

***Phataria unifascialis* (Valvatida: Ophidiasteridae)  
from the Eastern Pacific: Redescription and skeletal morphology**

Carolina Martín-Cao-Romero<sup>1\*</sup>, Francisco Alonso Solís-Marín<sup>2</sup>, Alfredo Laguarda-Figueras<sup>2</sup>  
& Blanca Estela Buitrón Sánchez<sup>3</sup>

1. Posgrado de Ciencias del Mar y Limnología, Instituto de Ciencias del Mar y Limnología (ICML), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Apdo. Post. 70-305, México D.F. 04510, México; caromcr@gmail.com
2. Laboratorio de Sistemática y Ecología de Equinodermos, Colección Nacional de Equinodermos “Dra. Ma. E. Caso M” (CNE), Instituto de Ciencias del Mar y Limnología (ICML), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Apdo. Post. 70-305, México D.F. 04510, México; fasolis@cmarl.unam.mx; laguarda@cmarl.unam.mx
3. Departamento de Paleontología, Instituto de Geología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Circuito exterior s/n, Col. Copilco, Del. Coyoacán, CP. 04500 México, D.F.; blancab@unam.mx

\* Correspondence author

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**Abstract:** The starfish *Phataria unifascialis* is widely distributed in the eastern coast of the Pacific Ocean, found on rocky bottoms, at depths between 0 and 50 m. The original description of *P. unifascialis* made by Gray in 1840 was brief and inaccurate in some important aspects, such as distribution area, plate arrangement and ambulacral spines. Here, we improve the description of *P. unifascialis* with SEM images and description of its mesodermal skeleton on the basis of a large sample. Rev. Biol. Trop. 65(Suppl. 1): S258-S271. Epub 2017 November 01.

**Key words:** Asteroidea; Ophidiasteridae; *Phataria unifascialis*; redescription; SEM; Eastern Pacific.

*Phataria unifascialis* is a well-known starfish that inhabits the rocky bottoms of the Eastern Ocean Pacific shallow waters (Alvarado & Solís-Marín, 2013). The starfish *Phataria unifascialis* belongs to the family Ophidiasteridae Verrill, 1870, which includes 28 valid genera, mostly shallow water, from tropical and subtropical regions. The species are a conspicuous feature of coral reef fauna. Asexual reproduction by fission occurs in a few species, but fertilization, planktotrophic or lecithotrophic larvae, and bipinnaria and/or brachiolaria stages are more common in the Ophidiasteridae family (Mortensen, 1921). The genus *Phataria* was proposed by Gray (1840) as a subgenus of the genus *Linckia*, and later was raised to genus by Sladen (1889). This genus differs from the others of the family Ophidiasteridae by having the papular areas in a longitudinal row or two in the radii, small granules in papular areas

and big granules in the abactinal plates. Currently the genus *Phataria* has only two valid species: *P. unifascialis* (Gray, 1840) and *Phataria mionactis* Ziesenhenné, 1942.

Morgan and Cowles (1996) studied some aspects of the behaviour, physiology and demography of *Phataria unifascialis*, were examined to determine whether cool temperature was an important factor limiting this species' distribution in the northern regions of the Gulf of California. Individuals in the population at Bahía de Los Angeles, in the northern gulf, were of larger mean size but were significantly less abundant than at Loreto, a site in the southern gulf. Smaller size classes were also less abundant or missing in the Bahía de Los Angeles population, suggesting limited recruitment. Pyloric caecae and gonads were of similar size at both locations making it unlikely

that food limitation or lack of reproductive potential was the limiting factor.

The population at Loreto contained a distinct reproductively-primed subgroup which was not observed at Bahía de Los Angeles. Activity of the species remained relatively constant with temperature down to 17°C, the winter surface water temperature characteristic of Loreto, but dropped sharply at the 14°C water temperature characteristic of the Bahía de Los Angeles winter. Metabolic rates at these low temperatures were elevated over expected rates even though activity was reduced, suggesting metabolic stress. The species' moderate oxyregulating ability also disappeared at low temperature. Taken together, these data suggest that the low temperatures of the northern gulf may well be an important factor limiting this species' northern distribution in the Gulf (Morgan & Cowles, 1996).

The purpose of the present study is to re-describe the species and its morphology based on several major ossicle types in the ophidiasterid.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this work 804 specimens were reviewed and they are deposited at the Colección Nacional de Equinodermos, "Dra. María Elena Caso Muñoz", (CNE, ICML, UNAM) and Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, California, USA (LACM) (Table 1). Organisms were observed using both an optic microscope (Olympus® SZX7) and scanning electron microscope (SEM) imaging (Laboratorio de Microscopía Electrónica de Barrido en el Instituto de Biología (IB), UNAM, Microscope JEOL JSM-6360LV). In order to observe the skeleton of *P. unifascialis* the skin

TABLE 1  
Examined material of *Phataria unifascialis* and *Phataria mionactis*

CUADRO 1  
Material examinado de *Phataria unifascialis* y *Phataria mionactis*

	Catalogue number	Number of specimens	Locality
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.0	1	El Revolcadero, Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico (16° 47' 45" N, 99° 51' 17" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.1	21	Isla Roca Partida, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 10' 00" N, 110° 18' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.6	20	La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 08' 00" N, 110° 23' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.8	6	Isla Patos, Sonora, Mexico (29° 16' 00" N, 112° 27' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.12	2	Between Isla Ballena and Roca Partida, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 20' 00" N, 110° 18' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.14	1	Bahía Eclipse, Isla Roca Partida, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 10' 00" N, 110° 18' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.19	1	Bahía San Gabriel, Isla Espíritu Santo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 30' 00" N, 110° 21' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.23	32	La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 08' 00" N, 110° 23' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.24	28	La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 08' 00" N, 110° 23' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.26	3	Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 12' 00" N, 106° 25' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.28	8	Cañón beach, Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 00" N, 106° 25' 00" W).

