

Perciformes/Scorpaenoidei

The order Scorpaeniformes was broken up in 2019: suborders Scorpaenoidei, Platycephaloidei and Normanichthyoidei went to Perciformes/Scorpaenoidei; Dactylopteroidei to Dactylopteriformes; Anoplomatoidei, Zanioleptoidei, Hexagrammoidei and Cottoidei to Perciformes/Cottoidei.

These live worldwide, mainly as neritic coastal fish, in all oceans and are often brightly colored. Many species, such as the Atlantic redfish, are important food fish, others, such as the lionfish, are known as colorful and bizarre coral reef dwellers. The stonefish, a member of the scorpionfish family, include the most poisonous fish in the world.

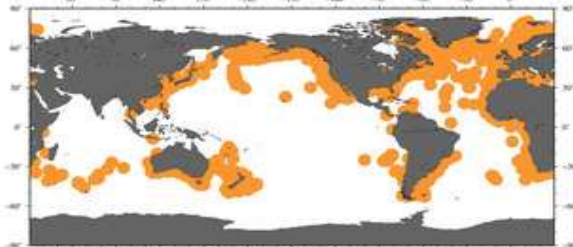
click on family name on map (Copepedia) to get access to higher resolution version and to maps at genus level

shift + click on fish to get access to photos on Fishbase page

Sebastidae

Sebastidae species have a compressed body with the head typically having ridges and spines. There is a venom gland in the spines of the fins. They are not closely related to the Gadiformes cods. *Sebastes norvegicus* is a large, slow-growing, late-maturing fish and the subject of a fishery. Eschmeyer downgraded this family to a Scorpaenidae subfamily in early 2022.

Sebastidae

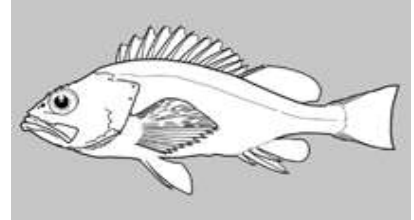


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rockfishes, rockcods and thornyheads
marine brackish

14.7 cm

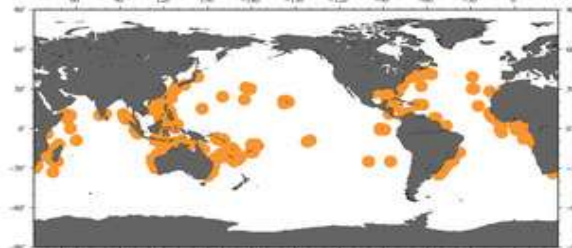


108 cm

Setarchidae

Setarchidae are found in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. They are offshore fish which can be found at depths between 180 and 830 m and examination of the stomach contents of two species suggest that they feed in the water column. Eschmeyer downgraded this family to a Scorpaenidae subfamily in early 2022.

Setarchidae

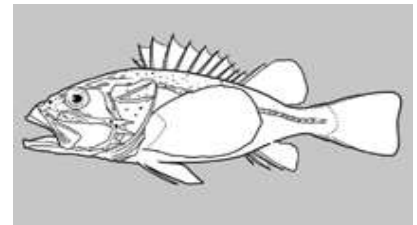


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deep-sea bristly scorpionfishes
marine brackish

7 cm

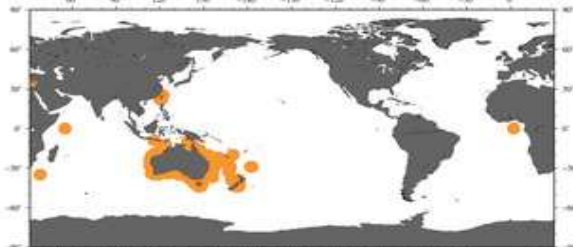


31.4 cm

Neosebastidae

The gurnard perches, have a prominent head with large eyes and a large mouth. There are strong bony ridges and spines on the head and cheeks. They are found in the eastern Indian Ocean and the western Pacific Ocean in temperate and subtropical waters. They are benthic fishes living on soft substrates and feed on small fishes and crustaceans.

