspicuous oblique bars,** the second and third bars form a V-shape marking under spinous dorsal fin; a dark longitudinal stripe present behind pectoral fin; spinous portion of dorsal fin dark at tip with black margin; pectoral, pelvic and anal fins dusky and often with black tip. Inner side of gill cover dusky.

Size: Maximum 40 cm; common to 30 cm.

Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found in shallow coastal waters over sand to sandy mud bottoms; rather common in the surf zone and in estuaries; juveniles may enter tidal rivers and creeks of low salinity (less than 1‰). Feeds on bottom-dwelling organisms, mainly worms and crustaceans. Caught mainly with bottom trawls, pound nets, and seines; also by anglers. No special fishery, but caught along with other *Menticirrhus* species; important fishing grounds are located to the north of the area. Marketed mostly fresh, an excellent foodfish.

Distribution: Gulf of Maine to Florida, northern Gulf of Mexico from Florida to Bay of Campeche; Mexico outside the area common from Cape Hatteras to Cape Cod.

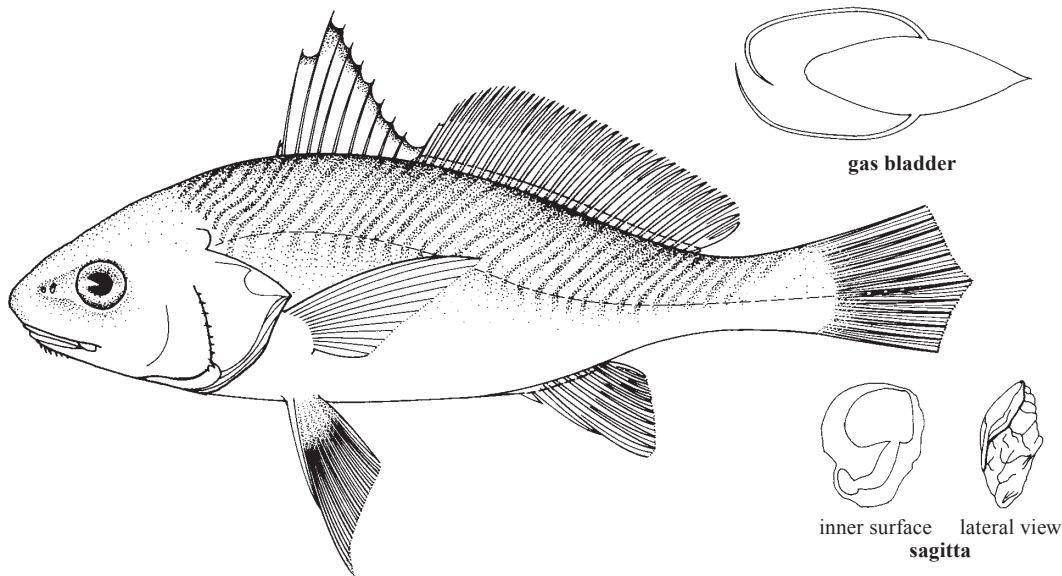


Micropogonias furnieri (Desmarest, 1823)

CKM

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: *Micropogon furnieri* (Desmarest, 1823) / *Micropogon opercularis* (Quoy and Gaimard, 1824).

FAO names: **En** - Whitemouth croaker; **Fr** - Tambour rayé; **Sp** - Corvinón rayado.

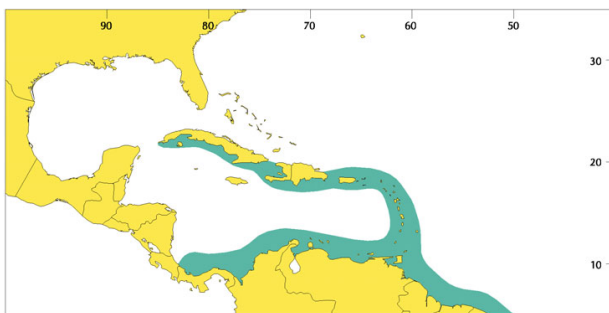


Diagnostic characters: A medium- to large-sized fish, slightly elongate and moderately compressed. **Mouth moderately large, subterminal to inferior;** teeth villiform, set in bands on jaws, outer-row teeth in upper jaw slightly enlarged. **Chin with 5 mental pores and 3 or 4 pairs of small barbels along inner edges of lower jaw;** snout with 10 pores (5 rostral and 5 marginal). Gill rakers 21 to 25, short and slender. **Preopercle margin strongly serrated, with 2 or 3 sharp spines at its angle.** Spinous dorsal fin with 10 spines, posterior portion with 1 spine and 26 to 30 (usually 26 to 28) soft rays; anal fin with 2 spines and 7 or 8 (rarely 9) soft rays. Caudal fin rhomboidal or double emarginated in adults. **Gas bladder with a pair of tube-like lateral appendages, originated from lateral wall from posterior half and extend forward in front of gas bladder.** **Sagitta round and thick, larger fish with granulated outcrop on inner surface;** lapillus rudimentary. Scales ctenoid on body and few top of head, cycloid on head; soft dorsal fin naked except a row of scales along its base. **Color:** silvery with a pink cast, **sides with distinct oblique or wavy stripes along scale rows from back to much below lateral line;** spinous portion of dorsal fin edged black, other fins pale to yellowish; inner side of gill cover dark.

