Fistularia commersonii

(Rüppell, 1835)

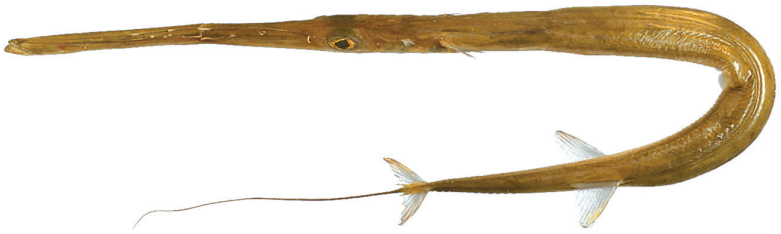


Photo : Ernesto Azzurro

Relevant synonyms: None
Misidentification: None
Meristic formula: D, 15; A, 14; P, 14-15; V, 6

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body extremely elongated, becoming depressed after head, which is very long, more than 1/3 of SL. Snout tubular and long. Two lateral ridges on length of snout, with serration on posterior part. Small slightly oblique mouth at end of snout. Teeth very small. Interorbital space flat with delicate ridges. Dorsal and anal fins posterior in position, opposite each other. Caudal fin forked, with two very elongated and filamented middle rays. Skin smooth, without bony plates along the midline of the back.

color: head, back and flank gray to olive-green (in Mediterranean) while specimens from outside of the Mediterranean often have blue spots or stripes on back.

common size: 20-100 cm (max. 150 cm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Fistularia petimba: bony plates along midline of back. Body shape and filamented middle rays distinguish this species from all other Mediterranean fishes.

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Lives solitary or in small groups, near reefs. Feeds mainly on fish, which are caught by ambush or pursuit, as well as squids and shrimps. Signatures of rapid adaptive evolution have been highlighted in the Mediterranean population (Bernardi *et al.*, 2016).

habitat: close vicinity of reefs.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean, including the coasts of Central and South America.

Mediterranean: recorded first in Israel, caught by trawl at depths of 15-35 m (Golani, 2000), although isolated introductions might have occurred prior to this date (Bariche *et al.,* 2013). Since 2000, this species experienced a population explosion along the coast of Israel and a rapid spread westward, reaching the westernmost sectors of the Mediterranean in 2007 (Sánchez-Tocino *et al.,* 2007). At this point *F. commersonii* has been recorded in all Mediterranean sub-basins, including vast areas of the western Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea (Dulčić *et al.,* 2012), where observations remain occasional, probably due to population instability (Azzurro *et al.,* 2012).

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

Via the Suez Canal.

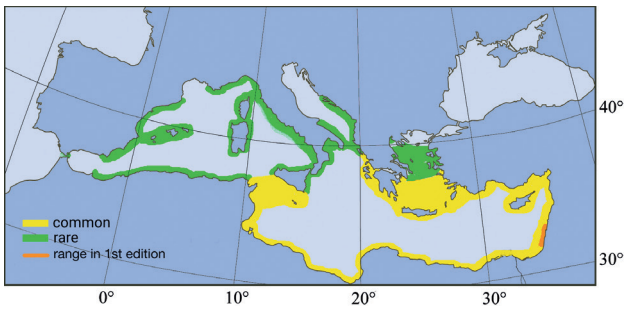
ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Very common.

speculated reasons for success: reduced competition with native analogues.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

Edible, of some commercial relevance in eastern Mediterranean countries.



1st Med. record
Israel, 2000

KEY REFERENCES

- Azzurro E., Soto S., Garofalo G. and Maynou F. 2012. *Fistularia commersonii* in the Mediterranean Sea: invasion history and distribution modeling based on presence-only records. *Biological invasions*, 15(5): 977-990.
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- Bernardi G., Azzurro E., Golani D., Miller M.R. 2016. Genomic signatures of rapid adaptive evolution in the bluespotted cornetfish, a Mediterranean Lessepsian invader. *Molecular Ecology*, 25: 3384-3396.
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