

**MURAENIDAE**

moray eels

**Enchelycore anatina**

(Lowe, 1839)\*



Photo : Avraham Niv

Relevant synonyms: None  
 Misidentification: None

**SHORT DESCRIPTION**

Body very elongated. Dorsal fin originating above branchial opening, very long, together with anal fin confluent with caudal fin. Pectoral and pelvic fin absent. Head pointed with a distinctly elevated occipital region. Anterior nostril tubular. Posterior nostril round to oval opening in front of eye. Large mouth, its cleft extending back well behind eye. Jaw arched, with many fang-like teeth, which are visible even when mouth is closed. No scales on body.

**color:** body dark brown with numerous yellow blotches and dots arranged in longitudinal rows. Snout and cheeks light brown with yellow dots.

**common size:** 50 - 100 cm (max. 120 cm).

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

- *Gymnothorax unicolor*: jaws not arched; body uniformly colored.
- *Gymnothorax reticularis*: jaws not arched; dark bands along the ventral surface.
- *Muraena helena*: jaws not arched; both posterior and anterior nostrils have tubes.

**Congridae, Muraenecosidae and Ophichthidae** (in part): pectoral fin present.

\*Note: the year of the description of this species is often erroneously given as 1837. For further explanation, see Ben-Tuvia and Golani (1984).

**BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY**

Feeds on fishes and large invertebrates. Eggs and larvae are apparently pelagic.

**habitat:** rocky.

**DISTRIBUTION**

**Worldwide:** Eastern Atlantic. Mainly insular species from the Azores to St. Helena Island.

**Mediterranean:** recorded first from Israel (Ben-Tuvia and Golani, 1984); later, off Elaфонissos Island, Greece (R. Fricke pers. comm.); more recently from Turkey (Yokes *et al.*, 2002), Croatia (Lipej *et al.*, 2011), Cyprus (Katsanevakis *et al.*, 2011), Greece (Pirkenseer 2013) including Rhodos (Kalogirou *et al.*, 2010), Southern Italy (Guidetti *et al.*, 2012) and Malta (Deidun *et al.*, 2015).

**MODE OF INTRODUCTION**

Via Gibraltar.

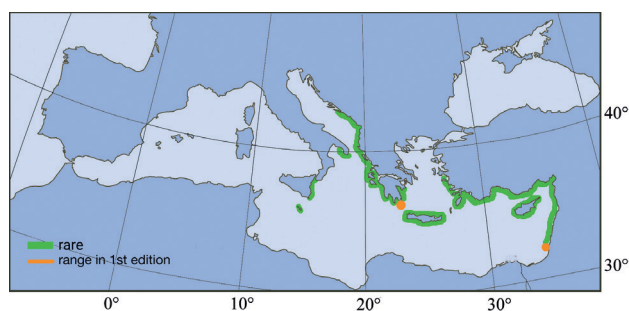
**ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS**

Occasionally observed along the eastern Mediterranean coasts.

**speculated reasons for success:** the long pelagic larval stage may enable the crossing of long distances.

**IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS**

None.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Israel, 1984.

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Ben-Tuvia A. and Golani D. 1984. A West African fangtooth moray eel *Enchelycore anatina* from the Mediterranean coast of Israel. *Copeia*, 541-544.
- Deidun A., Watson D., Castriota L., Mazza G. and Pasolli L. 2015. First record of the fangtooth moray, *Enchelycore anatina* (Actinopterygii: Anguilliformes: Muraenidae), from Maltese waters, central Mediterranean. *Acta Ichthyologica et Piscatoria* 45(3): 315-317.
- Kalogirou S. 2010. First record of the non-indigenous fangtooth moray *Enchelycore anatina* from Rhodos Island, south-eastern Aegean Sea. *Mediterranean Marine Science*, 11: 357-360
- Lipej L., Furlan B., Antolović N., Golani D. and Dulčić J. 2011. The first record of fangtooth moray *Enchelycore anatina* (Lowe, 1839) in the Adriatic Sea. *Journal of Applied Ichthyology* 27: 1387-1389.
- Pirkenseer C. 2013. First record of the moray eel *Enchelycore anatina* (Muraenidae, Anguilliformes) from the Messinian coast (Peloponnese, Greece). *Marine Biodiversity Records*, 6: e135.