Size: Maximum 90 cm; common to 45 cm.

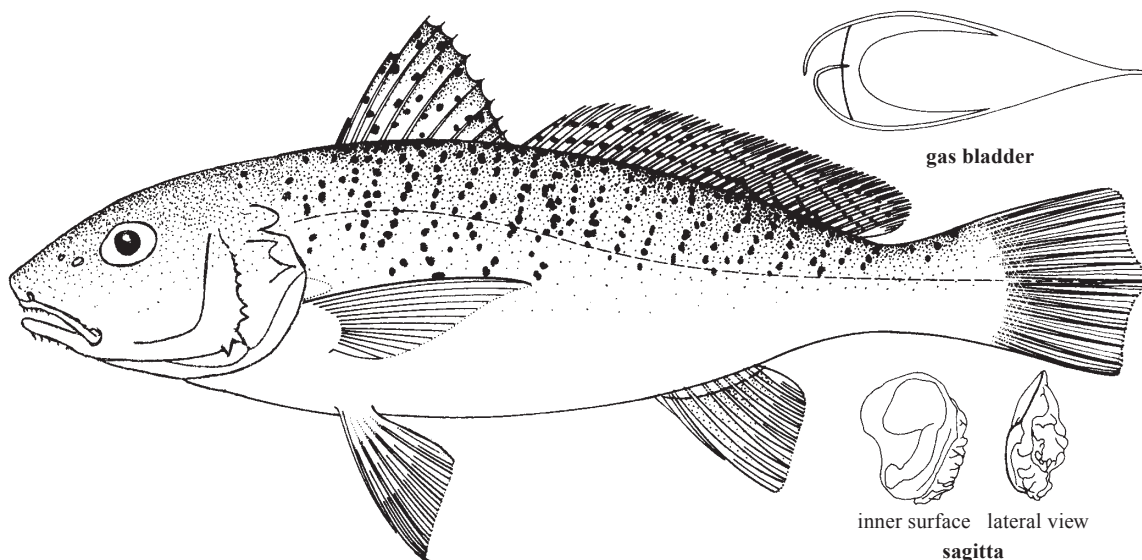
Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found over muddy and sandy bottoms in coastal waters to about 80 m, juveniles and young adults may be found year round in estuaries. Feeds on bottom-dwelling organisms, mainly worms, crustaceans, and small fishes. Caught mainly with bottom trawls, seines, cast nets, gill nets, and trammel nets. Fished off most coastal areas. One of the most important commercial species in Guianas and northeastern Venezuela, and apparently an important fishery resource in Cuba. Outside the area, major fishing ground located in southern Brazil to Argentina.

Distribution: Most of the Antilles, Caribbean and Atlantic coast from Costa Rica to Argentina.



Micropogonias undulatus (Linnaeus, 1766)

CKA

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: *Micropogon undulatus* (Linnaeus, 1776) / None.**FAO names:** **En** - Atlantic croaker; **Fr** - Tambour brésilien; **Sp** - Corvinón brasileño.

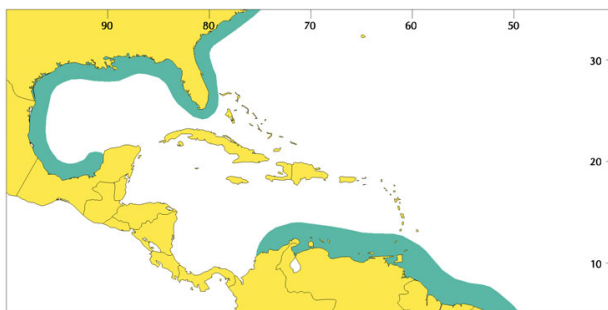
Diagnostic characters: A medium-sized fish, slightly elongate and moderately compressed. Mouth moderately large, subterminal, snout projecting; maxilla reaching below middle of eye. Teeth villiform, set in bands on jaws, outer-row teeth in upper jaw slightly enlarged. Chin with 8 pores and 3 to 4 pairs of small barbels along inner edges of lower jaw; snout with 10 to 12 pores (5 to 7 rostral and 5 marginal). Gill rakers 22 to 29 (usually 23 to 26), rather short and slender. Preopercle margin serrate with 3 to 4 strong spines at its angle. Spinous dorsal fin with 10 spines, posterior portion with 1 spine and 27 to 30 (usually 28 or 29) soft rays; anal fin with 2 spines and 8 or 9 (rarely 7) soft rays; caudal fin double emarginated in adults. Gas bladder with a pair of tube-like lateral appendages, originated from lateral wall in middle and extend forward to front end of bladder. Sagitta round and thick, inner surface with granulated outcrop; lapillus rudimentary. Scales ctenoid on body and few top of head, cycloid on head; soft dorsal fin naked except a row of scales along its base. **Colour:** silvery with a pinkish cast, back and upper sides greyish, with black spots forming irregular, discontinuous wavy dots or reticulated lines, mostly above lateral line; spinous portion of dorsal fin with small dark dots and a black edge; other fins pale to yellowish. Inner side of gill cover dusky.

