

REVIEW ARTICLE

Cytogenetic studies of Brazilian marine fish

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ABSTRACT

The available data on the karyotypes of marine fish occurring along the Brazilian coast were reviewed. The species investigated are representatives of the orders Clupeiformes, Siluriformes, Atheriniformes, Scorpaeniformes, Perciformes and Tetraodontiformes. This review provides data on chromosome numbers, sex and meiotic chromosomes, chromosome banding patterns, DNA content. Systematic implications are discussed. The chromosomes of 44 species found in Brazilian oceanic waters have been investigated thus far. The Perciformes are the best known, with 28 species, while the other fish groups are poorly known.

INTRODUCTION

Few cytogenetic studies of Brazilian coastal marine fish have been made when compared to freshwater species (Oliveira *et al.*, 1988). Of the thousands of fish species found in the Brazilian oceanic waters, the chromosomes of only 44 species have been investigated so far. This review summarizes and comments on all the available, but widely scattered data.

Analysis of data

The 44 species karyotyped so far from the coast of Brazil belong to six orders, 23 families and 38 genera (Table I). All of them belong to the class Osteichthyes and the infraclass Teleostei. The order Perciformes, the largest among fishes, comprising almost 9,300 species, of which about 75% are coastal marine (Nelson, 1994), is the group with the largest number of species investigated, 28, followed by five species of Siluriformes and four species of Scorpaeniformes. The most extensively studied families, with five species investigated, include Ariidae, Serranidae, Carangidae

and Sciaenidae. Among the genera, *Brevoortia*, *Scorpaena*, *Diplectrum*, *Trachinotus*, *Menticirrhus* and *Sphoeroides* are the most extensively studied, with two species investigated in each.

Of the 44 species karyotyped so far (Table II), 34 were from specimens captured along the coast of Rio de Janeiro, nine from São Paulo and two from Rio Grande do Sul State. *Micropogonias furnieri* was the only species for which the specimens investigated originated from two locations, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

Somatic karyotypes: chromosome numbers and karyotype morphology

Most of the species investigated (25) have diploid complements with $2n = 48$ (Table II), 19 of them having karyotypes composed exclusively of uniarmed chromosomes, and so with a fundamental number (FN value) equal to 48. However, this general statement is undoubtedly due to the fact that the Perciformes species, which show a tendency to maintain this karyotype (Ohno *et al.*, 1968; Cataudella and Capanna, 1973; Alvarez *et al.*, 1986), dominate the karyotyped marine species of the region.

With respect to the clupeiform species from Brazilian coast, the few data obtained agree with the available karyotypic data from other localities. Although a considerable diversity of diploid numbers

Table I - Marine fishes occurring along the Brazilian coast karyotyped to date. **Epinephelus marginatus*, *Mycteroperca acutirostris* and *Stephanolepis hispidus* were reported under names *Epinephelus guaza*, *Mycteroperca rubra* and *Monacanthus hispidus*, respectively.