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Catalogue number	Number of specimens	Locality
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.29	11	Playa Norte, Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 14' 13" N, 106° 26' 45" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.30	2	Playa Norte, Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 14' 13" N, 106° 26' 45" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.31	2	Isla Chivos, Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 12' 00" N, 106° 26' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.32	1	The Crestón hill, off the lighthouse, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 47" N, 106° 26' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.33	9	The Crestón hill del lado Est. Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 57" N, 106° 25' 51" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.34	23	Next to the Hermano del Sur, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 04" N, 106° 26' 03" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.35	6	Next to Isla Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 52" N, 106° 28' 19" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.36	13	15 m from Isla Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 43" N, 106° 27' 56" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.37	15	Between Hermano del Norte and Hermano del Sur, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 10" N, 106° 26' 30" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.38	6	Proximities of Isla Cardones, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 52" N, 106° 24' 10" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.39	2	Between Isla Cardones and Isla de Chivos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 41" N, 106° 24' 25" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.40	7	Between Isla Cardones and Isla de Chivos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 41" N, 106° 24' 25" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.41	13	The Escollera, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 38" N, 106° 25' 22" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.42	7	Next to the Hermano del Sur, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 04" N, 106° 26' 21" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.43	31	Cove beneath the tower at Paseo Centenario, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 07" N, 106° 25' 41" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.44	5	Next to the Hermano del Norte, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 22" N, 106° 26' 15" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.45	8	In the "entrance" of Hermano del Sur, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 56" N, 106° 26' 29" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.46	4	Off Isla Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 53" N, 106° 28' 20" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.47	11	Next to the south part of Isla de Lobos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 42" N, 106° 27' 54" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.48	1	In the "entrance" of Isla de Chivos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 34" N, 106° 25' 06" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.49	3	Off the radio tower, Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 08" N, 106° 25' 43" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.50	3	Two meters away of Hermano del Sur, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 51" N, 106° 26' 39" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.51	9	Off Isla Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 44" N, 106° 28' 17" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.52	9	Off Isla Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 53" N, 106° 28' 20" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.53	7	North cove of Isla de los Pájaros, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 15' 41" N, 106° 28' 46" W).

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Catalogue number	Number of specimens	Locality
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.54	30	Cove between the Isla de Chivos and Isla Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 44" N, 106° 27' 56" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.55	25	Isla Venados, one side towards Isla Pájaros, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 14' 34" N, 106° 28' 20" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.56	10	60 m to the east of Isla Cardones, Sinaloa, Mexico, Mexico (23° 10' 42" N, 106° 24' 12" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.57	37	70 m to the southwest of Isla de Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 14' 01" N, 106° 27' 57" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.58	20	Noth part of Isla de los Pájaros, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 15' 40" N, 106° 39' 12" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.59	38	100 m west of Isla Cardones, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 43" N, 106° 24' 25" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.60	1	80 m southeast of Isla de Chivos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 42" N, 106° 24' 48" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.61	9	East of Isla Pájaros, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 15' 13" N, 106° 28' 32" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.62	9	Between Isla Venados and Isla de Lobos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 15' 13" N, 106° 28' 32" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.63	1	Next to Hermano del Sur, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 06" N, 106° 26' 19" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.64	10	Next to Isla de Lobos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 47" N, 106° 28' 19" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.65	2	Next to Isla de Chivos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 54" N, 106° 24' 48" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.66	4	Between Isla Venados and Isla de Lobos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 43" N, 106° 27' 58" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.67	5	Next to Isla Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 14' 06" N, 106° 27' 57" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.68	4	Southwest to Isla de Pájaros, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 15' 12" N, 106° 29' 03" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.69	8	Southwest of Isla Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 53" N, 106° 27' 50" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.70	2	Southeast of Isla Cardones, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 43" N, 106° 24' 12" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.71	12	Northeast of Isla Pájaros, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 15' 39" N, 106° 28' 37" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.72	10	West of Isla Cardones, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 40" N, 106° 24' 28" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.73	1	Next to Isla Cardones, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 43" N, 106° 24' 23" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.74	1	East of Isla de Lobos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 13' 38" N, 106° 27' 57" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.75	1	In the "entrance" of Isla de Lobos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 21" N, 106° 28' 13" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.76	4	Playa Norte, Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 14' 13" N, 106° 26' 45" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.77	15	Next to Isla de la Piedra, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 11' 10" N, 106° 24' 18" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.78	11	La Escollera, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 50" N, 106° 25' 30" W).

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Catalogue number	Number of specimens	Locality
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.79	2	Between Isla de la Piedra and Isla de Chivos, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 56" N, 106° 24' 39" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.80	9	Next to Isla Cardones, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 42" N, 106° 24' 13" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.81	7	Next to Isla Cardones, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 10' 45" N, 106° 24' 13" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.87	1	Next to Isla Venados, Sinaloa, Mexico (23° 14' 21" N, 106° 28' 01" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.95	2	Isla la Ballena, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 25' 00" N, 110° 20' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.96	1	Los Islotes, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 36' 00" N, 110° 23' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.97	1	La Gaviota, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 17' 13" N, 110° 20' 34" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.101	6	Bahía San Gabriel, Isla Espíritu Santo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 30' 00" N, 110° 21' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.102	1	Puerto Escondido, Baja California Sur, Mexico (25° 50' 00" N, 111° 16' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.103	17	Puerto Balandra, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 31' 48" N, 110° 31' 15" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.104	4	Bahía San Gabriel, Isla Espíritu Santo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 30' 00" N, 110° 21' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.105	15	La Gaviota, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 17' 13" N, 110° 20' 34" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.106	10	El Embudo, Isla Espíritu Santo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 33' 00" N, 110° 22' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.107	2	Bahía Falsa, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 20' 00" N, 110° 01' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.108	2	Bahía Falsa, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 20' 00" N, 110° 01' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.109	1	Bahía Falsa, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 20' 00" N, 110° 01' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.110	37	Puerto Balandra, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 31' 48" N, 110° 31' 15" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.111	1	Bahía San Gabriel, Isla Espíritu Santo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 30' 00" N, 110° 21' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.112	2	Barra de Pulmo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (23° 24' 05" N, 109° 32' 34" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.113	6	El Corralito, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 35' 00" N, 110° 30' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.114	2	Bahía San Gabriel, Isla Espíritu Santo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 30' 00" N, 110° 21' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.115	1	La Bonanza, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 30' 00" N, 110° 15' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.116	9	Bahía San Gabriel, Isla Espíritu Santo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 30' 00" N, 110° 21' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.117	2	Estero de los Cuates, Baja California Norte (31° 50' 00" N, 116° 50' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.118	1	Los Frailes, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico (23° 23' 32" N, 109° 25' 00" W).

