

Malacoctenus macropus (Rosy Blenny)

Family: Labrisomidae (Blennies)

Order: Perciformes (Perch and Allied Fish)

Class: Actinopterygii (Ray-finned Fish)



Fig. 1. Rosy blenny, *Malacoctenus macropus*.

[<http://www.reef.org/node/8815>, downloaded 15 October 2016]

TRAITS. *Malacoctenus macropus* generally has a pointed, small and flattened snout with fleshy lips, outer canine teeth and small inner teeth (McEachran and Fechhelm, 2005). They possess 21-22 dorsal spines together with 2 anal spines, 8-11 dorsal soft rays, and 20-21 anal soft rays (Ray and Robins, 1986). The body of *M. macropus* is covered with ctenoid (comb-edged) scales. The male *M. macropus* is covered in grey stripes with spots of white along its dorsal fins together with red colour on the sides and under its head (Fig. 1) (McEachran and Fechhelm, 2005). In this species the male is generally larger and has a larger head than the female. Female *M. macropus* have asymmetrical bars on their tan-coloured bodies, evenly dotted with small white spots (Fig. 2) (McEachran and Fechhelm, 2005). The species reaches an average length of 5.2cm (Robertson and Tassell, 2015).

DISTRIBUTION. *M. macropus* can be found in the Greater and Lesser Antilles and from Florida and Bermuda to Venezuela. It is native to a number of countries such as Trinidad and Tobago,

Jamaica, Haiti, Honduras, Venezuela, Barbados, Saint Lucia, Panama, Montserrat and Puerto Rico to name a few (Fig. 3) (IUCN, 2016).

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY. They are found in marine water, specifically in reefs 0-8m deep. They can be found in patch reefs (sponge and sea grass beds), in shoreline habitat and estuaries. However they are most dominant in mangroves. They like to live and reproduce in crevices and holes in these habitats (IUCN, 2016). *M. macropus* are carnivores and feed on benthic worms and crustaceans (Robertson and Tassell, 2015).

REPRODUCTION. *Malacoctenus macropus*, like most fish, reproduce by eggs. These eggs hatch to produce larvae which pass through a number of developmental stages before the adult. The eggs are laid in groups hidden away in nests in cracks and holes, and fertilized by the males. The males actively protect the nest, by keeping away predators. The males also fan the eggs as they hatch to produce the larvae. After the larva hatches it goes off on its own (Jonna, 2003). The larva then goes through developmental stages of the pre-transitional stage followed by the transitional stage, and finally the juvenile stage. In the transitional stage they develop areas of melanin pigmented cells on the head together with a short bar over the orbital rim and an eye strip (Fig. 5). By the juvenile stage the *M. macropus* has stripes on the body (Fig. 6) (Jonna, 2003).

APPLIED BIOLOGY. *Malacoctenus macropus* is a species that is greatly harvested for the aquarium trade. This however, at present appears to not have too much effect on the abundance of the species. Other factors which have the potential to affect the species at a more localized level are pollution from coastal areas as well as water pollution (IUCN, 2016).

REFERENCES

- IUCN. 2016. *Malacoctenus macropus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species e.T155167A4734283. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2010-4.RLTS.T155167A4734283.en>.
- Jonna, R. 2003. Blenniidae (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed October 21, 2016 at <http://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Blenniidae/>
- McEachron, J. , Fechhelm, J. 2005. Fish Of The Gulf Of Mexico, Volume 2 Scorpaeniformes to Tetraodontiformes, Austin, University of Texas Press.
- Ray G.C. and Robins, C.R. 1986. A field guide to Atlantic coast fishes of North America, Boston, U.S.A. Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Robertson D. R. and Tassell J Van. 2015. Shorefishes of the Greater Caribbean: online information system. Version 1.0 Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Balboa, Panamá.

Author: Angela Ali

Posted online: 2016



Fig. 2. Female rosy blenny, *Malacoctenus macropus*.

[<http://www.snorkelstj.com/rosy-blenny.html> downloaded 15 October 2016]



Fig. 3. Map showing the distribution of *Malacoctenus macropus*.

[http://www.aquamaps.org/receive.php?type_of_map=regular download 20 October 2016]

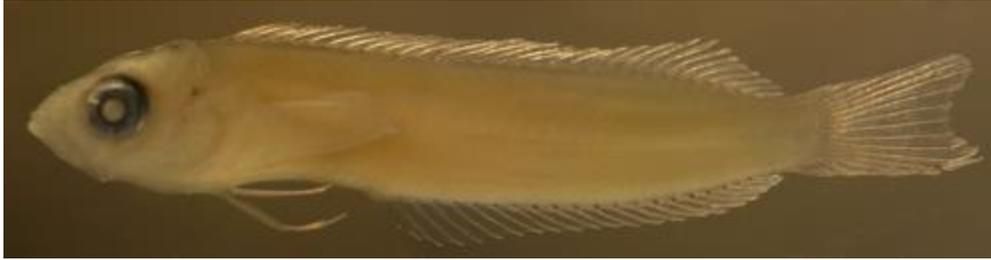


Fig. 4. Early larva stage of the rosy blenny.

[<http://www.coralreeffish.com/labrisomidae.html> downloaded 21 October 2016]



Fig. 5. Transitional stage of the rosy blenny.

[<http://www.coralreeffish.com/labrisomidae.html> downloaded 21 October 2016]



Fig. 6. Juvenile stage of the rosy blenny.

[<http://www.coralreeffish.com/labrisomidae.html> downloaded 21 October 2016]

For educational use only - copyright of images remains with original source