Equulites klunzingeri
(Steindachner, 1898)

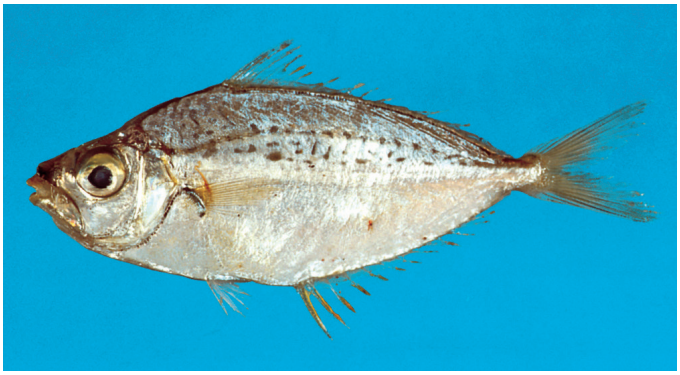


Photo : David Darom

Relevant synonyms: Leiognathus klunzingeri, Equula klunzingeri, Leiognathus mediterraneus
Misidentification: Leiognathus berbis
Meristic formula: D, VII + 15-16; A, III+15-16; P, 18-20; GR, 15-18

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body oblong, very compressed. A single dorsal fin, the second spine enlarged. Caudal fin forked. Anal fin long, more than half of SL, the second spine enlarged. Bony ridge on top of the head just in front of dorsal fin origin. Mouth strongly protrusible, tubular and directed downwards when protracted. Jaw with villiform teeth. No vomer nor palatine teeth.

color: body silvery grey with white belly. Dark spots on the back and the upper flanks.

common size: 4-8 cm (max. 11 cm SL).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Carangidae: mouth not strongly protrusible. Two detached anal spines.

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Schooling species. Feeds on benthic invertebrates. Spawning season in the summer, eggs and larvae are planktonic.

habitat: benthic in continental shelf to 70 m.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: Northwest Indian ocean, but since *Leiognathus* badly needs taxonomic revision, the distribution range might change.

Mediterranean: recorded first in Syria (Gruvel, 1931); successively recorded in Israel (Liebman, 1934), Rhodes (Tortonese, 1938), Turkey (Erazi, 1942; Avsar *et al.,* 1988; Innal *et al.,* 2015), Lampedusa Island (Ben-Tuvia,1966)*, N-E Greece (Papaconstantinou and Tortonese, 1980) and Egypt (El Sayed, 1994). Southern Adriatic (Dulčić and Pallaoro, 2002).

*Note: a single specimen was mentioned by Ben-Tuvia (1966), from a record by Gilat, south-west off Lampedusa); as there is no other report from the Sicily Channel in the past 54 years, the presence of this species is considered doubtful.

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

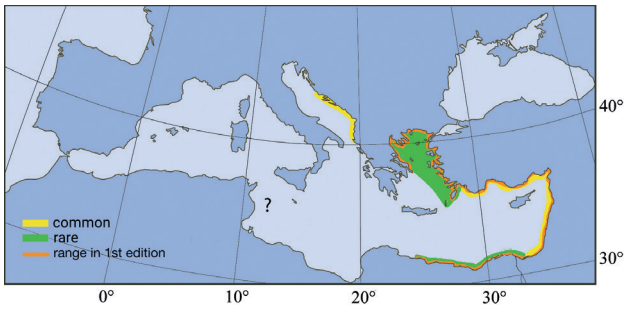
Via the Suez Canal.

ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Very common in Eastern Mediterranean.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

Caught in large number as bycatch in trawl ; no commercial value due to its small size.



1st Med. record
Syria, 1931.

KEY REFERENCES

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- Dulčić J. and Pallaoro A. 2002. First record of the lessepsian migrant *Leiognathus klunzingeri* (Pisces: Leiognathidae) from the Adriatic Sea. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the UK.*, 82: 523-524.
- Gruvel A. 1931. Les Etats de Syrie. Richesses marines et fluviales, Exploitation actuelle, Avenir. 72-134 pp. Société des Editions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales. Paris.