

***Platax orbicularis* (Forsskål 1775)**  
**Orbicular Batfish**



*Photo by J. Randall, Bishop Museum*

**Identification:** Juveniles exhibit broad, elevated dorsal and anal fins while adults are orbiculate (i.e., nearly circular). The body color of juveniles is light reddish brown to brownish yellow with a brown bar through the eye. Adult body color is silvery grey with black bars through the pectoral fin and eye. Anal and dorsal fins exhibit black margin. Small black spots sometimes scattered on side. Concave snout profile with large bone between eyes. Grows to about 50 cm TL. Also called Narrowbanded Batfish. Dorsal fin V (34-38), anal fin III (26-28). From Randall et al. (1996); Heemstra (2001).

**Similar Species:** Atlantic Spadefish (*Chaetodipterus faber*) has multiple dark body bars, and pointed dorsal and anal fins.

**Native Range:** Orbicular Batfish is distributed across the Indo-Pacific, from the Red Sea and eastern Africa to Indonesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. Also from southwest Japan to northeast Australia and New Caledonia. From Allen et al. (2003).

**Ecology:** Orbicular Batfish inhabits shallow and deep reefs with juveniles occurring in small groups among mangroves and also within inner lagoons.

Juveniles resemble a floating leaf in appearance and behavior. Young adults are found in channels and lagoons where they sometimes form schools. Orbicular Batfish diet consists of algae, invertebrates, and small fishes. From Myers (1999).

**Nonindigenous Occurrences:** The species was observed at numerous locations in south Florida and Florida Keys from 1996 to 2005. REEF divers removed four Orbicular Batfish from the Florida Keys (two in 1999, two in 2002). There have been no re-occurrences of this species in the Florida Keys since these removals.



Ephippidae (spadefishes)