Order	Family	Genus	Species	Common names	
Clupeiformes	Clupeidae	<i>Brevoortia</i>	<i>Brevoortia aurea</i>	savelha	
			<i>Brevoortia pectinata</i>	savelha	
Siluriformes	Ariidae	<i>Bagre</i>	<i>Bagre bagre</i>	sari-sari	
			<i>Cathorops</i>	<i>Cathorops</i> sp	congo
			<i>Genidens</i>	<i>Genidens genidens</i>	pareré
			<i>Netuma</i>	<i>Netuma barba</i>	bagre-branco
			<i>Arius</i>	<i>Arius parkeri</i>	cangatá
Atheriniformes	Atherinidae	<i>Odontesthes</i>	<i>Odontesthes</i> sp	peixe-rei	
	Dactylopteridae	<i>Dactylopterus</i>	<i>Dactylopterus volitans</i>	peixe-voador	
Scorpaeniformes	Scorpaenidae	<i>Scorpaena</i>	<i>Scorpaena brasiliensis</i>	mangangá	
			<i>Scorpaena isthmensis</i>	mangangá	
	Triglidae	<i>Prionotus</i>	<i>Prionotus punctatus</i>	cabrinha	
Perciformes	Centropomidae	<i>Centropomus</i>	<i>Centropomus parallelus</i>	robalo	
	Serranidae	<i>Diplectrum</i>	<i>Diplectrum formosum</i>	michole-de-areia	
			<i>Diplectrum radiale</i>	michole-de-areia	
			<i>Epinephelus</i>	<i>Epinephelus marginatus</i> *	garoupa-verdadeira
		<i>Mycteroperca</i>	<i>Mycteroperca acutirostris</i> *	badejo-mira	
		<i>Serranus</i>	<i>Serranus flaviventris</i>	mariquita	
	Priacanthidae	<i>Priacanthus</i>	<i>Priacanthus arenatus</i>	olho-de-cão	
	Pomatomidae	<i>Pomatomus</i>	<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>	enchova	
	Carangidae	<i>Caranx</i>	<i>Caranx latus</i>	<i>Caranx latus</i>	guarajuba
			<i>Chloroscombrus</i>	<i>Chloroscombrus chrysurus</i>	palombeta
			<i>Selene</i>	<i>Selene setapinnis</i>	peixe-galo
			<i>Trachinotus</i>	<i>Trachinotus carolinus</i>	pampo-verdadeiro
			<i>Trachinotus</i>	<i>Trachinotus falcatus</i>	sernambiquara
			<i>Eucinostomus</i>	<i>Eucinostomus gula</i>	carapicu
			<i>Orthopristis</i>	<i>Orthopristis ruber</i>	cocoroca
	Sparidae	<i>Diplodus</i>	<i>Diplodus argenteus</i>	marimbá	
	Sciaenidae	<i>Menticirrhus</i>	<i>Menticirrhus americanus</i>	papa-terra	
			<i>Menticirrhus litoralis</i>	papa-terra	
		<i>Micropogonias</i>	<i>Micropogonias furnieri</i>	corvina	
		<i>Cynoscium</i>	<i>Cynoscium acoupa</i>	pescada-amarela	
		<i>Umbrina</i>	<i>Umbrina coroides</i>	castanha-riscada	
		Argentinidae	<i>Mullus</i>	<i>Mullus argentinae</i>	trilha
		Pomacentridae	<i>Abudefduf</i>	<i>Abudefduf saxatilis</i>	sargento
		Mugilidae	<i>Mugil</i>	<i>Mugil liza</i>	tainha
		Sphyraenidae	<i>Sphyraena</i>	<i>Sphyraena tome</i>	bicuda
		Labridae	<i>Bodianus</i>	<i>Bodianus rufus</i>	bodião
		Blenniidae	<i>Parablennius</i>	<i>Parablennius pilicornis</i>	maria-da-toca
<i>Scartella</i>				<i>Scartella cristata</i>	maria-da-toca
Tetraodontiformes	Balistidae	<i>Cantherhines</i>	<i>Cantherhines macrocerus</i>	peixe-porco	
			<i>Stephanolepis</i>	<i>Stephanolepis hispidus</i> *	peixe-porco
	Tetraodontidae	<i>Sphoeroides</i>	<i>Sphoeroides greeleyi</i>	baiacu-pinima	
			<i>Sphoeroides spengleri</i>	baiacu	

Table II - Chromosome numbers and karyotypes of the marine fishes occurring along the Brazilian coast (for FN estimates, metacentric and submetacentric chromosomes are the only ones considered to be armed).