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Catalogue number	Number of specimens	Locality
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.119	18	El Embudo, Isla Espíritu Santo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 30' 00" N, 110° 21' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.120	2	Los Islotes, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 35' 09" N, 110° 24' 09" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.121	1	Bahía San Carlos, Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico (27° 58' 56" N, 110° 58' 36" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.122	3	Isla Espíritu Santo, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 30' 00" N, 110° 21' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.123	1	Puerto Libertad, Sonora, Mexico (24° 54' 14" N, 112° 41' 27" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.125	1	Los Islotes, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 35' 05" N, 110° 24' 56" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.126	1	Los Islotes, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 35' 05" N, 110° 24' 56" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.127	1	Los Islotes, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 35' 57" N, 110° 24' 59" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.128	3	Los Islotes, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 35' 57" N, 110° 24' 20" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.130	21	El Coyote cove, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 10' 00" N, 110° 18' 00" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.139	1	Los Islotes, Baja California Sur, Mexico (24° 35' 57" N, 110° 23' 59" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.151	1	South of Isla Santa Catalina, Baja California Sur, Mexico (25° 30' 54" N, 110° 46' 41" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.152	1	Isla Las Ánimas, Baja California Sur, Mexico (25° 06' 52" N, 110° 30' 28" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.156	2	Bahía San Carlos, Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico (27° 56' 27" N, 111° 05' 30" W).
<i>Phataria unifascialis</i>	ICML-UNAM 2.18.157	3	El Peruano, Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico (27° 54' 30" N, 110° 58' 11" W).
<i>Phataria mionactis</i>	LACM 761.1 Holotype	1	La Plata Island, Ecuador (no lat long data).

was removed with regular household bleach (NaClO), after that the individual skeletal plates were extracted from specimens or parts of them immersed, using regular household bleach, rinsed in tap water, dried, mounted on aluminium stubs and gold-coated (modified from Thuy & Stöhr, 2016).

## RESULTS

### Systematics

#### *Phataria unifascialis* (Gray, 1840)

(Figs. 1-7)

