

**HEMIRAMPHIDAE**

halfbeaks

**Hemiramphus far**

(Forsskål, 1775)

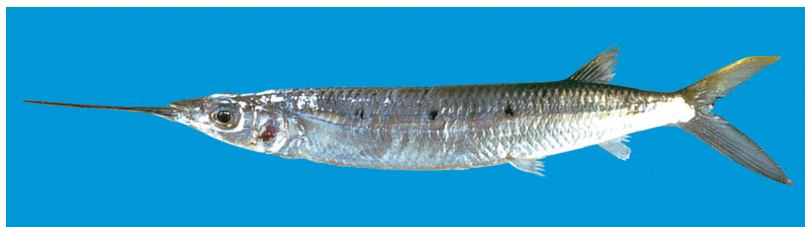


Photo : Philip C. Heemstra

Relevant synonyms: None

Misidentification: *Hemiramphus marginatus*

Meristic formula: D, 11-14; A, 9-12; P, 11-13; V, 6; LL, 52-54; GR, 24-36

**SHORT DESCRIPTION**

Body elongated and slightly compressed. Lower jaw greatly prolonged, beak-like. Upper jaw short and triangular. Dorsal and anal fins posterior in position. Anal fin origin below middle of dorsal fin base. Caudal fin deeply forked, lower lobe much larger than upper lobe. Pelvic fin abdominal positioned behind midpoint of flank. Pectoral fin short. Large cycloid scales, easily detached. No scales on the upper jaw.

**color:** back bluish grey with silvery white belly. A series of 3-9 (usually 4-6) black spots (often hardly visible)\* along the flanks. Upper caudal fin yellow. Tip of lower jaw red.

**common size:** 10-30 cm (max. 40 cm).

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

*Hyporhamphus spp.*: scales on the upper jaws (naked in *H. far*).

\*in the Mediterranean population the blackish spots that are commonly used to distinguish *H. far* from closely related species are often faded or completely absent.

### BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Schooling species. Capable of leaping and skittering on the water surface with half of its body out of the water. Feeds on zooplankton and floating objects. Eggs large with adhesive filaments, which attach to floating or benthic objects.

**habitat:** epipelagic, inshore.

### DISTRIBUTION

**Worldwide:** wide Indo-Pacific from the Red Sea and east Africa to the Philippines and Samoa.

**Mediterranean:** recorded first from Palestine as *H. marginatus* by Steinitz (1927). Successive records from Syria (Gravel, 1931), Rhodes (Tortonese, 1938), Egypt (El Sayed, 1994), and Tunisia (Charfi-Cheikhrouha, 2004), where the population has recently increased in abundance (Boughedir *et al.*, 2015). Also reached the coasts of Algeria (Kara *et al.*, 2012) and Lampedusa, Italy (Falautano *et al.*, 2014).

### MODE OF INTRODUCTION

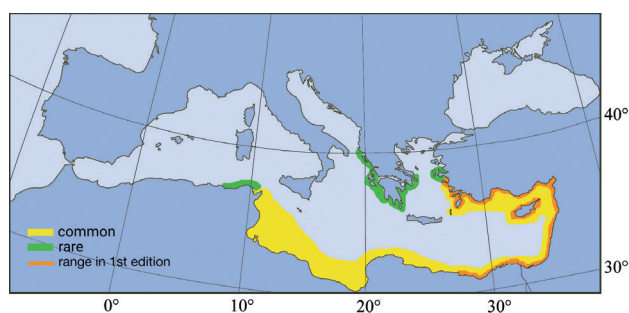
Via the Suez Canal.

### ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Very abundant in the Eastern Basin, up to the Sicily Strait.

### IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

Large schools are caught mainly in purse seine and occasionally in trammel nets, contributing to the local fisheries in the Levant.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Palestine, 1927.

### KEY REFERENCES

- Boughedir W., Rifi M., Shakman E., Maynou F., Ghanem R., Souissi J.B. and Azzurro E. 2015. Tracking the invasion of *Hemiramphus far* and *Saurida undosquamis* along the southern Mediterranean coasts: a local ecological knowledge study. *Mediterranean Marine Science*, 16(3): 628-635.
- Falautano M., Castriota L., Battaglia P., Romeo T. and Andaloro F. 2014. First record of the Lessepsian species *Hemiramphus far* (Hemiramphidae) in Italian waters. *Cybium*, 38(3): 235-237.
- Kara H., Rouag F., Laouira L. 2012. Westward range expansion of the lessepsian spotted halfbeak *Hemiramphus far* (Hemiramphidae) in the Mediterranean Sea. *Marine Biodiversity Records*, 5:e.
- Steinitz W. 1927. Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Küstenfauna Palästinas. I. *Pubblicazioni della Stazione Zoologica di Napoli*, 8(3-4): 311-353.