Neosebastidae

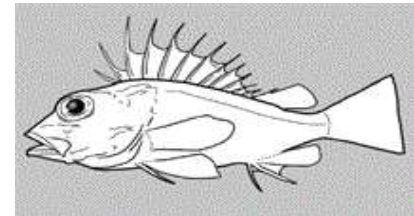


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gurnard scorpionfishes
marine

7 cm

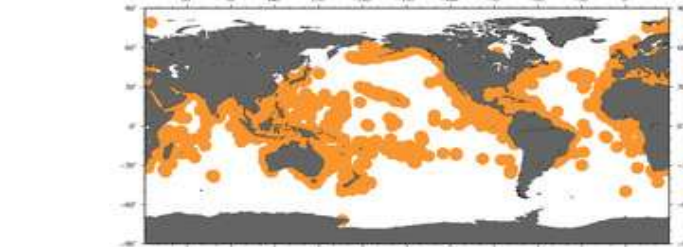


50 cm

Scorpaenidae

As their name suggests, scorpionfish have a type of "sting" in the form of sharp spines coated with venomous mucus. The lionfishes in the genus *Pterois* are using their large pectoral fins as a kind of safety net when catching prey. Eschmeyer included Sebastinae and Setarchinae subfamilies in early 2022. Caracanthidae included in 2007.

Scorpaenidae

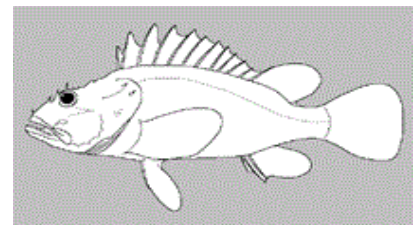


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scorpionfishes or rockfishes
marine brackish

WCA WCA
2.4 cm



90 cm

[WCP](#)

[WCP](#)

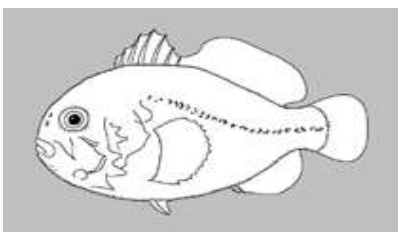
[WCP](#)

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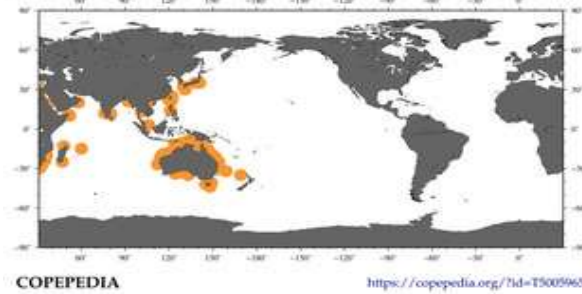
Caracanthidae - Orbicular velvetfishes



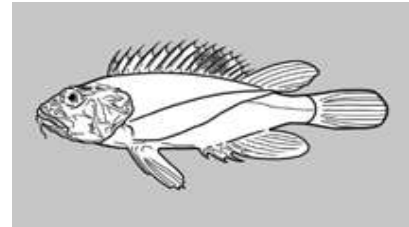
Apistidae

These are found from the Red Sea and the eastern coast of Africa east in to the western Pacific Ocean, north to Japan and south to Australia. They are demersal species of the continental shelf and may be found over soft substrates or on reefs. Eschmeyer downgraded this family to a Synanceiidae subfamily in early 2022.