*Linckia* (*Phataria*) *unifascialis* Gray, 1840

*Linckia bifascialis* Gray, 1840

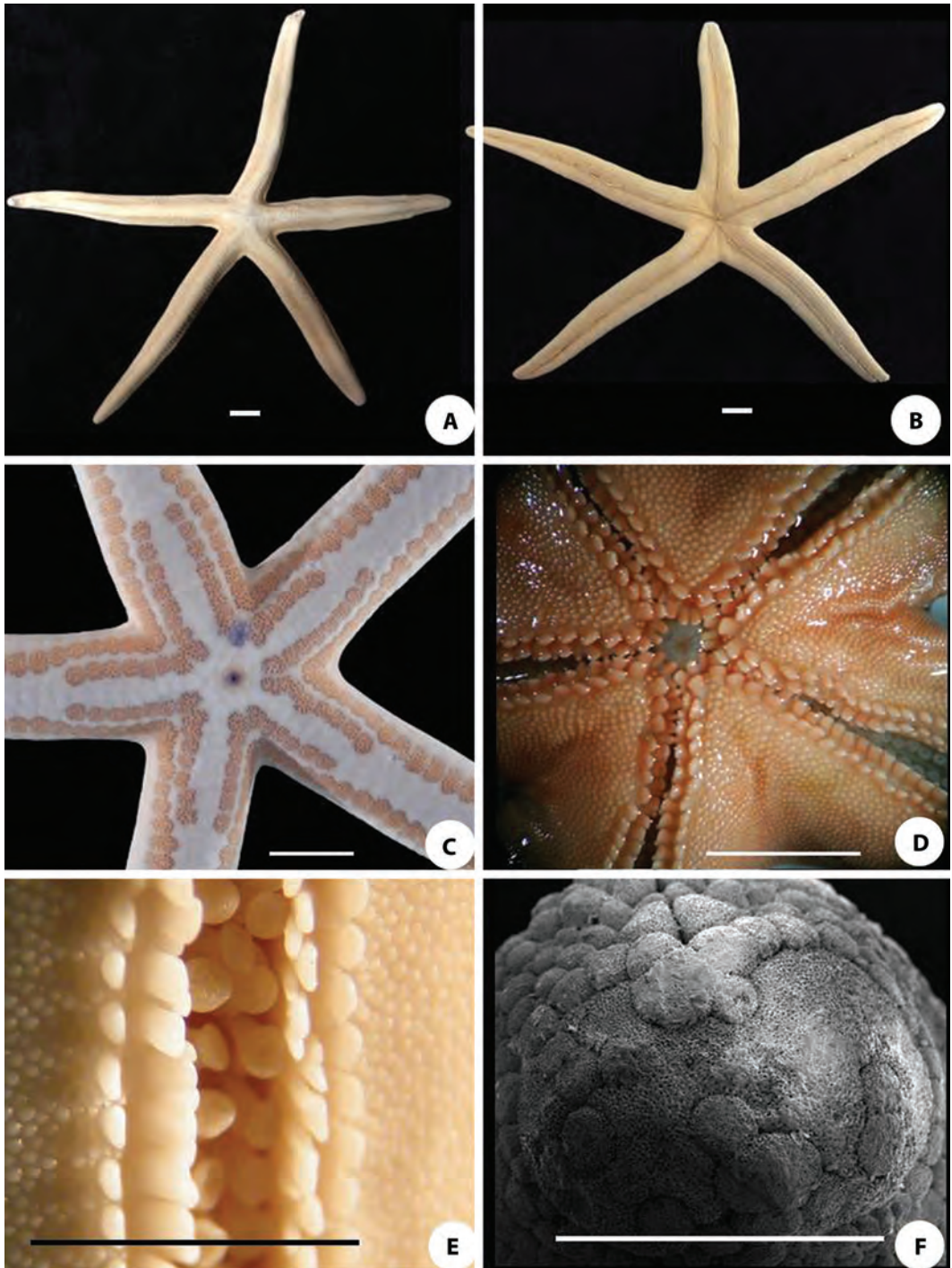
*Linckia unifascialis* Gray, 1840

*Ophidiaster suturalis* Müller & Troschel, 1842

**Original description** (Gray, 1840): Rays trigonal, tapering, back with three rows of flat ossicula; sides with a single abroad band of pores; rather more than three times as long as broad.

**Emended description:** Five rays, tapering, papular areas only in the abactinal surface, the papular areas are in one longitudinal row along the arm, and also have two small rows of papular areas at both sides of the main row. Three longitudinal rows of carinal plates along the arm. Both surfaces are cover by granules, in





**Fig. 1.** *Phataria unifascialis*. A) Abactinal view; B) Actinal view; C) Abactinal disc; D) Actinal disc; E) Actinal arm; F) Terminal plate; (A,B,C and D scale bar=1cm; E and F scale bar= 0.5cm).

**Fig. 1.** *Phataria unifascialis*. A) Vista abactinal; B) Vista actinal; C) Disco abactinal; D) Disco actinal; E) Brazo actinal; F) Placa terminal; (A,B,C y D escala=1cm; E y F escala= 0.5cm).

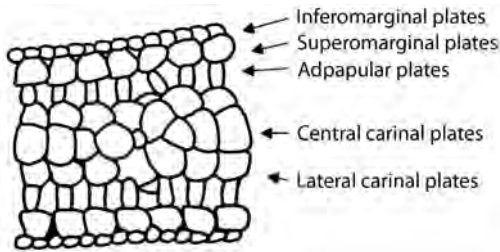


Fig. 2. *Phataria unifascialis*. Skeleton of the arm in abactinal view.

Fig. 2. *Phataria unifascialis*. Vista abactinal del esqueleto del brazo.

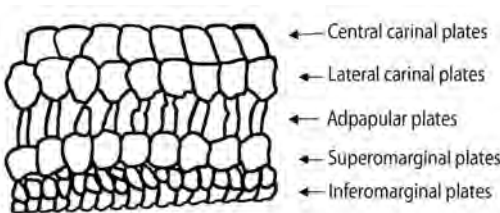


Fig. 3. *Phataria unifascialis*. Skeleton of the arm in a lateral view.

Fig. 3. *Phataria unifascialis*. Vista lateral del esqueleto del brazo.

the abactinal one there are small granules in the papular areas and bigger ones on the abactinal plates. The actinal surface with smaller, rounded granules with little space between them. The anus is located in the center of the disc; only one rounded madreporite with radial striations. Only one row of ambulacral spines; such spines are wider in the base and tapering (Fig. 1).

**Morphology of the skeletal ossicles.** The abactinal area is composed of carinal plates, adpapular plates and superomarginal plates (Fig. 2, Fig. 4 and Fig. 6). The actinal area is composed of inferomarginal plates, actinal plates, adambulacral plates and ambulacral furrow plates (Fig. 3, Fig. 5 and Fig. 7).

**Type locality:** “Bay of Caracas, West Columbia” (data from holotype label). But there is any locality in the Pacific Ocean with this name.

