

TETRAODONTIDAE

pufferfishes

Lagocephalus suezensis

Clark and Gohar, 1953

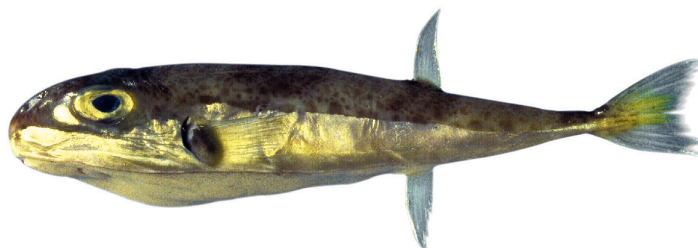


Photo : David Darom

Relevant synonyms: None
Misidentification: *Lagocephalus scleratus*
Meristic formula: D, 10-11; A, 9; P, 15-16

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body inflatable, when not inflated, elongated and round in front, tapering toward caudal fin. Pointed short-bases, dorsal and anal fins, posterior in position. Caudal fin forked to lunated. Pectoral fin with wide base and round margin. Pelvic fin absent. Large head with blunt snout. Small mouth, jaws beak-like with two teeth in each jaw. Gill slit in front of pectoral fin base. No scales. Minute spinules on the belly and on the dorsal surface, extending to origin of dorsal fin. Two lateral lines curving anteriorly around eyes.

color: back-brown to olive grey with irregular shaped darker brown to grey dots in various sizes. Bright silver stripe on the side and white belly.

common size: 7-15 cm (max. 18 cm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

- *Lagocephalus guentheri*: small spinules on the dorsal surface, not extending posteriorly beyond the pectoral fin margin.
- *Lagocephalus scleratus*: 11-13 dorsal rays, spinals on the back almost reaching caudal fin.
- *Torquigener flavimaculosus*: round caudal fin.
- *Sphoeroides pachygaster*: smooth skin.
- *Chilomycterus spilostylus*: three rooted spines, fixed in erected position.

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Like other members of the family, capable when threatened to inflate its body by engulfing water or air (when taken out from the water). Feeds on benthic invertebrates. Spawning season in the summer. Eggs and larvae are planktonic.

habitat: benthic sandy and muddy to 40 m.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: Red Sea endemic.

Mediterranean: recorded first from Lebanon, misidentified as *L. sceleratus* (Mouneimne, 1977) ; later recorded in the Mediterranean from Israel (Golani, 1996). Recorded in Rhodes (Corsini *et al.*, 2005), and recently recorded from Libya (Ben Abdallah *et al.*, 2011).

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

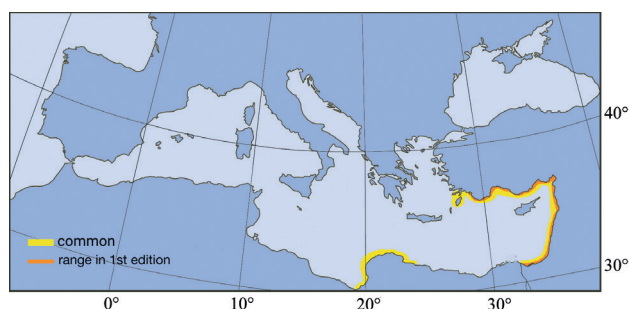
Via the Suez Canal.

ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Very common.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

Caught as by-catch in shallow water trawls. No commercial value. Some internal organs are toxic.



1st Med. record
Lebanon, 1977

KEY REFERENCES

- Ben Abdallah A., Nafti A., Al Turkey A. and Shakman E.A. 2011. A new record of a Lessepsian fish, *Lagocephalus suezensis* (Actinopterygii: Tetraodontiformes: Tetraodontidae), in the South Mediterranean (Libyan coast). *Acta Ichthyologica et Piscatoria*, 41(1): 71-72.
- Corsini M., Margies P., Kondilatos G. and Economidis P.S. 2005. Lessepsian migration of fishes to the Aegean Sea: first record of *Tylerius spinosissimus* (Tetraodontidae) from the Mediterranean, and six more fish records from Rhodes. *Cybium*, 29: 347-354.
- Golani D. 1996. The marine ichthyofauna of the eastern Levant - history, inventory and characterization. *Israel Journal of Zoology*, 42: 15-55.
- Mouneimne N. 1977. Liste des poissons de la côte du Liban (Méditerranée orientale). *Cybium*, 1: 37-66.