

**DASYATIDAE**

stingrays

**Himantura uarnak**

(Forsskål, 1775)

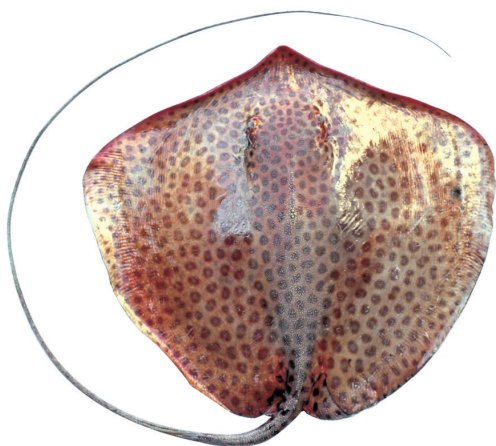


Photo : David Darom

Relevant synonyms: Trygon  
uarnak, Dasyatis uarnak,  
Himantura leoparda  
Misidentification: None

**SHORT DESCRIPTION**

Body flat, almost rhomboid shaped, with nearly straight anterior margins, snout obtusely triangular. Pectoral fin apex rounded (in juveniles) to nearly rounded in adults. Spiracles situated closely posterior to eyes. Mouth with 4-5 fleshy papillae. Long whip-like tail, 2.5-3.5 longer than disc width with one (rarely two) serrated spines close to its base. Upper surface mostly smooth, with a series of medium small flattened tubercles from eyes to tail base.

**color:** upper surface light brown to greyish-yellow with numerous dark brown spots. Lower surface white.

**common size:** disc diameter 40 - 120 cm.

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

- *Taniura grabata*: posterior part of tail has membranous fold below.
- *Dasyatis* spp.: upper surface more or less uniform in color (some *D. pastinaca* specimens have a bluish-grey pattern on a brown-olive background).

**Rajidae:** body covered, at least partially, with prickles and/or thornlets; no whip-like tail.

**Myliobatidae, Rhinopteridae and Mobulidae:** head distinctly protrudes from body.

**Gymnuridae:** tail shorter than disc width.

### BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Feeds on fishes, crustaceans and, to a lesser extent, on molluscs. An ovoviviparous species. Reaches sexual maturity at the age of 4 (disc diameter 1 m). 3-5 offspring of 20 cm disc diameter born after one year gestation.

**habitat:** inhabits sandy or muddy substrates at depths to 50 m. Known as a euryhaline species often penetrating estuaries.

### DISTRIBUTION

**Worldwide:** species recorded in the literature as having a wide Indo-Pacific distribution from the Red Sea, Eastern Africa to Northern Australia and the Philippines. However, since *H. uarnak* is often confused with other closely-related species, its true distribution range will be known only after taxonomic study of the entire complex.

**Mediterranean:** recorded first from Israel (Ben-Tuvia, 1955) ; successive records in Mersin, Turkey (Ben-Tuvia, 1966), Lebanon (Mouneinne, 1977), Egypt (El Sayed, 1994), Turkey (Basusta et al., 1998).

### MODE OF INTRODUCTION

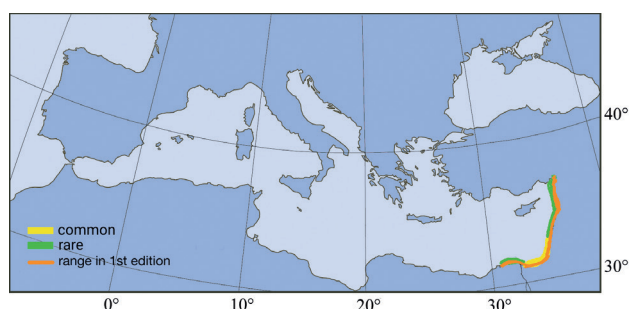
Via the Suez Canal.

### ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Prevalent with steady population.

### IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

Large specimens are often caught in trawl. Not commercially important.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Israel, 1955

### KEY REFERENCES

- Basusta N., Erdem, Ü. and Kumlu M. 1998. Two new fish records for Turkish seas: round stingray *Taeniura grabata* and skate stingray *Himantura uarnak* (Dasyatidae). *Israel Journal of Zoology* 44:65-66.
- Ben-Tuvia A. 1955. Two Indo-Pacific fishes, *Dasyatis uarnak* and *Upeneus moluccensis*, in the eastern Mediterranean. *Nature*, 176:1177-1178.
- Last P.R. and Stevens J.D. 1994. Sharks and Rays of Australia. *CSIRO Division of Fisheries*, Australia. 513 pp. +84 plates.
- Last P.R., White W.T., Carvalho M.R., de Séret B., Stehmann M.F.W. and Naylor G.J (eds.) 2016. Rays of the World. *CSIRO Publishing*, Clayton South VIC. 790 pp.