Size: Maximum 50 cm; common to 30 cm.

Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found over mud and sandy mud bottoms in coastal waters to about 100 m depth and in estuaries where the nursery and feeding grounds are located. Feeds on bottom-dwelling organisms, mainly worms, crustaceans, and fishes. Caught mainly with bottom trawls, pound nets, gill nets, trammel nets, and seines, and by anglers. Juveniles and young constitute 50% of by catches by shrimp trawlers in the Gulf of Mexico. FAO statistics report landings ranging from 551 to 1 396 t from 1995 to 1999. Marketed mostly fresh, a good foodfish.

Distribution: Atlantic coast from Cape Cod to Florida, Gulf of Mexico from Florida to Bay of Campeche, Mexico.

Note: *M. undulatus* was thought to be sympatric with *M. furnieri* in its southerly distribution. Here, I suggest that *M. undulatus* is a northern species and *M. furnieri* is the Caribbean species, including Antilles and South American species.

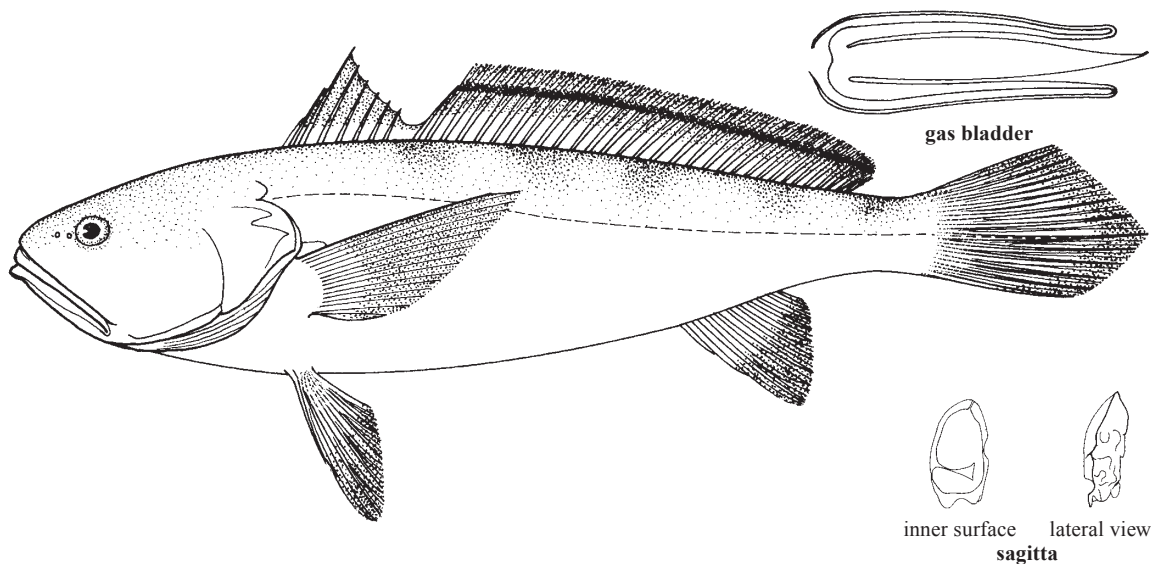


Nebris microps Cuvier, 1830

NBM

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: None / None.

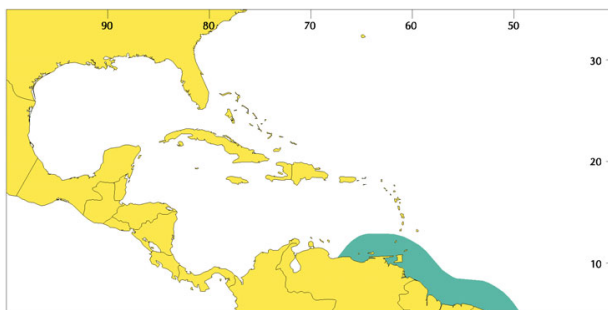
FAO names: En - Smalleye croaker; Fr - Courbine tiyeux; Sp - Corvina ojo chico.



Diagnostic characters: A medium-sized fish, with very elongate body and rounded in cross-section, tapering to a slender caudal peduncle. **Eye very small, 9 to 12 times in head. Mouth large, strongly oblique, lower jaw projecting;** maxilla reaching beyond eye; teeth very small, conical, set in narrow bands on jaws. **Chin without barbel**, but with 4 minute mental pores; **snout with 2 marginal pores.** Gill rakers 20 to 24, long and slender, longer than gill filament. Preopercle margin membranous and smooth. **Spinous dorsal fin short with 8 spines**, posterior portion long with 1 spine and 31 to 33 soft rays; anal fin with 2 weak spines and 9 or 10 soft rays; caudal fin asymmetrically rhomboidal. **Gas bladder with a pair of long U-shaped tubular appendages, originating anteriorly, extending backward to tip of main chamber.** **Sagitta ovoid and very thick**, lapillus rudimentary. Scales very small, all cycloid; soft dorsal fin almost entirely covered with small scales. **Colour:** body more or less uniformly silvery brown to orange, darker above; pectoral, pelvic, and anal fins orange with dark tip. Juveniles with 5 or 6 saddle-like dark blotches on sides. Inner side of gill cover pale to yellowish.