**Type material:** NHM 1938.5.12.4 (Natural History Museum, London).

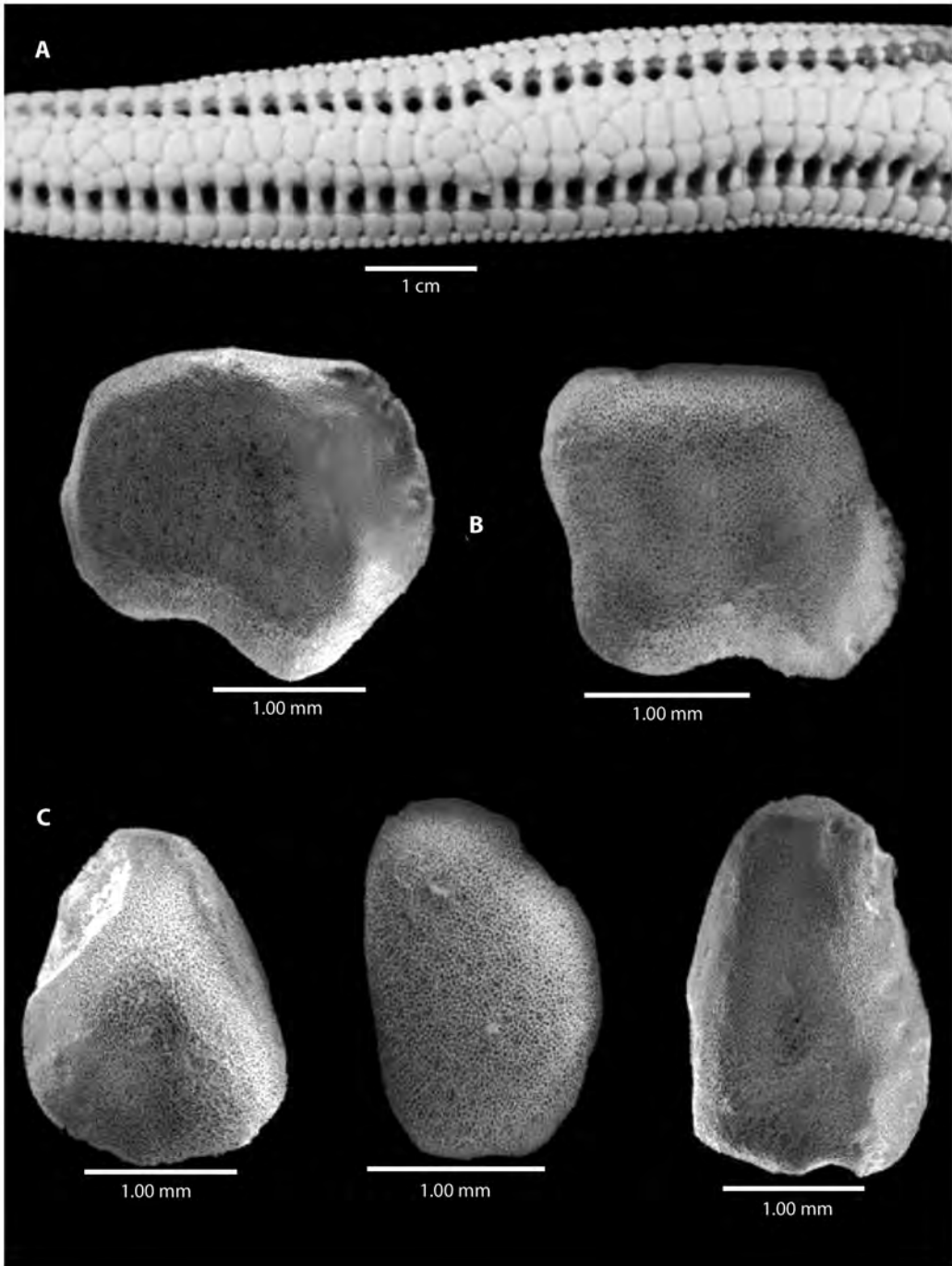
**Geographic distribution:** Eastern Pacific. Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (Pérez-Ruzafa, A., Alvarado, J. J., Solis-Marín, F. A., Hernández, J. C., Morata, A., Marcos, C., ... & Baraza, E, 2013).

**Bathymetric distribution:** From 0 and 50 m (Pérez-Ruzafa et al., 2013).

## DISCUSSION

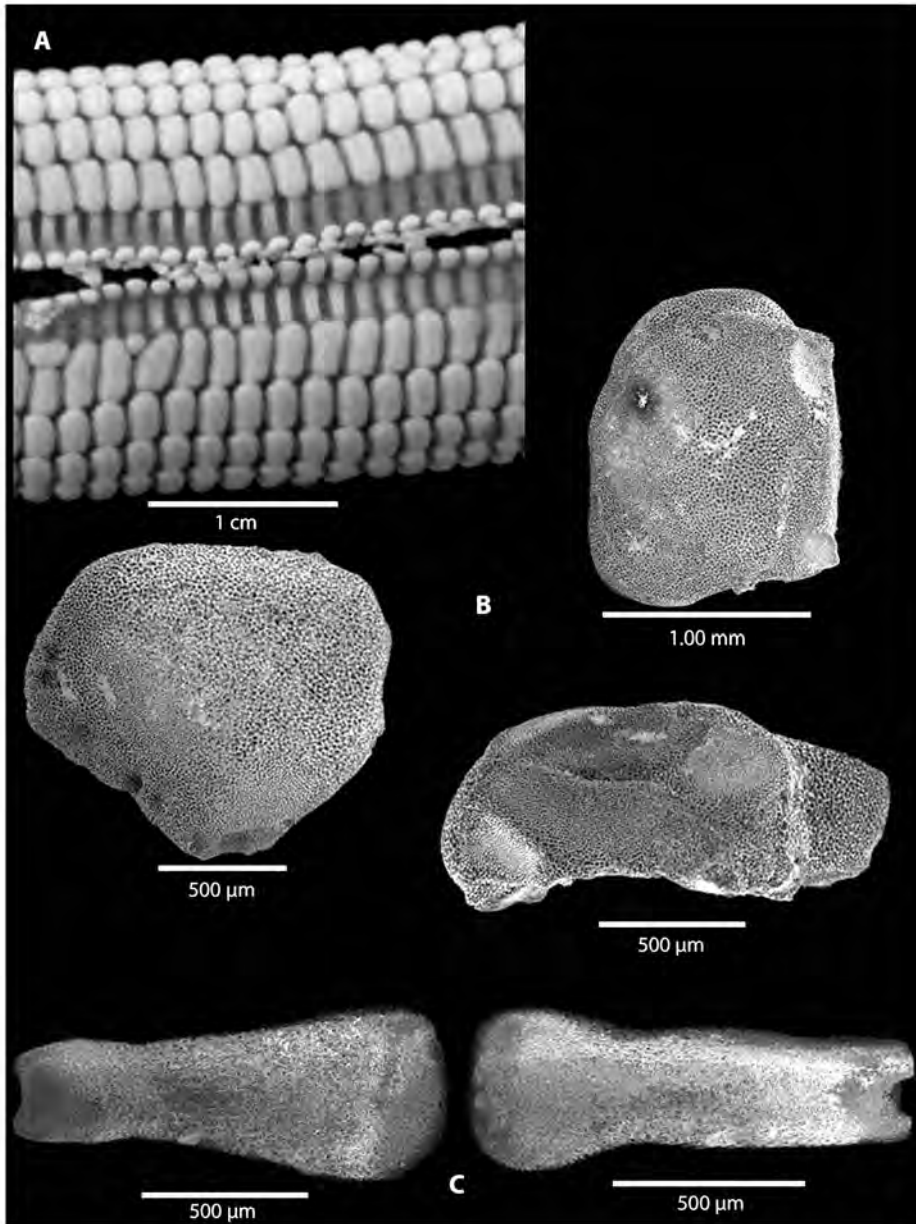
The original description made by Gray (1840) did not include the basic information to identify *P. unifascialis* as a separated and independent genus of Ophiasteridae, instead the specie was included in the genus *Linckia* (Gray, 1840). Gray’s original description can be practically used to describe various genus or species within the family (i.e. *Pharia*, *Phataria*, *Narcissia*, *Linckia*, etc). The diagnosis presented in this work has the main taxonomical characters to unequivocally can identify the specimens belonging to this species. There are three main contributions in this new emended diagnosis: 1) the papular areas are distributed in one longitudinal row along the arm, and two small rows can reach half or less the main row at both sides of the main longitudinal papular row; 2) there are three longitudinal rows of carinal plates along each arm, and 3) there is only one row of ambulacral spines that are wider in the base and tapering. Currently the genus *Phataria* has only two valid species: *Phataria unifascialis* (Gray, 1840) and *Phataria mionactis* Ziesenhenné, 1942. The specie *Phataria mionactis*, which has a restricted distribution to the Galapagos Islands, is distinguished by the presence of two continuous rows of papular areas at both sides of the main row (Fig. 8); the carinal plates are in an irregular arrangement, smaller than those in *P. unifascialis*. The abactinal plates are convex in *P. mionactis* and flat in *P. unifascialis* (see Figs. 2 and 8).