Species	Locality	n	2n	Chromosome types				FN	Sex chromosomes	References
				m	sm	st	a			
<i>Brevoortia aurea</i> ♀	L.R. de Freitas, RJ	23	46	2	2		42	50	X ₁ X ₁ X ₂ X ₂	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1992a
<i>Brevoortia aurea</i> ♂	L.R. de Freitas, RJ	23,22	45	3	2		40	50	X ₁ X ₂ Y	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1992a
<i>Brevoortia pectinata</i>	L. Marapendí, RJ	-	46	2	2		42	50	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1992b
<i>Bagre bagre</i>	Cananéia, SP	-	56	24	26	6	-	106	-	Gomes <i>et al.</i> , 1990
<i>Cathorops</i> sp.	Cananéia, SP	27	54	13	13	28	-	80	-	Gomes <i>et al.</i> , 1992
<i>Genidens genidens</i>	Cananéia, SP	28	56	12	20	20	4	88	-	Gomes <i>et al.</i> , 1994
<i>Netuma barba</i>	Cananéia, SP	28	56	18	18	18	2	92	XX/XY	Gomes <i>et al.</i> , 1994
<i>Arius parkeri</i>	Cananéia, SP	28	56	16	16	22	2	88	-	Gomes <i>et al.</i> , 1994
<i>Odontesthes</i> sp.	Estuário R. Grande, RS	-	48	2-4		46-44		50-52	-	Brugger <i>et al.</i> , 1990
<i>Dactylopterus volitans</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	16	14	6	12	78	-	Corrêa <i>et al.</i> , 1995
<i>Scorpaena brasiliensis</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	46	4	10	14	18	60	-	Corrêa <i>et al.</i> , 1995
<i>Scorpaena isthmensis</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	40	6	8	2	24	54	-	Corrêa <i>et al.</i> , 1994a
<i>Prionotus punctatus</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	100-102	-	-		100-102	100-102	-	Corrêa <i>et al.</i> , 1995
<i>Centropomus parallelus</i>	Estado do R. Janeiro	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls <i>et al.</i> , 1995b
<i>Diplectrum formosum</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	-	2	-	46	50	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1992b
<i>Diplectrum radiale</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1991
<i>Epinephelus marginatus</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1992b
<i>Mycteroperca acutirostris</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Aguilar, 1993
<i>Serranus flaviventris</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Aguilar, 1993
<i>Priacanthus arenatus</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	50	-	-	-	50	50	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>	Litoral fluminense	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls <i>et al.</i> , 1991
<i>Caranx latus</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	46	-	-	-	46	46	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Chloroscombrus chrysurus</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Selene setapinnis</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	46	-	2	-	44	48	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Trachinotus carolinus</i>	São Sebastião, SP	-	48	8			40	56	-	Zenaid and Almeida-Toledo, 1994
<i>Trachinotus falcatus</i>	São Sebastião, SP	-	48	10			38	58	-	Zenaid and Almeida-Toledo, 1994
<i>Eucinostomus gula</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Orthopristis ruber</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	-	2	36	10	50	-	Brum, 1994
<i>Orthopristis ruber</i>	Litoral fluminense	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls <i>et al.</i> , 1991
<i>Diplodus argenteus</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Menticirrhus americanus</i>	Cananéia, SP	24	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Gomes <i>et al.</i> , 1983b
<i>Menticirrhus litoralis</i>	Costa do R. G. do Sul	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Reggi <i>et al.</i> , 1986
<i>Micropogonias furnieri</i>	Cananéia, SP	24	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Gomes <i>et al.</i> , 1983a
<i>Micropogonias furnieri</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	46	-	-	-	46	46	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Cynoscion acoupa</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Umbrina coroides</i>	48° W; 23°S, RJ	-	46	-	4	-	42	50	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Mullus argentinae</i>	Litoral fluminense	-	44	-	2	-	42	46	-	Pauls <i>et al.</i> , 1991
<i>Abudefduf saxatilis</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	2	2	-	44	52	-	Corrêa <i>et al.</i> , 1994b
<i>Mugil liza</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Sphyræna tome</i>	48°W; 23°S, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls and Coutinho, 1990
<i>Bodianus rufus</i>	Litoral fluminense	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Pauls <i>et al.</i> , 1991
<i>Parablemnus pilicornis</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	-	-	-	48	48	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1992b
<i>Scartella cristata</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	48	-	2	26	20	50	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1994a
<i>Cantherhines macrocerus</i>	Estado do R. de Janeiro	-	40	-	-	-	40	40	-	Pauls <i>et al.</i> , 1995a
<i>Stephanolepis hispidus</i> ♀	48°W; 23°S, RJ	17	34	-	-	-	34	34	X ₁ X ₁ X ₂ X ₂	Pauls, 1993
<i>Stephanolepis hispidus</i> ♂	48°W; 23°S, RJ	17, 18	33	-	1	-	32	34	X ₁ X ₂ Y	Pauls, 1993
<i>Spherooides greeleyi</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	46	±24		±22		±70	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1994b
<i>Spherooides spengleri</i>	Baía da Guanabara, RJ	-	46	±18		±28		±64	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1994b

has been observed ($2n = 28-54$) in this group, it seems quite likely that these variations are derived from a karyotype of $2n = 48$ one-armed chromosomes (Doucette Jr. and Fitzsimons, 1988).

On the other hand, the karyotypes in Atheriniformes are also considered to derive from the 48 acrocentrics karyotype, even when they exhibit diploid numbers and/or FN values differing from 48. The available karyotypic data are consistent with taxonomic organization, indicating a close kinship between this group and Perciformes (Brum, 1995).