Apistidae



19 cm wasp scorpionfishes marine

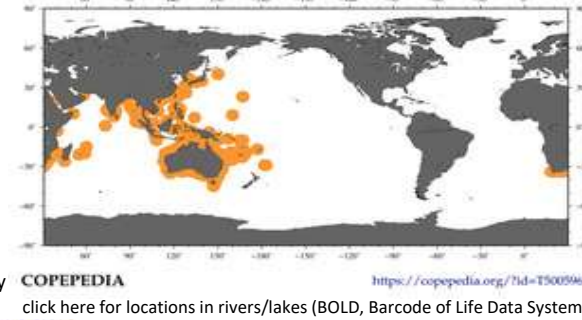


20 cm

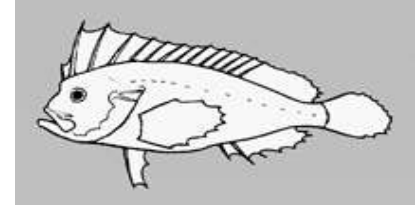
Tetrarogidae

These have compressed bodies with heads typically with ridges and spines. Waspfishes are almost all found in the Indian and western Pacific Ocean, but the smoothskin scorpionfish (*Coccotropsis gymnoderma*) is found off South Africa. They are demersal fishes, mostly marine, but the bullrout (*Notesthes robusta*) spending much of its life in the freshwater reaches of rivers. Other freshwater fish are *Neovespicula depressifrons*, *Tetraroge barbata* and *nigra*. Downgraded to a Synanceiidae subfamily in early 2022.

Tetrarogidae



3.3 cm waspfishes marine brackish fresh

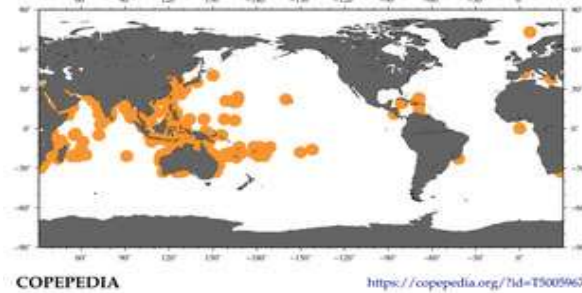


81 cm

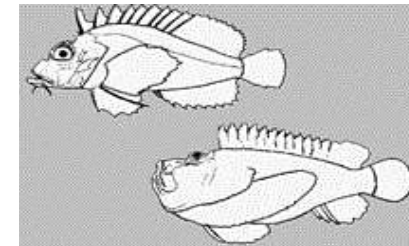
Synanceiidae

There are venom glands at the base of the spines in the dorsal fin are among the most toxic of venoms produced by fishes. *Synanceia verrucosa* resembles a lump of stone overgrown by algae and lower animals. *Leptosynanceia asteroblepa* occurs in fresh and brackish water in Southeast Asia. Eschmeyer downgraded seven families to Synanceiidae subfamilies in early 2022.

Synanceiidae



7.2 cm stonefishes marine brackish fresh

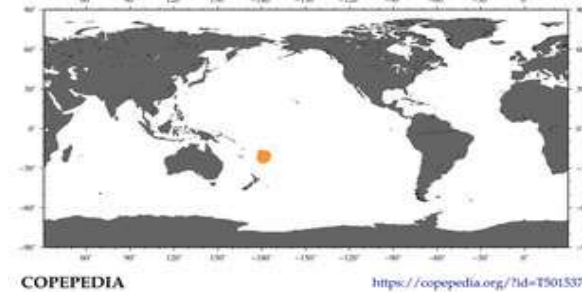


60 cm

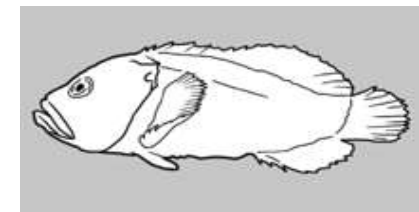
Eschmeyeridae

Eschmeyer nexus is found in the western central Pacific Ocean where it has only been recorded from Fiji. It is a demersal fish. The fish species was first scientifically described in 1983 and in 2001 was assigned to an independent, monotypic family, the Eschmeyeridae, adopted by Eschmeyer in 2008, but downgraded to a Synanceiidae subfamily in early 2022.