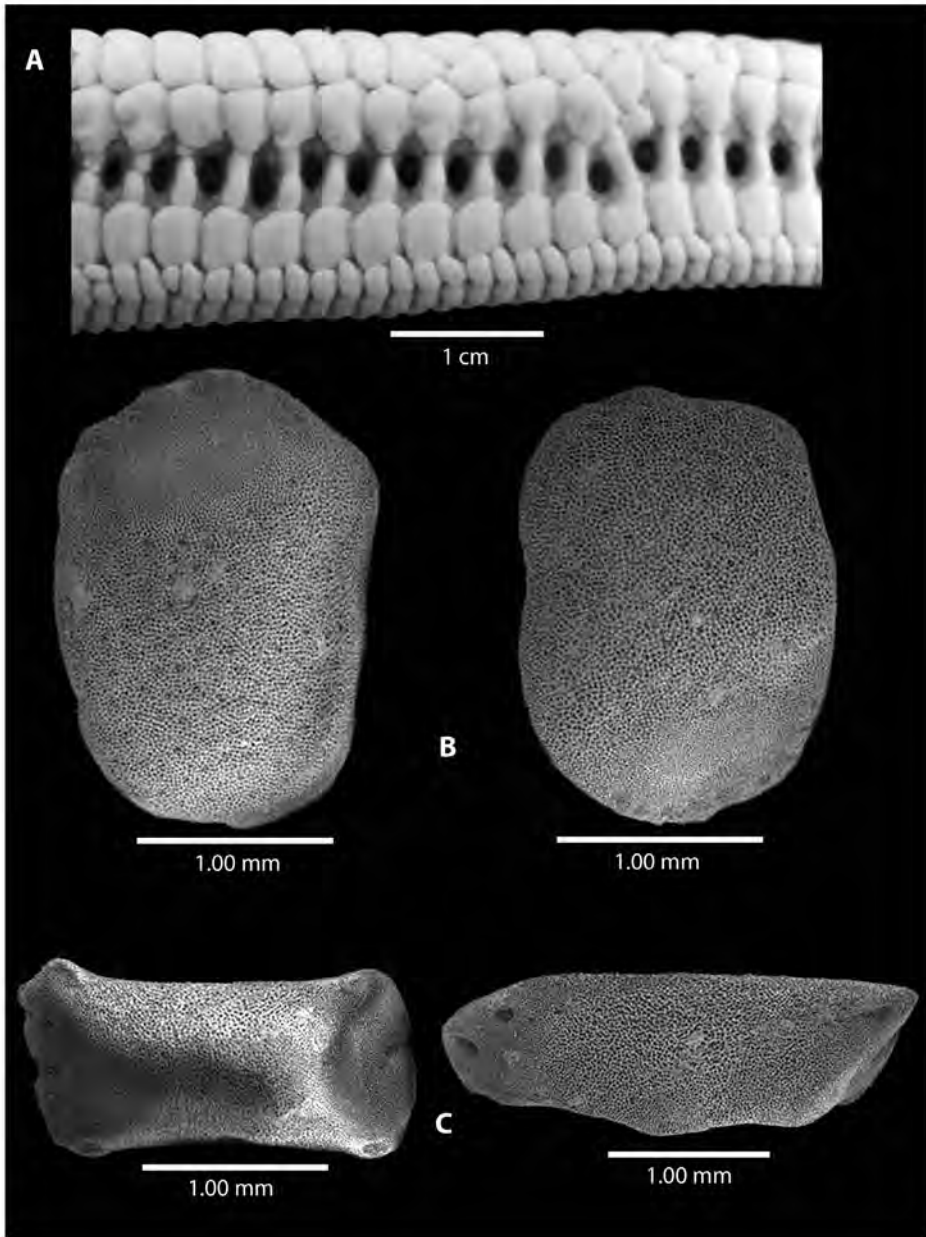
**Fig. 4.** *Phataria unifascialis*. A) Abactinal view of a duned arm; B) Lateral carinal plates; C) Central carinal plates.