Size: Maximum to 50 cm; common to 30 cm.

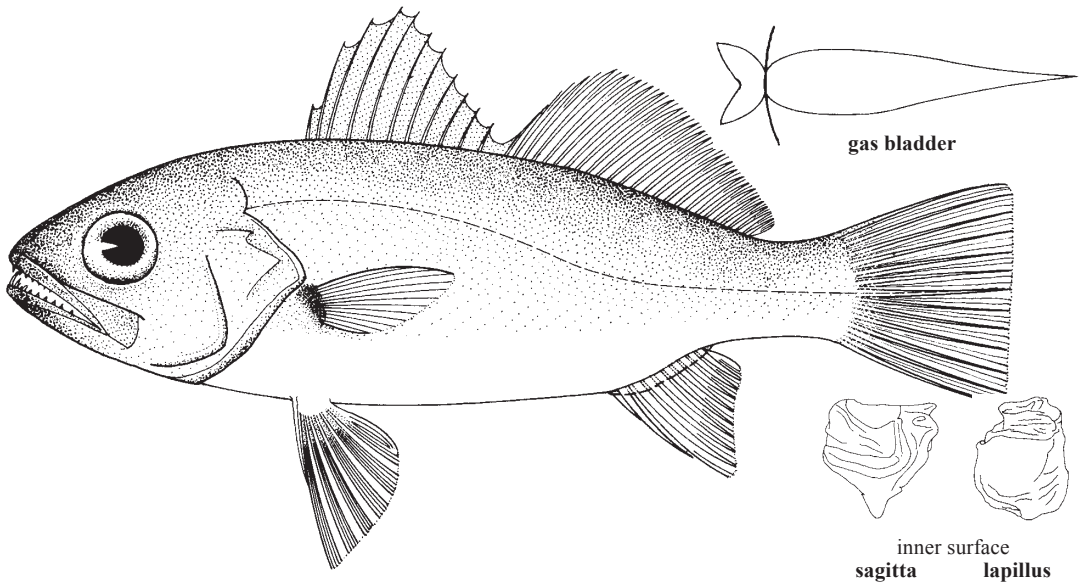
Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found over sandy mud bottoms in coastal waters to about 50 m; also entering estuaries, especially the juveniles. Feeds mainly on shrimps and small crustaceans. Caught mainly with bottom trawls and seines, no special fishery; reported to be very abundant to the south of Trinidad, and in the Orinoco delta. Marketed mostly fresh and salted; a good foodfish; one of the highly sought species in Trinidad and Guyana.



***Odontoscion dentex* (Cuvier, 1830)**

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: None / None.

FAO names: **En** - Reef croaker; **Fr** - Verrue de roche; **Sp** - Bombache de roca.

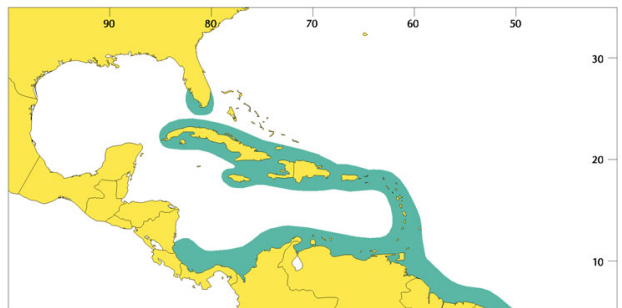


Diagnostic characters: A small fish, body oblong and compressed. **Mouth large, subterminal to terminal, slightly oblique;** maxilla reaching slightly behind middle of eye. **Teeth sharp, widely spaced, set in narrow ridges on jaws, a pair of moderately large canine-like teeth at tip of lower jaw. Chin without barbels but with 4 mental pores; snout with 8 pores (3 rostral and 5 marginal).** Gill rakers 19 to 25, long, and stiff. Preopercle margin smooth, slightly denticulated. **Spinous dorsal fin with 11 or 12 spines,** posterior portion with 1 spine and 23 to 26 soft rays; anal fin with 2 sharp spines and 8 or 9 (rarely 10) soft rays, **second spine about 3/4 of first soft ray;** caudal fin truncate. **Gas bladder with 2 chambers, anterior one yoke-shaped without diverticula, posterior one carrot-shaped. Lapillus enlarged, more than half the size of sagitta.** Scales large, ctenoid on body and opercle; cycloid on top of head, preopercle, and around eyes. Soft dorsal fin completely covered with small scales and with 2 or 3 rows of scales along its base. **Colour:** silvery grey somewhat brownish with dark dots on scales; **a large black spot at bases of pectoral fins;** inner side of gill cover dark.

