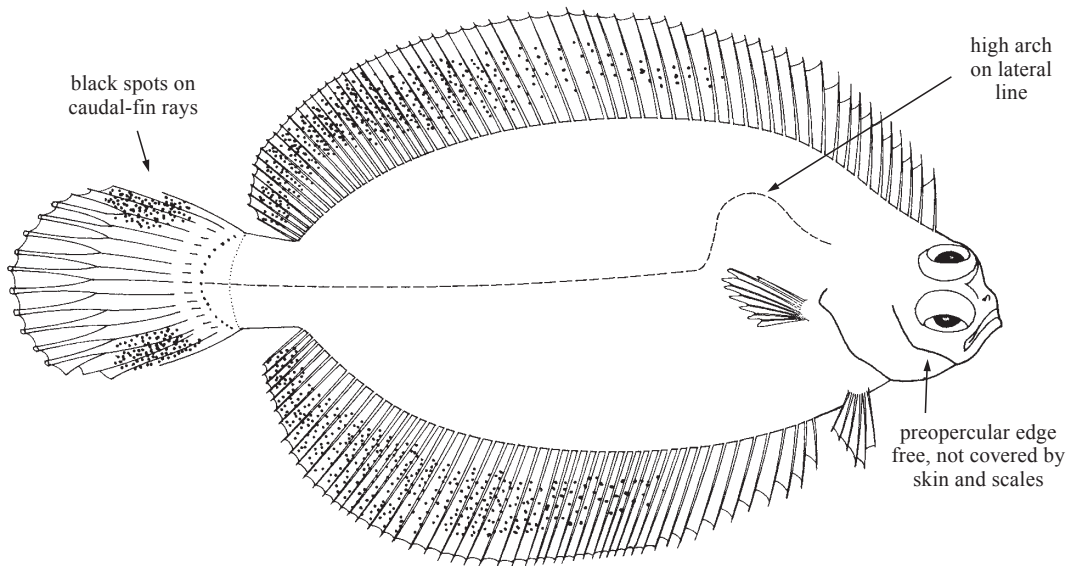


POECILOPSETTIDAE

Rigthead flounders

by T.A. Munroe, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C., USA

Diagnostic characters (Western Central Atlantic only): Relatively small-sized (to about 18 cm total length) flatfishes with **eyes on the right side** (left-eyed individuals rare); body oval, strongly compressed, often fragile; pterygiophore regions thin, semitransparent (especially in small specimens); **preopercular margin free, not covered with skin and scales**. Head small, compressed, **with notch anterior to eyes**; snout short, much shorter than eye diameter; mouth asymmetrical; **jaws short**; posterior margin of jaws at vertical through anterior part of pupil; teeth small, slender and difficult to see, but present on all jaws. Eyes large, nearly equal in position, separated by narrow bony ridge. **No tentacle associated with either eye**. Gill rakers stout, short, pointed at tips, not serrated. No spines in fins, all rays soft, dorsal fin extending forward to point at least equal with verticals through anterior and posterior margins of pupil of upper eye; dorsal- and anal-fin rays simple. **No prolongation of the dorsal- or pelvic-fin rays**. **Pectoral and pelvic fins present**. **Pelvic fins short-based and free from anal fin**. Anus on midventral line. Genital papilla on right side of body slightly dorsal to anus. **Lateral line well developed on ocular side with well-defined curve above pectoral fin; no supratemporal branch; lateral line rudimentary or absent on blind side**. **Scales moderately small, deciduous, ctenoid on ocular side, cycloid on blind side**. **Five autogenous hypurals lacking any fusion with the first preural centrum**. **Colour:** ocular side uniformly light brown, without conspicuous markings; blind side white with several rows of black spots, most conspicuous on small individuals, becoming less noticeable on larger specimens. Peritoneum black, at least in posterodorsal region. Dorsal and anal fins with uniformly dark fin rays and membranes throughout length of fin, or fins with alternating series of pigmented and unpigmented areas. Pectoral fins dusky to blackish distally. Pelvic fins dusky. **Caudal fin with 2 black spots on distal part of outside caudal-fin rays**.



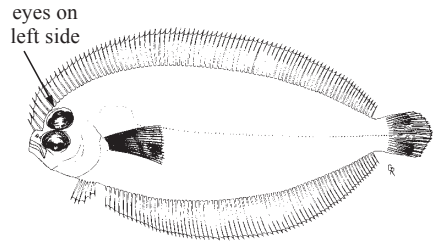
Habitat, biology, and fisheries: These flatfishes are usually found in depths exceeding 180 m and have been reported to 1 600 m. They are small fish (to about 18 cm total length) and of no commercial value in area of interest.