**Fig. 4.** *Phataria unifascialis*. A) Vista abactinal de un brazo desnudo; B) Placas carinales laterales; C) Placas carinales centrales.

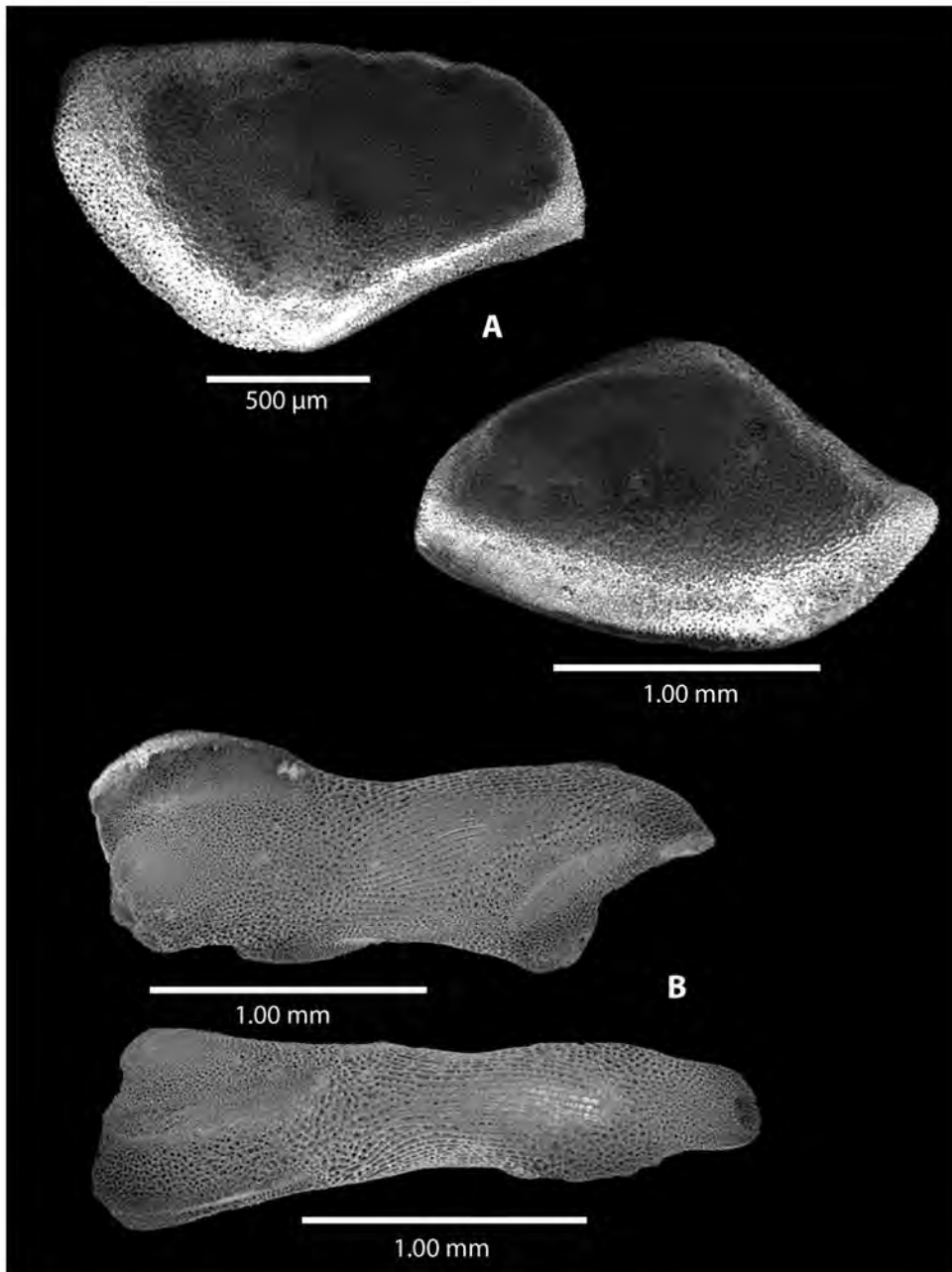


**Fig. 5.** *Phataria unifascialis*. A) Abactinal view of a nudged arm; B) Adambulacral plates; C) Adambulacral spines.

**Fig. 5.** *Phataria unifascialis*. A) Vista abactinal de un brazo desnudo; B) Placas adambulacrales; C) Espinas adambulacrales.