Size: Maximum 30 cm; common to 20 cm.

Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found in shallow coastal reefs and over sandy mud bottoms. Feeds on shrimps and small fishes. Caught mainly with traps and on hook-and-line; in coastal areas also with bottom trawls. No specific fishery, large fish marketed fresh.

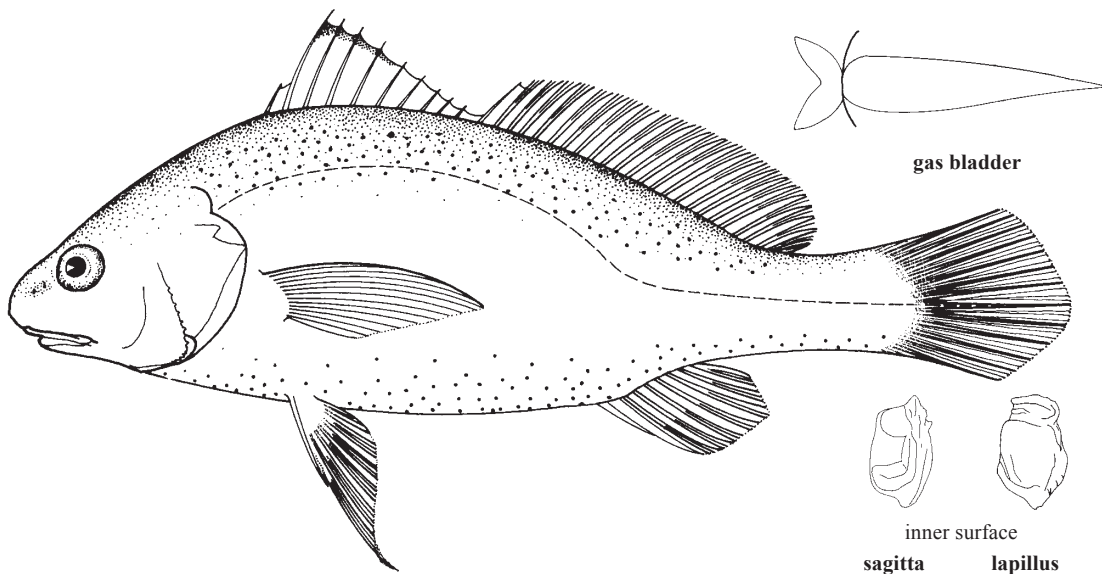
Distribution: Florida keys to Antilles and along the southern Caribbean and Atlantic coast from Costa Rica to northeast Brazil.



***Ophioscion punctatissimus* Meek and Hildebrand, 1925**

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: *Ophioscion panamensis* Schultz / often confused with *Stellifer* species.

FAO names: En - Spotted croaker; Fr - Chevalier tacheté; Sp - Corvinilla punteada.



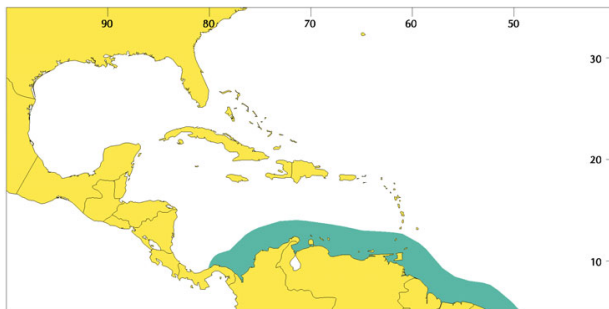
Diagnostic characters: A small fish, oblong, somewhat robust with an elevated dorsal profile. Mouth small, inferior, nearly horizontal; maxilla reaching below middle of eye. Teeth villiform, set in bands on jaws, outer-row teeth in upper jaw slightly enlarged. Chin without barbel but with 5 mental pores; snout with 10 to 12 pores (5 to 7 rostral and 5 marginal). Gill rakers 22 to 26, slender, slightly short of gill filament. Preopercle margin strongly serrated. Spinous dorsal fin with 10 spines, posterior portion with 1 spine and 23 to 25 soft rays; **anal fin with 2 spines and 6 or 7 soft rays, second spine long and stout about the length of first ray**; caudal fin rhomboidal to rounded in adult. **Gas bladder with 2 chambers, anterior one yoke-shaped without posterior appendages, posterior chamber carrot-shaped. Lapillus large about the size of sagitta.** Scales all ctenoid except few cycloid scales below and in front of eyes; soft dorsal fin with 1 or 2 rows of scales along its base, membranes between rays with small scales cover more than 3/4 of fin height. **Colour:** silvery grey, darker or brownish above; pale below with large punctuated spots on sides; spinous dorsal fin with a dark margin, pectoral, pelvic and anal fins dusky; inner side of gill cover dark, visible externally.

Size: Maximum 25 cm; common to 15 cm.

Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found in shallow coastal waters over sandy mud bottoms, also common on beaches. Feeds mainly on bottom-dwelling worms and crustaceans. Caught mainly with bottom trawls and artisan beach seines as bycatch. Usually not marketed for human consumption; mostly used for bait.

Distribution: Caribbean and Atlantic coasts of Central and South America from Panama to northeast Brazil.

Note: *Ophioscion panamensis*, Shultz 1945 is known from 10 type specimens (24 to 51 mm standard length). It is considered as a junior synonym of *O. punctatissimus* Meek and Hildebrand, 1925. Outside the area, 2 different morphotypes of *Ophioscion* species are also found from northeast Brazil.

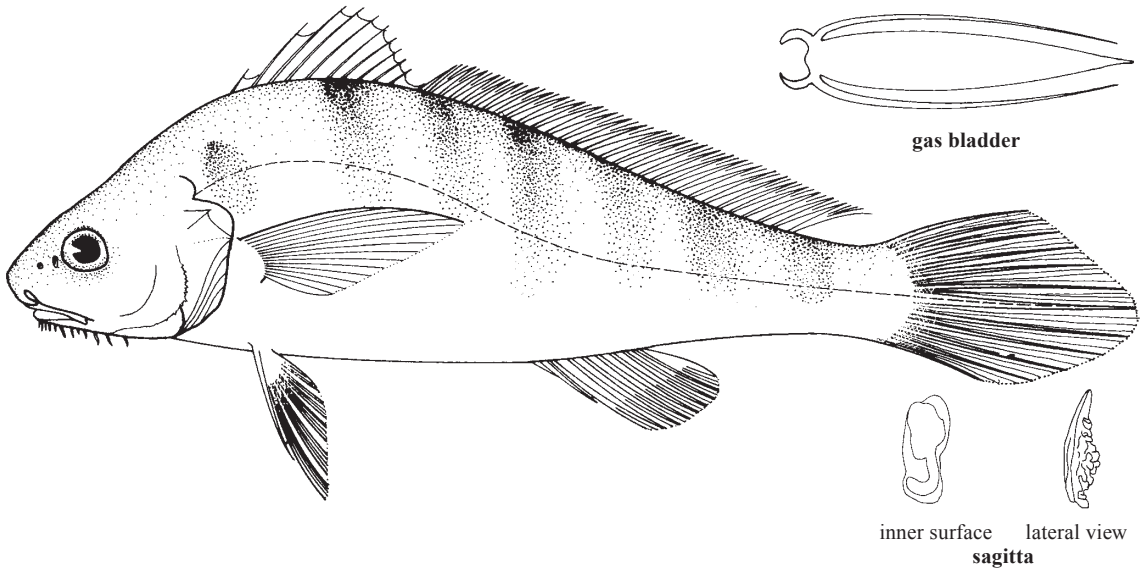


Paralonchurus brasiliensis (Steindachner, 1875)

RLB

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: None / None.

FAO names: **En** - Banded croaker; **Fr** - Bourrugue marie-louise; **Sp** - Lambe maríaluisa.

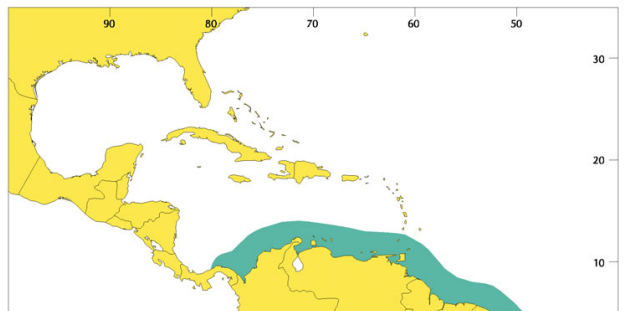


Diagnostic characters: A medium-sized fish, body elongate and moderately compressed, dorsal profile elevated. **Mouth small, inferior, nearly horizontal;** maxilla not reaching beyond middle of eye. Teeth small, villiform, set in bands on jaws. **Chin with 5 pores and many barbels, 3 or 4 pairs in a tuft around median pore and 10 to 12 pairs along inner edges of lower jaw;** snout with 8 pores (3 rostral, 5 marginal). Gill rakers 10 to 14, short, and stout. Spinous dorsal fin with 10 spines, posterior portion with 1 spine and 28 to 31 soft rays; anal fin with 2 spines and 7 to 9 (usually 8) soft rays, first spine very short and second one needle-like, less than 1/2 of fin height; **caudal fin asymmetrically rhomboidal with lower half pointed;** pectoral fins short. **Gas bladder well developed, much longer than head length, bearing anteriorly 2 pairs of appendages, anterior pair short and horn-like, lateral pair long, tube-like, and extending posteriorly to tip of main chamber.** Sagitta (large earstone) thin and elongate, lapillus (small earstone) rudimentary. Scales ctenoid (comb-like) except on breast and below eye; soft dorsal fin with 1 or 2 rows of scales along its base and extending on membranes between soft rays to 1/2 of fin height. **Colour:** body silvery to yellowish, brown above, whitish below; **sides with 7 to 9 dark vertical bars extending to below lateral line; a large dark brown spot, larger than eye, behind upper end of gill slit.**

Size: Maximum 30 cm; common to 25 cm.

Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found over muddy bottoms in coastal waters to about 50 m; juveniles entering estuaries. Feed on bottom-dwelling organisms, mainly worms and benthic invertebrates. Caught mainly with bottom trawls and seines as bycatch. No special fishery; very abundant off Araya peninsula (Venezuela) and southern Brazil. Usually not desirable for human consumption.

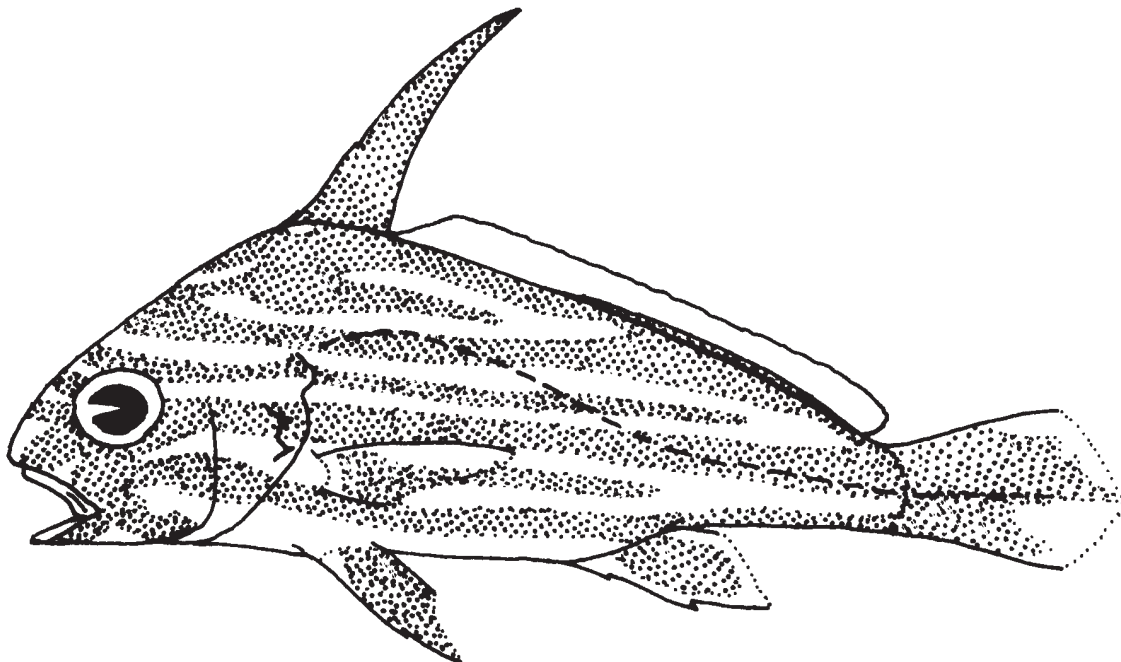
Distribution: Caribbean and Atlantic coasts of South America from Panama to southern Brazil.



Pareques acuminatus Bloch and Schneider, 1801

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: *Equetus acuminatus* (Bloch and Schneider, 1801) / *Equetus punctatus* (Bloch and Schneider, 1801); *Pareques umbrosus* (Jordan and Eigenmann, 1889).

FAO names: En - High hat; Sp - Obispo.

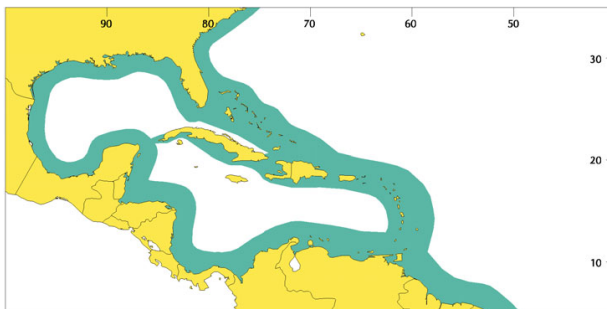


Diagnostic characters: A medium- to small-sized fish, body short, back strongly arched and deep. Head low, mouth small, inferior, nearly horizontal; maxilla reaching below middle of eye. Teeth villiform, set in bands on jaws; outer-row teeth of lower jaw enlarged. Chin without barbel but with 5 mental pores; snout with 10 pores (5 rostral and 5 marginal). Gill rakers 14 to 20, short and slender. Preopercle margin slightly serrated. **Spinous dorsal fin high, but less than head length** with 8 to 10 spines, posterior portion with 1 spine and 37 to 41 soft rays; anal fin with 2 spines and 7 or 8 soft rays; caudal fin truncate to emarginate. Gas bladder simple, carrot-shaped, without appendages. **Sagitta (large earstone) oval and very thick, lapillus (small earstone) rudimentary.** Scales ctenoid (comb-like), cycloid (smooth) below eye and underside of head. **Soft dorsal fin almost entirely covered with scales.** Caudal fin double truncate to rounded. **Colour:** whitish body with dark brown longitudinal stripes alternating in width, 3 to 5 broad stripes with narrow stripes in between them; all fins dark brown.

