

Centropomus parallelus (Fat Snook or Saumon)

Family: Centropomidae (Snooks)

Order: Perciformes (Perch and Allied Fish)

Class: Actinopterygii (Ray-finned Fish)



Fig. 1. Fat snook, *Centropomus parallelus*.

[<http://peixesdesportivosdomundo.blogspot.com/2012/03/o-camurim-obeso-centropomus-parallelus.html>,
downloaded 27 September 2016]

TRAITS. The fat snook is also commonly called the saumon. Snook species are generally similar, with elongated bodies and long mouths. The back of the fat snook shows a golden brown colour while the underneath of the fish is silver. A characteristic feature of all snook species is a black lateral stripe that extends from the head all the way down to the tail (Fig. 1). The different species of snooks are identified only by small morphological differences such as scale sizes, adult size, and the length of the anal fin spine (Snyder and Burgess, 2016). Fat snook have smaller scales and deeper bodies than other species of snook. They can grow up to 75cm and weigh as much as 4kg, and the size at maturity is about 30cm in females and 24cm in males. At the same ages females are generally larger than males (Cerqueira and Tsuzuki, 2009).

DISTRIBUTION. Found in the western Atlantic, the Greater and Lesser Antilles, the south eastern gulf of Mexico and along coastal areas of the Caribbean all the way to Santos, Brazil (Schultz, 2003) (Fig. 2). The fat snook is native to Trinidad and Tobago (IUCN, 2016).

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY. Fat snook most frequently inhabit lagoons, coastal waters and estuaries but can also be found in freshwater habitats. This species is more often found in inland waters than other snooks. Fat snooks are both nocturnal and crepuscular foragers (Rock, 2009). Some male snooks turn into females, hence they are said to be protandric. They feed on small fish and crustaceans (IUCN, 2016).

REPRODUCTION. *C. parallelus* reproduce via eggs. This species can lay up to one million eggs per 1kg of female. In tropical climate spawning can take place throughout the year. They typically spawn in the sea close to the mouth of the river in shallow waters at a temperature range of 25-30°C. Egg development of this species takes approximately 20 hours. Larvae move to rivers, mangroves or lagoons where they can grow to maturity (Cerqueira and Tsuzuki, 2009). Juvenile fat snook live in a protective habitat such as mangroves until they are about 25-35cm long and then they migrate to waters with higher salinity.

BEHAVIOUR. Fat snook, like most other species of snook, usually travel in large schools in the summer period (Fig. 3). They also tend to hide under rocks or live under river banks or in mangroves (Fig. 4) as protection from predators. Another way fat snook avoid predators is by the transparent colour of the fry (Everson, 2003).

APPLIED BIOLOGY. *Centropomus parallelus* is an endangered species listed by the IUCN and as such there are major threats to the existence of this species. These include chemical effluents being washed into habitats due to farming, coastal development which can destroy habitats for many fish and fishing activities which seek to catch them for recreation or consumption. As such there is a need for conservation actions to be taken. These may include the monitoring of fishing activities to ensure that endangered species are not captured and the protection of natural habitat of fat snook such as mangrove and estuarine areas. Also conservation methods can be implemented like the one used in Texas where only one fish is permitted to be caught a day per person (IUCN, 2016).

REFERENCES

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Fig. 2. Fat snook geographic distribution.

[<http://www.discoverlife.org/mp/20m?kind=Centropomus+parallelus>, downloaded 27 September 2016]



Fig. 3. Fat snook travelling in a school.

[<http://www.cpt.com.br/noticias/criacao-do-robalo-em-cativeiro-esta-bem-proximo-na-piscicultura-brasileira>, downloaded 11 October 2016]

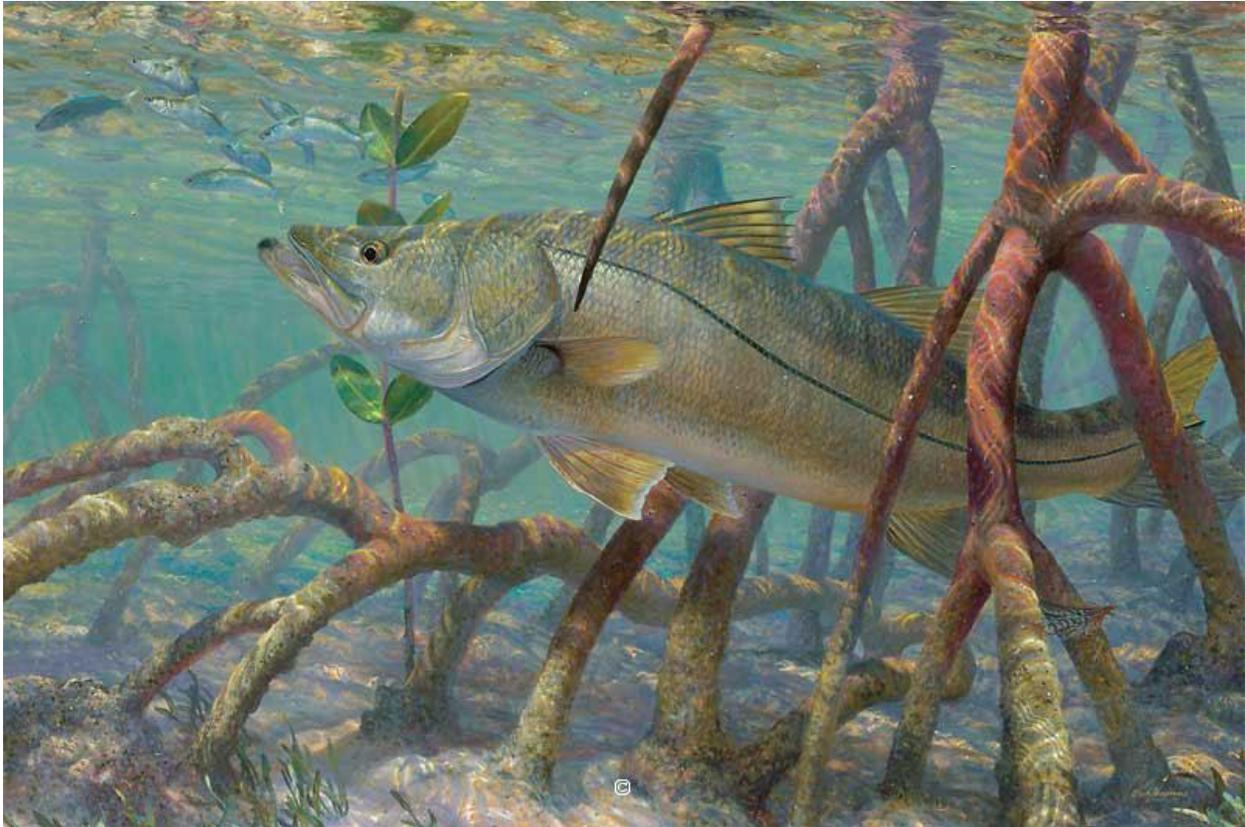


Fig. 4. Fat snook hiding in mangroves.

[<http://www.guidesandlodges.com/maggio>, downloaded 14 October 2016]

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