

SAILFIN SCULPIN

NAUTICHTHYS OCULOFASCIATUS (GIRARD, 1858)

NATURAL HISTORY SUMMARY BY KATE DUROST

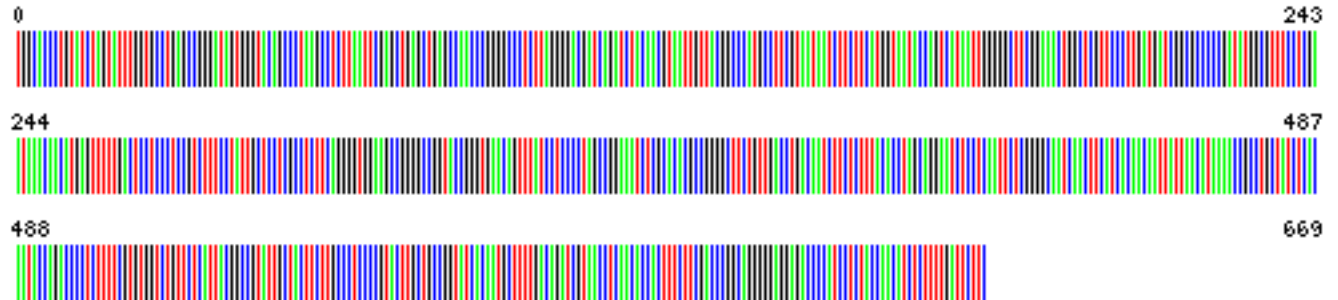


Figure 1. *Nautichthys oculofasciatus* DNA Barcode - Barcode of Life Database - BOLD Systems (Ratnasingham and Hebert 2007)

Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Scorpaeniformes

Family: Hemitriptidae

Genus: *Nautichthys*

Species: *N. oculofasciatus*

Description

Sailfish Sculpin or *Nautichthys oculofasciatus*, gets its name from the characteristic elongated sail-like dorsal fin that extends beyond its head, as well as the dark band that covers its eyes. The rest of its coloring varies, but usually consists of gray with dark markings, dusky bands above and paler in color below (Froese 2017).

Distribution

The Sailfish Sculpin has been found along most of the western coast of North America, from St. Lawrence Island, Alaska all the way to San Miguel Island in southern California, and possibly occurring in Japan. (Froese2017). *Nautichthys oculofasciatus*' [range map](#) is available at Aquamaps 2016.

Diet

The *Sailfin Sculpin* feeds on benthic organisms such as other finfish or crustaceans (Froese 2017).

Habitat and Ecology

As a benthic dweller, the Sailfin Sculpin prefers to live in rocky coastal waters at depths of roughly 110 m, where there is plenty of algae growth. Since it is nocturnal, it may be found sheltering in crags upside down during the day (TenBrink and Aydin 2009).

Reproduction and Life Cycle

The Sailfin Sculpin becomes sexually mature after one year. During the winter and early spring, it migrates to the intertidal zone to spawn. The orange colored eggs adhere to the bottom (TenBrink and Aydin 2009).

Conservation status

The conservation status of the Sailfin Sculpin (*N. oculofasciatus*) has not yet been ranked by the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species or NatureServe.

Cultural Significance

The Sailfin Sculpin's unique dorsal fin and relative ease of care make it a popular fish in home aquariums (Froese 2017).

Specimen Specific Detail

The [Burton Ostenson Museum of Natural History](#) at Pacific Lutheran University specimens of *N. oculofasciatus* were collected at Point Defiance Park in Tacoma, Washington on February 14, 1961. Other things that were happening at the time included: the birth of the actress Latifah, To Kill a Mockingbird was one of the top bestsellers, and John F. Kennedy was president of the United States (TakeMeBackTo).

Literature Cited

Aquamaps. 2016. Computer generated distribution maps for *Nautichthys oculofasciatus* (Sailfin sculpin), with modelled year 2100 native range map based on IPCC A2 emissions scenario. www.aquamaps.org, version of Aug. 2016. Web. Accessed 2 Sep. 2017.

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