

THE PRESENCE OF INDO-PACIFIC PUFFER FISH *TORQUIGENER FILAVIMACULOSUS* HARDY & RANDALL, 1983 IN THE ISKENDERUN BAY, THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN COAST OF TURKEY

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Abstract

The first record of the lessepsian pufferfish (*Torquigener filavimaculosus* Hardy & Randall, 1983) in coast of Iskenderun Bay, Eastern Mediterranean Sea, is given in the present paper. A single young specimen was sampled with the research trawler "Mustafa Kemal I" in June, 2008, and morphological characteristic and fin formulas are described with detail.

Keywords: Fishes, Species Introduction, Teleostei, Eastern Mediterranean

Introduction

The family Tetraodontidae is represented in the Mediterranean Sea by four genera and nine species [1,2]. *Torquigener filavimaculosus* distributed in shallow waters and found on sand-muddy bottoms at depths of 3 to 57 m. It is carnivorous feeding on small benthic invertebrates. *T. filavimaculosus* has a distribution throughout Indian Ocean Red Sea, Persian Gulf and eastern Africa to Seychelles [1,3]. The puffer fish *T. filavimaculosus* was recorded for the first time in the Mediterranean Sea from Haifa Bay, Israel [4]. Following, Bilecenoglu [5,6] based on two specimens observed from the south western Mediterranean coast of Turkey (off Fethiye shore), expanded the westward distribution range of the species. Lately this species is recorded by Corsini-Foka [7] from Rhodes island.

Material and Methods

On 26 June 2008 a 52.0 mm total length (*L_T*), 48.2 mm fork length (*L_F*) and 42.6 mm standart length (*L_S*), specimens of puffer fish *T. filavimaculosus* Hardy & Randall, 1983 was caught by the research trawler "Mustafa Kemal I" from Iskenderun Bay (36° 33' N- 36° 03' E) at a depth of 24 m (Fig. 1). The single specimen has been deposited at the ichthyological collection Museum of Faculty of Fisheries, Mustafa Kemal University. Some morphometric and meristic characteristics of the specimen are given in Table 1.

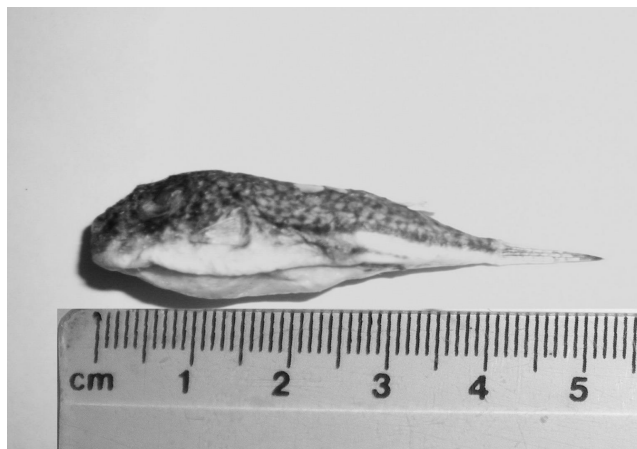


Fig. 1. *Torquigener filavimaculosus* caught off Iskenderun Bay, Eastern Mediterranean Sea, Turkey (52.0 mm *L_T*)

Results and Discussion

Body elongate, somewhat compressed laterally and inflatable. The chin distinct, mouth small and terminal with conspicuous lips, covered with short papillae. Eyes elongated. Origin of dorsal fin slightly in front of anal fin origin. Dorsal and anal fins were elongated and pointed. Caudal fin truncated. Pectoral fin rounded with wide base. Pelvic fins absent. The skin had numerous longitudinal pleats. **Colour:** The body is lightbrownish with regularly distributed grey dots dorsally and white ventrally. A mid lateral line with longitudinal series of yellow to olive-green spots. Caudal fin with brown spots, dorsal fin spotted, anal and pectorals fin transparent. Measurements, counts and body coloration of puffer fish *T. filavimaculosus* agree with descriptions of Hardy & Randall [8], Golani [4] and Golani et al [1]. *T. filavimaculosus*, is very similar to *Torquigener brevipinnis* (Regan, 1902) previously described from the Red Sea and adjacent waters by Hardy & Randall [8]. *T. filavimaculosus* further differ from *T. brevipinnis* inhaving caudal fin markings less regular and more numerous on

each ray and the dorsal fin arises above the vent. Both species differ from *Torquigener hypselogeneion* in the relative eye diameter, caudal peduncle length (smaller dimensions in *T. hypselogeneion*), and in having more dense ventral spination [9]. The present record is caught the first of the species from the coast of Iskenderun Bay, Eastern Mediterranean Sea. While a single specimen does not necessarily indicate an established population. This species may be capable of colonization in the Mediterranean in the future, like other this species.

Tab. 1. Some morphometric measurements and meristic counts of puffer fish

Measurements (mm) and counts	<i>T. filavimaculosus</i>
Number of specimens	1
Total length (<i>L_T</i>)	520
Fork length (<i>L_F</i>)	482
Standart length (<i>L_S</i>)	426
Body depth	116
Head length	99
Head width	73
Predorsal length	242
Snout	40
Snout to origin of dorsal fin	205
Snout to origin of pectoral fin	118
Preanal length	242
Prepectoral length	132
Eye diameter	37
Interorbital distance	66
Preorbital length	69
Longest dorsal ray length	52
Longest anal ray length	41
Maximum pectoral fin length	43
Maximum caudal fin length	84
Fin rays	
Dorsal finrays	9
Anal finrays	7
Pectoral finrays	14
Caudal finrays	10

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