Similar families occurring in the area

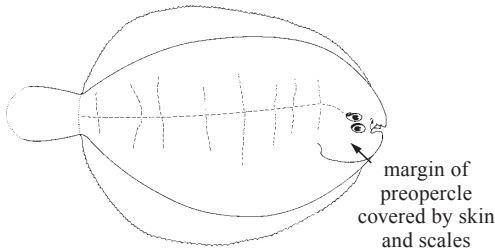
Bothidae, Scophthalmidae and Cynoglossidae: flatfishes with eyes on left side.

Paralichthyidae: eyes typically on left side but some with eyes on right; jaws long, typically extend near rear margin of eye.

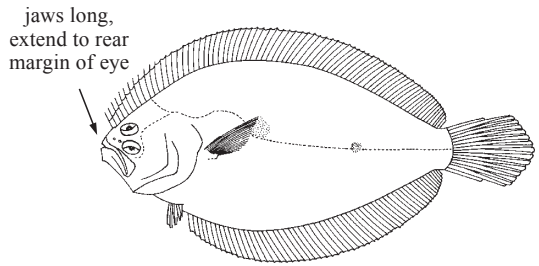
Achiridae: flatfishes with eyes on right side, margin of preoperculum not free and covered by skin and scales.



Bothidae



Achiridae




Paralichthyidae



Key to the species of Poecilopsettidae occurring in the area

Note: *Poecilopsetta albomarginata* (Reid, 1934) is considered a junior synonym of *P. inermis*.

- 1a. Body relatively elongate, depth 32 to 39% standard length; lateral line scales greater than 80; dorsal and anal fins with series of narrow streaks interrupted by non-pigmented areas
 *Poecilopsetta beanii*
- 1b. Body deeper, depth 40 to 46% standard length; lateral line scales less than 79; dorsal and anal fins with continuous dark pigmentation without series of alternating narrow streaks and non-pigmented areas
 *Poecilopsetta inermis*

List of species occurring in the area

The symbol  is given when species accounts are included.

-  *Poecilopsetta beanii* (Goode, 1881).
-  *Poecilopsetta inermis* (Breder, 1927).

References

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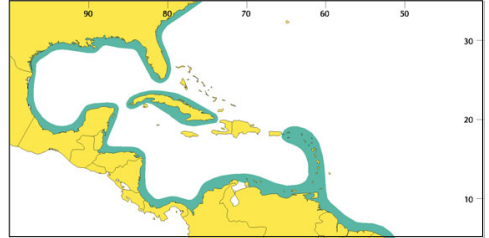
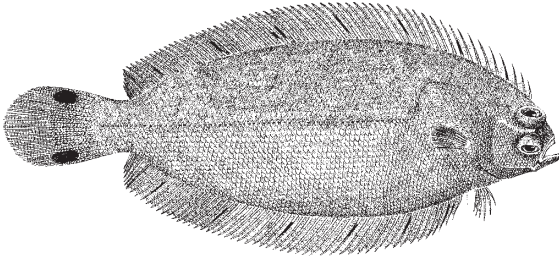
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Poecilopsetta beanii* (Goode, 1881)*En** - Deepwater dab.

Maximum size to 9 cm. Occurring along outer continental shelf and continental slope at depths of 155 to 1 636 m (usually greater than 200 m). Metamorphosis begins fairly early (9.5 mm standard length); last stages of metamorphosis observed at 32 mm standard length; at 36 mm standard length, specimens considered pelagic presettlement juveniles. Of no interest to fisheries. Western North and Central Atlantic (New England south through Gulf of Mexico to Campeche; Cuba; St. Kitts, Lesser Antilles; off Central American coast to northern Colombia and northern Brazil).

***Poecilopsetta inermis* (Breder, 1927)****En** - Caribbean offshore flounder.

Maximum size to 16 cm. Occurring on the outer continental shelf and upper continental slope at depths of 120 to 1 636 m, commonly at 180 to 545 m. Of no interest to fisheries. Western Central Atlantic (Puerto Rico; Virgin Islands south to Trinidad; Belize; Nicaragua; Colombia; western Venezuela to northern Brazil).