Eschmeyeridae



4.1 cm cofishes marine

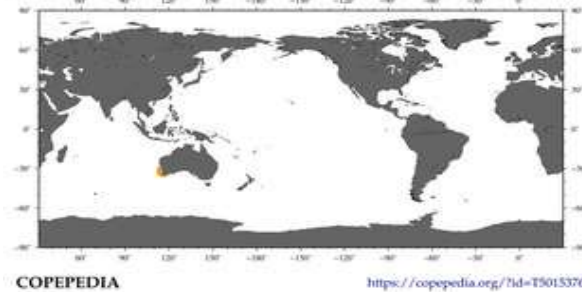


4.1 cm

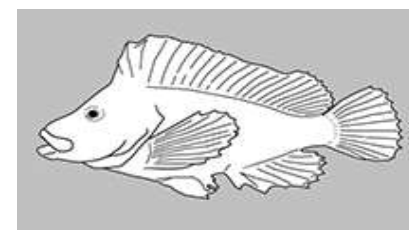
Perryenidae

Perryena leucometopon has a long snout and a small, terminal mouth. It is endemic to the waters off southern and western Australia. It moves very little and very slowly and probably uses its long snout to search for invertebrate prey. Separated from Congiopodidae by Eschmeyer in 2012, but downgraded to a Synanceiidae subfamily in early 2022.

Perryenidae



16 cm whitenose pigfishes marine

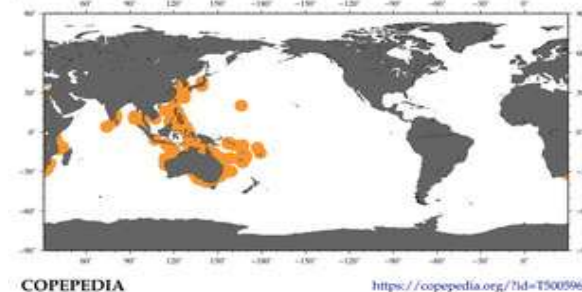


16 cm

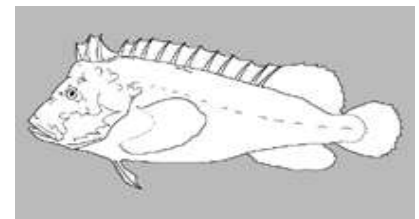
Aploactinidae

These are small fish that have skin with a velvet texture. They live on the sea bottom close to the shore, at depths of up to 100 metres. These fishes are very well camouflaged ambush predators hiding amongst algae or rubble on or in the vicinity of rocky and coral reefs. Downgraded to a Synanceiidae subfamily in 2022.

Aploactinidae



WCP 1.7 cm velvetfishes marine

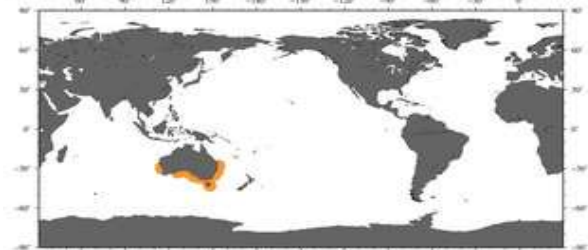


23 cm

Pataecidae

Australian prowfishes are distinguished by a long dorsal fin that begins far forward on the head, forming a "prow" shape, and extends all the way to the caudal fin. They are endemic to the coastal waters of southern Australia. Downgraded to a Synanceiidae subfamily in early 2022.

Pataecidae



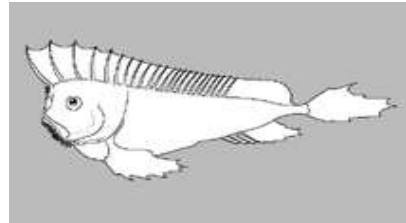
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Australian prowfishes

21 cm

marine

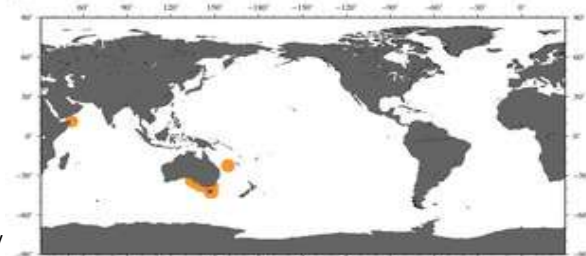


27 cm

Gnathanacanthidae

The red velvetfish is endemic to temperate seas off southern Australia. They sway back and forth with the swell in a similar manner to the kelp fronds they live among, enhancing their camouflage and making them difficult to detect. The predominantly red colour is dull in the absence of red light at the depths these fishes live in, further enhancing their camouflage. Downgraded to a Synanceiidae subfamily in early 2022.

