

Batrachoides surinamensis (Pacuma Toadfish or Sapo)

Family: Batrachoididae (Toadfish)

Order: Batrachoidiformes (Toadfish)

Class: Actinopterygii (Ray-finned Fish)



Fig. 1. Pacuma toadfish, *Batrachoides surinamensis*.

<http://inaturalist.ca/taxa/95540-Batrachoides-surinamensis> downloaded 17 November 2016]

TRAITS. The pacuma toadfish is brown with irregular markings, and has a whitish belly (Collette, 2010) (Fig. 1). The female pacuma toadfish grows to a length of 20cm while the male grows to a length of 25cm (Froese, 2014). The head is short, with barbels around the jaws, large molar teeth in both jaws, very small eyes, and two spines on the operculum (gill cover). The first dorsal fin has 3 solid spines, without venom glands, and the second dorsal fin has 28-30 soft rays. The pectoral fins have 20-22 soft rays while the anal fin has 25-27 rays. Behind the head the body is covered by small scales. They have two lateral lines; the upper with 54-67 pores and the lower with 48-63 pores (Collette, 2010).

DISTRIBUTION. *Batrachoides surnamensis* can be found along the coast of both Central and South America (Fig. 2), from Honduras to Brazil (IUCN, 2016), and is also native to Trinidad and Tobago (Froese, 2014).

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY. *Batrachoides surnamensis* resides in the muddy bottom layers of brackish water. They feed on molluscs, crustaceans and gastropods (Collette, 2010).

REPRODUCTION. Reproduction in the toadfish family Batrachoididae occurs when males make sounds such as humming, hooting and grunting to attract their mates into the nest. The female lays the eggs, which are sticky and attach to the nest. These eggs are guarded by the male against all predators. The eggs develop into larvae in 3-4 weeks, then cluster and hide behind the male until they can look after themselves (Wikipedia, 2011).

APPLIED BIOLOGY. These fish are categorised as Least Concern in the IUCN red list. The pacuma toadfish is found in coastal marine protected areas and is not endangered (IUCN, 2016).

REFERENCES

- Collette, B.B. (2016). National Marine Fisheries Service, National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C., USA <http://www.fao.org>
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- IUCN. (2016). *Batrachoides surinamensis* . IUCN Red List.
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/summary/154930/0,%20downloaded%2020%20October%202016>
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Fig. 2. *Batrachoides surinamensis* geographic distribution.

[<http://maps.iucnredlist.org/map.html?id=154930> downloaded 20 October 2016]

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