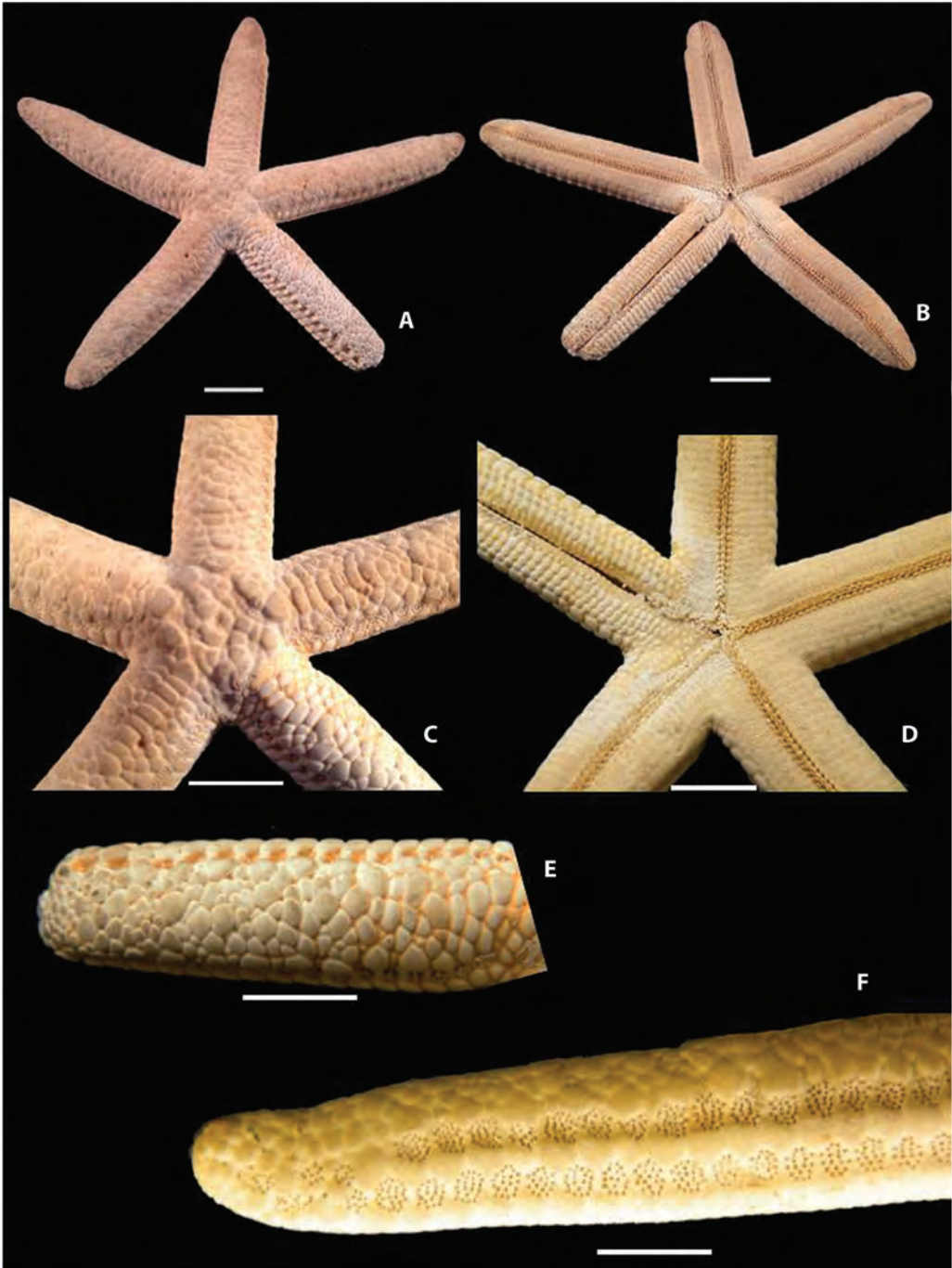


**Fig. 6.** *Phataria unifascialis*. A) Lateral view of a denuded arm; B) Superomarginal plates; C) Adpapular plates.  
**Fig. 6.** *Phataria unifascialis*. A) Vista lateral de un brazo desnudo; B) Placas súperomarginales; C) Placas adpapulares.



**Fig. 7.** *Phataria unifascialis*. Holotype LACM 761.1. A) Actinal plates; B) Plates of the ambulacral furrow.  
**Fig. 7.** *Phataria unifascialis*. Holotipo LACM 761.1. A) Placas actinales; B) Placas del surco ambulacral.





**Fig. 8.** *Phataria mionactis*. A) Abactinal view; B) Actinal view; C) Abactinal disc; D) Actinal disc; E) Abactinal arm; F) Longitudinal rows of papular areas; (Scale bar= 1cm).

**Fig. 8.** *Phataria mionactis*. A) Vista abactinal; B) Vista actinal; C) Disco abactinal; D) Disco actinal; E) Brazo abactinal; F) Hileras longitudinales de áreas papulares; (Escala= 1cm).



The type locality of *P. unifascialis* was not mentioned by Gray (1840), nevertheless the locality in the holotype label reads: “Bay of Caracas, West Columbia, Venezuela” (Andrew Cabrinovic pers. comm.). Ziesenhenné (1937), mentions that the type locality of the species was “Bay of Caracas, west coast of Colombia”. There is no locality in the Colombian Pacific under that name and because the species has a known distribution on the American Pacific Ocean coasts, the type locality is not in Venezuela since this country is located in the Atlantic Ocean. More research is needed to determine the original type locality of *P. unifascialis*.

The use of plate morphology in Asteroidea identification is highly recommended as presented by Turner and Dearborn (1972). More efforts need to be done in order to use these taxonomic characters, even though type material is so limited and fragile. Whenever material is available, skeletal morphology studies are suggested.

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To Maria Berenit Mendoza Garfias (Laboratorio de Microscopía Electrónica y Fotografía de la Biodiversidad, Instituto de Biología, UNAM) for her technical support with the SEM photos. To Andrew Cabrinovic (Aquatic Invertebrates Division, The Natural History Museum, UK) for the information about the holotype.

#### RESUMEN

***Phataria unifascialis* (Echinodermata: Asteroidea) de la costa este del Océano Pacífico: redescrípción y morfología del esqueleto.** La estrella de mar *Phataria unifascialis* está ampliamente distribuida sobre fondos rocosos entre 0 y 50 m de profundidad en Pacífico Este. La descripción original de *P. unifascialis* realizada por Gray en 1840 fue breve e inexacta en algunos aspectos importantes;

actualmente tenemos más información sobre la morfología de esta especie. Este trabajo incluye una descripción detallada de *P. unifascialis* añadiendo por primera vez imágenes SEM y descripción de sus placas esqueléticas.

**Palabras clave:** Asteroidea; Ophiasteridae; *Phataria unifascialis*; redescrípción; SEM; Pacífico Este.

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