Gnathanacanthidae



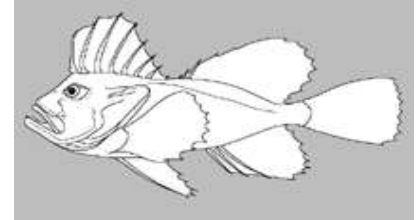
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red velvetfish

30 cm

marine

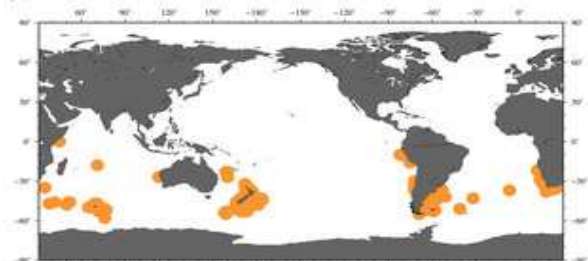


30 cm

Congiopodidae

Congiopids are found in the Southern Hemisphere where they live on the bottom of shallow temperate and sub-Antarctic seas, at depths of up to 600 metres. *Congiopodus peruvianus* resembles yellow and orange dead tree leaves. Two genera were placed into Zanclorhynchidae in 2021 leaving *Congiopodus* as the only genus. Eschmeyer separated Perryenidae in 2012.

Congiopodidae



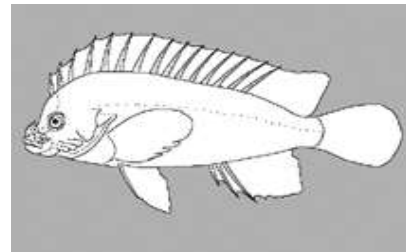
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racehorses or pigfishes

27.2 cm

marine

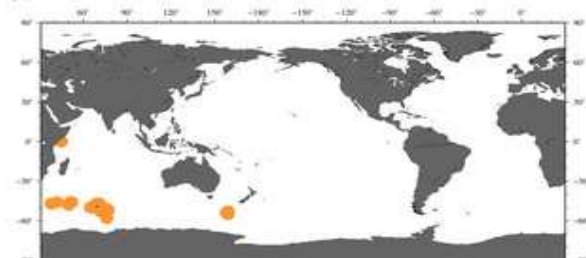


76 cm

Zanclorhynchidae

Alertichthys is found in the sea around New Zealand and *Zanclorhynchus* in the southern Indian Ocean. The fish live at depths of 2 to 1000 metres and are sluggish bottom dwellers. They have a moderately long, laterally flattened body and a pointed snout. Upgraded from Congiopodidae subfamily to family in 2021.

Zanclorhynchus spp.



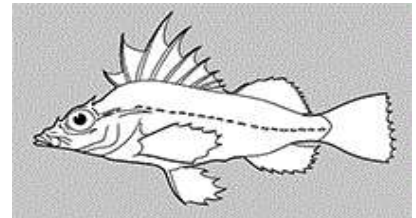
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horsefishes

20 cm

marine

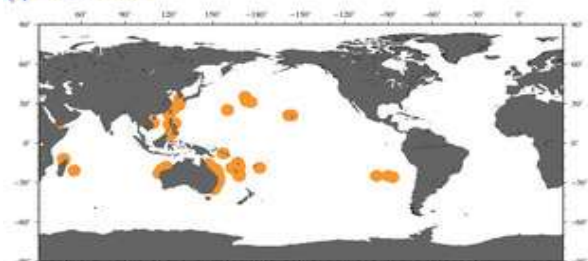


40 cm

Bembridge

Bembridge deep-water flatheads have an Indo-Pacific distribution and are mainly found in the South China Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the waters near Southern Indonesia and Australia. These are benthic fishes of the continental shelf at depths of 80 to 581 m. Before 2019 in Scorpaeniformes/Platycephaloidei. Parabembridge separated from 1998 to 2018.

