

BELONIDAE

needlefishes

Ablennes hians

(Valenciennes, 1846)



Photo : Philip C. Heemstra

Relevant synonyms: None

Misidentification: None

Meristic formula: D, 23-26; A, 24-28; P, 13-15, V, 13-15, Ver., 82-97

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body compressed and very elongated, its depth ca. 10% of SL. Both jaws very long and pointed, their length is 70% of head length. Large eyes. No gill rakers. Dorsal and anal fins in posterior position, their first rays are longest, forming falcated lobes. Pectoral fin also falcated. Pelvic fin located near middle of the body. Caudal fin forked, with lower lobe longer than upper lobe.

color: Blue back with silvery-white flank and belly. Series of several bluish-grey vertical bars on the posterior part of the body (these bars are often faded).

common size: 400-700 mm (max 1400mm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Other species of **Belonidae**: Dorsal and anal fins are not falcated. No dark bars on the body. Body almost round in cross-section.

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Pelagic fish, lives solitary or in schools. Feeding on fishes. Eggs and larvae are planktonic.

habitat: mostly offshore but often reaches coastal waters.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: A cosmopolitan species, found on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, Indo-Pacific including the Red Sea.

Mediterranean: a few specimens have been collected from Syria to Israel.

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

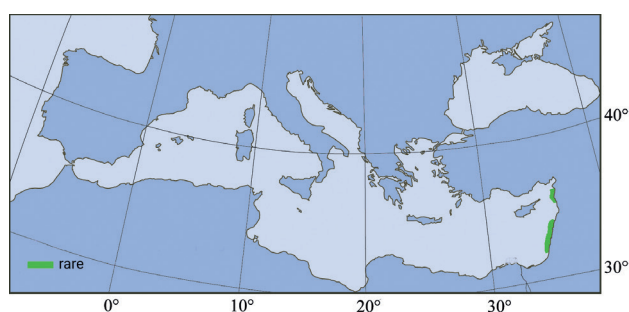
Most likely via the Suez Canal.

ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Rare.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

Commercial species in its original distribution but is still too rare to have commercial value in the Mediterranean.



1st Med. record
Israel, Natanya
(20 km north
of Tel-Aviv).

KEY REFERENCES

- Alshawy F., Ibrahim A., Hussein C. and Lahlah M. 2019. First record of the flat needlefish *Ablennes hians* (Valenciennes, 1846) from Syrian marine waters (eastern Mediterranean). *Marine Biodiversity Records*. 4pp.
- Collette B.B. and Parin N.V. 1970. Needlefishes Belonidae of the Eastern Atlantic Ocean. *Atlantide Report* 11: 7-60.
- Golani D. 2019. First record of the flat needlefish *Ablennes hians* (Valenciennes, 1846) in the Mediterranean Sea (Osteichthyes, Beloniformes, Belonidae). *BioInvasion Records*, 8(2): 410-412.