

Astroscopus guttatus

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Astroscopus guttatus (**Northern stargazer**) is a fish that can reach lengths of 22in (56 cm) and are located on the eastern shores between the states of North Carolina and New York in the United States. The Northern stargazer can be found up to depths of 120 ft (36 m). Stargazers have a flat forehead with a lot of body mass up front near the mouth.

The Northern stargazer has a blackish brown body with white spots that are of the same size all over its head and back. It has three dark horizontal stripes on its (white) tail. The mouth of the stargazer faces up so that it can ambush prey while hiding in the sandy bottoms of coastal bodies of water. The top of the stargazer has electric organs in the orbitae ^[1] which can generate and transmit an electric shock.

The Northern stargazers live primarily along the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. They bury themselves in the sand and wait for prey (usually smaller fish) to come by.^[2] Their eyes are situated on top of the head and poke up through the sand, hence the name stargazer.^[3] Stargazer's scientific name is *Astroscopus guttatus* where *Astroscopus* means "one who aims at the stars" and *guttatus* translating into "speckled" — referring to the white spots on the fish's back.

The stargazer lays small, transparent eggs on the bottom of the bay. These eggs float to the surface after they are released. They hatch into larvae and grow up to 6 to 7 mm. They slowly grow a dark coloring and develop the electrical organs from eye muscles when they are 12 to 15 mm. After this they swim to the bottom and grow into adults.

Citations

- U. Dahlgren and C.F. Silvester (1906): The electric organ of the stargazer, *Astroscopus* (Brevoort).- *Anat- Anz.* 29: 387
- Biology: <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/Gallery/Descript/StarGazerNorth/StarGazeNorth.htm>
- I.R. Schwab (2004). <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1772429/>

References

- Froese, Rainer and Pauly, Daniel, eds. (2006). "*Astroscopus guttatus*" (<http://www.fishbase.org/summary/SpeciesSummary.php?genusname=Astroscopus&speciesname=guttatus>) in FishBase. April 2006 version.

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Categories: Uranoscopidae | Fish of the Atlantic Ocean | Fish of the United States

Northern stargazer



Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Actinopterygii
Order:	Perciformes
Family:	Uranoscopidae
Genus:	<i>Astroscopus</i>
Species:	<i>A. guttatus</i>

Binomial name

Astroscopus guttatus

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