

Plakobranthus ocellatus (van Hasselt, 1824)

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Mollusca
Class: Gastropoda
Order: Sacoglossa

Family: Plakobranthidae
Genus: *Plakobranthus*
Species: *P. ocellatus*



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Plakobranthus ocellatus is a common inhabitant of shallow coral reef pools and lagoons. It is seldom seen as it is well-camouflaged, half buried in the coral sand. *P. ocellatus* lives in sheltered, shallow water habitats with stones or gravel and silt. Maximum length is 6-7 cm in **Persian Gulf (Iran, Kish Island)**. It may seem puzzling that this slug has evolved a method of storing chloroplasts, but at the same time shades them from the sunlight which would allow them to photosynthesis and provide nourishment for the slug. It is a theory, which is totally untested, that *P. ocellatus* deliberately shades the chloroplasts from the bright tropical sun. Most chloroplasts have an optimal light intensity at which they photosynthesis. They can be "burnt out" if exposed to too much light. By covering the chloroplasts with the parapodia, *P. ocellatus* rather than cutting the chloroplasts off from light, is just reducing the light levels to a better level for photosynthesis. Active crawling and mating are often crepuscular with the animals spending much of the time both by day and night resting passively on the bottom with a fine layer of sand covering their bodies.

Food: *Plakobranthus ocellatus* feeds on a broad food spectrum, including members of the genera *Halimeda*, *Caulerpa*, *Udotea*, *Acetabularia* and further unidentified algae.

Distribution: *Plakobranthus ocellatus* widely distributed in the Indo-Pacific, **Persian Gulf**; Big Island, Maui, Oahu, Kauai, French Frigate Shoals, Midway and Kure.