In terms of karyotypic diversification, the most conspicuous group is Scorpaeniformes, in which each of the four karyotyped species has not only different diploid numbers (40, 46, 48 and 100-102) but also different arm numbers (54, 60, 78 and 100-102). This fact seems to agree with the data obtained for representatives of Scorpaeniformes from the other locations, documenting the application of cytogenetics in the taxonomy of the group (Corrêa, 1995). The reasons for this diversification of Scorpaeniformes could be the same as those for the freshwater fishes. Since representatives of Scorpaeniform, in general, occur in benthonic habits, they not form schools, they have smaller and more isolated populations, they present a greater karyotype diversity, as opposed to the karyotypic uniformity present in marine species in general (Brum, 1994).

On the other hand, in the marine species of Siluriformes, what varies is mainly the number of chromosome arms, since these species have different FN values (88, 92 and 106), with the same diploid number ($2n = 56$) in four of the species karyotyped. This may reflect the evolutionary history of the group, since the Siluriformes are primarily a freshwater group, thus presenting the characteristic of diversification of the species from this type of environment (Oliveira *et al.*, 1988).

In the Brazilian species of Tetraodontiformes karyotyped so far the diploid numbers 33/34 and 40 (Balistidae) and 46 (Tetraodontidae) can be observed. The phylogenetic and karyotypic data available for Tetraodontiformes suggest that there may be two major chromosome evolution pathways in this group (Brum, 1995): the line of Triacanthidae, the most primitive, where $2n = 48$ appears to be a common feature among species (Choudhury *et al.*, 1982) and a more specialized one, formed by balistids and tetraodontids, among others, where $2n = 46$ might be considered the plesiomorphic condition (Arai and Nagaiwa, 1976). As suggested in Arai and Nagaiwa (1976), the values $2n < 46$ observed in Balistidae, for example, probably resulted of centric fusions.

Of all species karyotyped so far, only two were investigated by different authors (*Orthopristis ruber* and *Micropogonias furnieri*), with a discrepancy in results occurring in both cases. In *O. ruber*, the discrepancy concerned the quantification of chromosome types, yielding two different FN values (48 and 50). Since the specimens were all from the coast of Rio de Janeiro, these variations may perhaps be attributed to technical artifacts. With respect to *M. furnieri*, the differences were more conspicuous, since they involve the diploid numbers (46 and 48). In this case the specimens were from different locations (Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo), so we may infer an interpopulational chromosome variation, or even a case of cryptic species.

Chromosome banding patterns and DNA contents

The locations of nucleolar organizer regions (NORs) were studied in 12 species (Table III). The predominant chromosomal NOR phenotypes include a single NOR-bearing pair classified as one of the largest in the complements, with telomeric to interstitial position. The only different NOR phenotype was discovered in *Diplectrum formosum*, where NORs are located in up to four NOR-bearing chromosomes. In species of *Scorpaena*, the location of NORs detected by silver staining was sequentially confirmed by counterstain-enhanced fluorescence using Mithramycin A (Sigma), showing the corresponding signals.

While the G-banding (Table III) was detected for two species, with results unsatisfactory, positive C-banding (Table III) results were obtained for 11 species. In all of them the constitutive heterochromatin blocks were present in the centromeric region of nearly all chromosomes, with telomeric blocks also being detected in all chromosomes of five species.

The amount of DNA/cell (Table III) was estimated only for two species (*Menticirrhus americanus* and *Micropogonias furnieri*). These values were slightly higher than the amount of DNA of Perciformes in general (Hinegardner and Rosen, 1972).

Sex chromosomes and meiosis

The haploid number was determined in eight species and sex heteromorphism at the chromosome level was detected in only three species: *Brevoortia aurea*, *Netuma barba* and *Stephanolepis hispidus* (Table II). A multiple sex chromosome system of the $X_1X_1X_2X_2/X_1X_2Y$ type was detected in *B. aurea* and *S. hispidus*, whereas the presence of simple XX/XY sex chromosomes was detected in *N. barba*.

Table III - Chromosome banding patterns revealed by the NORs, C-banding, and amount of DNA/cell of the marine fish species occurring along the Brazilian coast.