Bembridge



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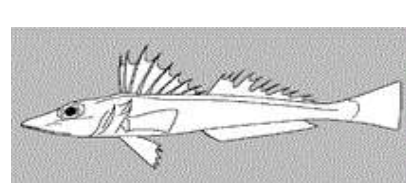
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WCP

deepwater flatheads

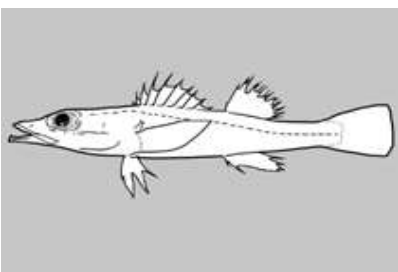
11 cm

marine



30 cm

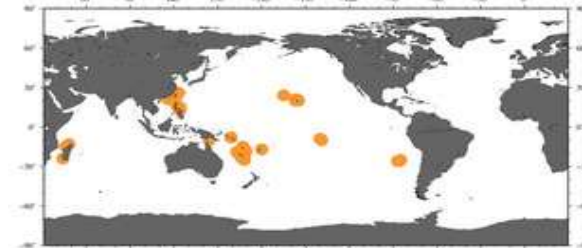
Parabembridge - Sprat-like flatheads



Plectrogeniidae

Plectrogenium is found in the Indian and Pacific Oceans from Madagascar to Hawaii. They are bathydemersal fishes which are found at depths greater than 250 m. Before 2019 in Scorpaeniformes /Platycephaloidei. Before 2011 called Plectrogenidae. During the 1990s upgraded from subfamily Plectrogeninae in Scorpaenidae.

Plectrogeniidae



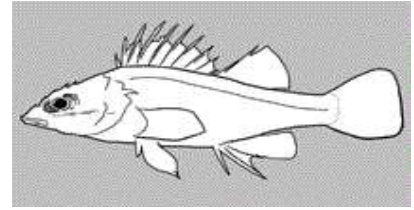
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5.2 cm

stinger flatheads

marine

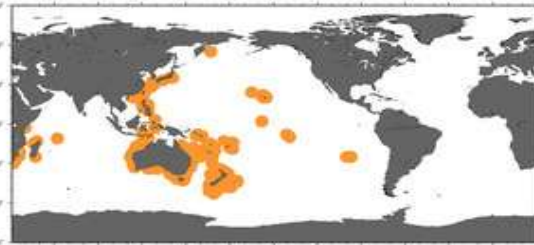


6.8 cm

Hoplichthyidae

Ghost flatheads have a very wide, flattened head, an elongate body which has no scales but does have many spines and ridges on the upper body. They are benthic fishes living on the bottom in continental shelf and slope waters at depths between 50 and 1,500 m. Before 2019 in Scorpaeniformes/Platycephaloidei.

Hoplichthyidae



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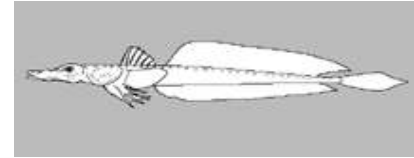
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WCP

6.7 cm

ghost flatheads

marine



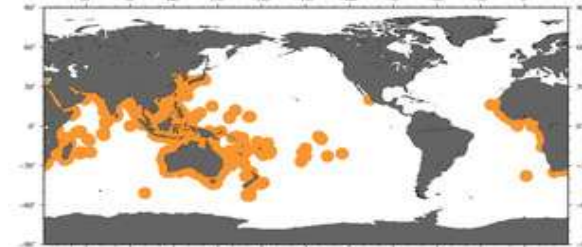
43 cm

Platycephalidae

Their most distinctive characteristic is the flattened shape of their heads. While the rest of their bodies is shaped similarly to other fish that inhabit the areas they frequent, their heads are triangle-shaped, giving them the shape of a trowel or an artist's spatula. Their eyes are situated on the upper surface. Before 2019 in Scorpaeniformes/Platycephaloidei.