Size: Maximum 25 cm; common to 20 cm.

Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found over sandy or muddy bottoms in coastal waters and reefs to about 60 m. Typically found as small groups beneath rock ledge by day. Often caught with bottom trawls and traps, also on hook-and-line. Not market for food, but often sought by public aquarium for exhibition and sometimes aquarium hobbyists.

Distribution: Atlantic coast, Chesapeake Bay to Gulf of Mexico, south to Bay of Campeche, Mexico, along Caribbean coast and Antilles to north-east Brazil.

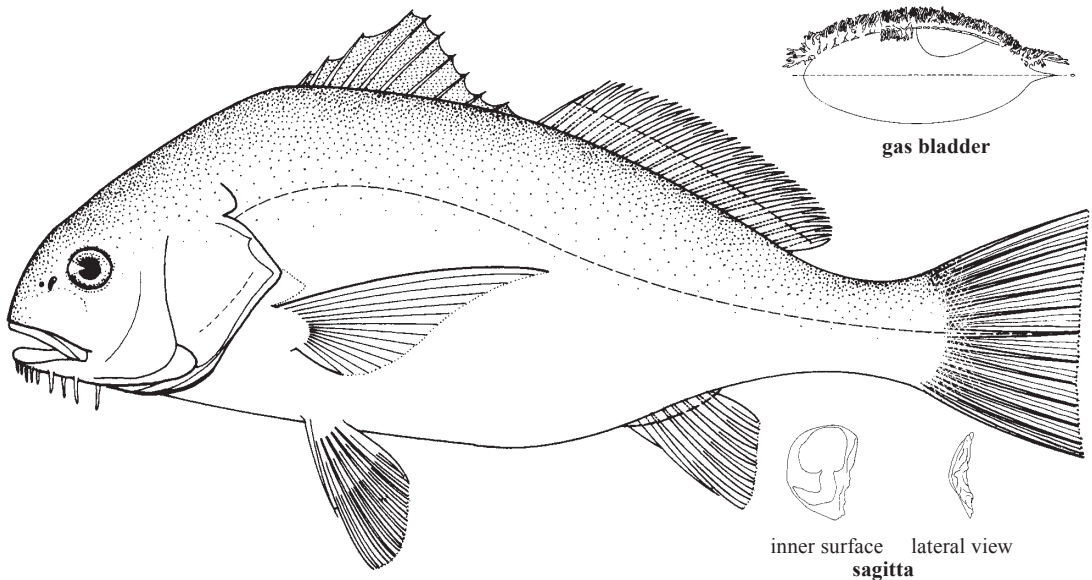


Pogonias cromis (Linnaeus, 1766)

BDM

Frequent synonyms / misidentifications: None / None.

FAO names: **En** - Black drum; **Fr** - Grand tambour; **Sp** - Corvinón negro.



Diagnostic characters: A large fish, body oblong and moderately deep and compressed. **Mouth inferior, nearly horizontal**; maxilla reaching below middle of eye. Teeth villiform, set in bands on jaws; lower pharyngeal teeth fused as a triangular plate with molariform grinding teeth. **Chin with 5 pores and 10 to 13 pairs of small barbels along median edges of lower jaws and subopercles, increasing in length posteriorly**; snout with 10 pores (5 rostral and 5 marginal). Gill rakers short and stout, 16 to 21. Preopercle margin smooth. Spinous dorsal fin with 10 spines, posterior portion with 1 spine and 19 to 22 soft rays; anal fin with 2 spines and 5 to 7 (usually 6) soft rays, second spine long and stout; caudal fin truncate to slightly emarginate. **Gas bladder with numerous lateral appendages interconnected in a complicated pattern in adult. Sagitta semicircular and moderately thin**, lapillus rudimentary. Scales all ctenoid much reduced in size on breast; few cycloid scales below eyes; soft dorsal fin naked except 2 or 3 rows of small cycloid, scales along its base. **Colour:** silvery grey to very dark, young with 4 or 5 black vertical bars on sides, disappearing with growth; pelvic and anal fins usually dark.

Size: Maximum 150 cm; common to 60 cm.

Habitat, biology, and fisheries: Found over sand and sandy mud bottoms in coastal waters and surf zones; often form large aggregations close to surf zone; juveniles enter estuaries. Feeds on bottom-dwelling organisms, mainly benthic worms, crustaceans, and molluscs. Caught mainly with bottom trawls, beach haul seines, and pond nets; also by anglers. During spawning migrations, it is very vulnerable to large beach haul seines.

Distribution: Atlantic coast from Gulf of Maine to Florida, northern and western coast of Gulf of Mexico, uncommon in Antilles and south Caribbean coast, along Atlantic coast of South America from Orinoco delta to Argentina, but no record from northeast Brazil. Outside the area, the southern Brazil and Argentina population is much larger in average size.