Species	Chromosomal NOR phenotypes	C-banding	G-banding	Amount of DNA/cell	References
<i>Brevoortia aurea</i>	2 terminal NORs in one of the largest acrocentric pairs	centromeric blocks in all chromosomes	-	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1992b
<i>Scorpaena brasiliensis</i>	2 NORs detected both with AgNO ₃ and Mithramycin A that are heteromorphic in terms of size, in the short arms of the second pair in the complement, identified as submetacentrics	small centromeric blocks in practically all chromosomes, in addition to more conspicuous blocks in the NOR position, which are therefore C-positive	-	-	Corrêa <i>et al.</i> , 1995
<i>Scorpaena isthmensis</i>	2 NORs detected both with AgNO ₃ and Mithramycin A in the telomeres of the short arm of the fifth pair in the complement (submetacentrics)	small centromeric blocks in practically all chromosomes	-	-	Corrêa <i>et al.</i> , 1995
<i>Prionotus punctatus</i>	-	smaller blocks, mainly centromeric, in most chromosomes, side by side with more conspicuous telomeric blocks in the larger chromosomes	-	-	Corrêa <i>et al.</i> , 1995
<i>Centropomus parallelus</i>	2 interstitial NORs in one of the middle pairs	C-bands restricted on pericentromeric regions	-	-	Pauls <i>et al.</i> , 1995b
<i>Diplectrum formosum</i>	1 to 4 labelled chromosomes	centromeric and telomeric blocks	-	-	Aguilar, 1993
<i>Diplectrum radiale</i>	2 interstitial NORs in one of the largest pairs	centromeric and telomeric blocks	-	-	Brum <i>et al.</i> , 1992b
<i>Caranx latus</i>	2 NORs in the long arm of the submetacentric pair	-	-	-	Pauls <i>et al.</i> , 1994
<i>Eucinostomus gula</i>	2 NORs in the second pair in the complement	-	-	-	Pauls <i>et al.</i> , 1994
<i>Orthopristis ruber</i>	-	centromeric and telomeric blocks in all chromosomes	-	-	Brum, 1994
<i>Menticirrhus americanus</i>	-	-	undefined	1.57 ± 0.03 pg	Gomes <i>et al.</i> , 1983b
<i>Menticirrhus litoralis</i>	1 pair of NORs	centromeric and pericentromeric blocks	-	-	Reggi <i>et al.</i> , 1986

While the *B. aurea* multiple sex chromosome system characterizes the first description of sex chromosomes among the Clupeiformes, the same mechanism detected in *S. hispidus* is also present in *Stephanolepis cirrhifer*, from Japan (Murofushi *et al.*, 1980), these being the only two cases of sex chromosomes documented in tetraodontiform species.

In the Siluriformes, several sex-chromosome mechanisms were already detected (Moreira-Filho *et al.*, 1993), but among the ariid fishes studied so far, *N. barba* is the unique in possessing sex chromosome heteromorphism in the male.

Conclusions and systematic implications

The cytogenetic information obtained so far for marine fishes occurring along the Brazilian coast indicates that they have low karyotype variability when compared to freshwater species (Brum, 1995). This is surely due to the absence of barriers, to the greater vagility, and to population sizes, consisting of a large number of individuals. On the other hand, the predominant occurrence of the karyotype with 48 acrocentrics (and of karyotypes derived from it) in Perciformes, and at least in Clupeiformes, Atheriniformes and Tetraodontiformes, is consistent with the hypothesis that this karyotype represents a synapomorphy between the clupeiform fishes and the different groups of modern teleosts (Euteleostei) (Brum, 1995). Whereas this type of karyotype was nearly unchanged in marine species of these groups, it became more derived in freshwater groups of euteleost fish (Brum, 1995).

RESUMO

Neste trabalho são revisados os dados cariotípicos disponíveis para os peixes marinhos ocorrentes no litoral brasileiro. As espécies investigadas até o momento pertencem às ordens Clupeiformes, Siluriformes, Atheriniformes, Scorpaeniformes, Perciformes e Tetraodontiformes. A maior parte destes dados estão dispersos em anais de congressos ou em publicações de difícil acesso, a maioria escrito em língua portuguesa. A presente revisão contém dados de números cromossômicos, cromossomos sexuais, padrões de bandeamento, conteúdo de DNA e suas respectivas implicações sistemáticas. Das espécies ictílicas ocorrentes em águas oceânicas do Brasil, somente 44 foram investigadas, em termos cromossômicos, até o momento. Os Perciformes, com 28 espécies cariotipadas, constituem a ordem de peixes mais estudada, sendo a representatividade de outros grupos de peixes, neste sentido, pequena ou mesmo nenhuma.

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