WCP

Platycephalidae



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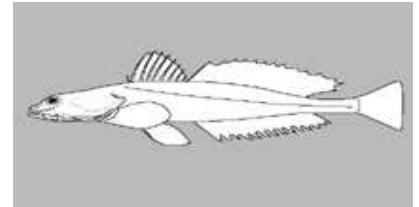
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WCP WCP

WCP

6.2 cm

flatheads
marine brackish

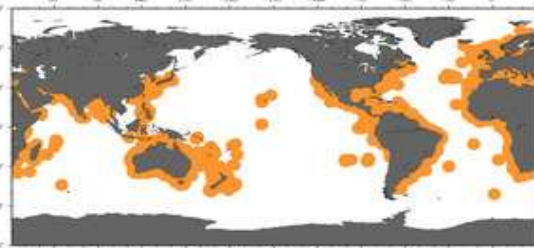


120 cm

Triglidae

Typical for the gurnards are the lower two to three rays of the pectoral fins, which are equipped with taste cells and have been transformed into tactile organs, with which the gurnards can also trip short distances over the sea floor. The shape of the head and the large, broad, terminal mouth are also striking. Before 2019 in Scorpaeniformes/Platycephaloidei.

Triglidae



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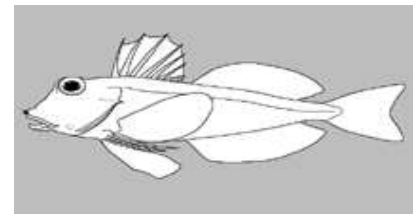
WCA WCA

6 cm

searobins
marine brackish

WCP

WCP



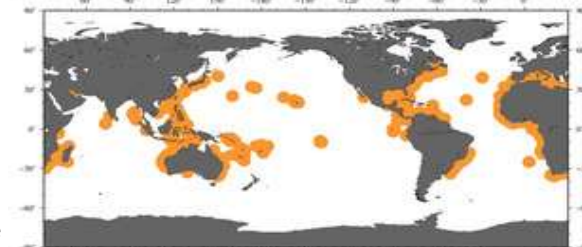
82.8 cm

Peristediidae

Peristediidae fishes have the body encased in 4 rows of thick scutes, each plate is spined, on each side of the body. The mouth is under the snout with barbels on the lower jaw. These are found in the warmer waters of the oceans. They are found on continental or insular slopes, typically at depths greater than 180 m. Before 2019 in Scorpaeniformes/Platycephaloidei. Eschmeyer downgraded this family to a Triglidae subfamily in early 2022.

WCA

Peristediidae

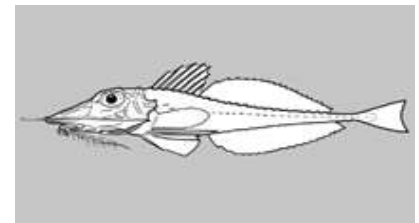


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armored searobins or armored gurnards
marine

7 cm

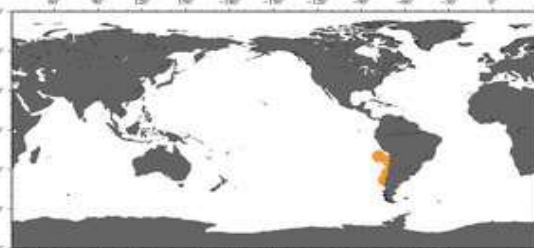


50 cm

Normanichthyidae

The mote sculpin is a fairly slender fish with a maximum length of about 11 cm. It is found in tropical South Pacific waters, from Chimbote, Peru, to Isla Mocha, Chile, where it is found at depths from 37 to 200 m. Before 2019 in Scorpaeniformes, suborder Normanichthyoidei.

Normanichthyidae



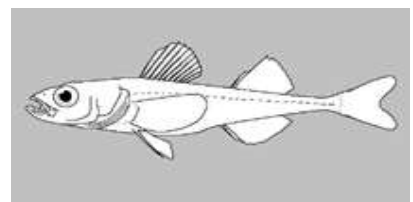
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11 cm

barehead scorpionfishes

marine



11 cm