

**OPLEGNATHIDAE**

knifejaws

**Oplegnathus fasciatus**

(Temminck and Schlegel, 1844)



Photo : J. Attard

Relevant synonyms: None  
 Misidentification: None  
 Meristic formula: D, XI-  
 XII+16-18; A, III+12-13;  
 P,17-18; V, I+5; LL, 72-75

**SHORT DESCRIPTION**

Body relatively deep and compressed. Small head with pointed snout. Small mouth; its jaw not reaching beyond the vertical of eye. The teeth in both jaws of adult fused to form sharp beak-like dental plates. A single spine on the operculum. Preoperculum serrated. A single dorsal fin with a deep notch between spinules portion and the soft ray portion. Deep incisions in the membranes of dorsal fin. Anal fin triangular. Caudal fin moderately forked, both lobes rounded. Body covered with small ctenoid scales.

**color:** young specimens with seven black vertical bars on a bluish-grey background. The first four bars approximately the same width as the intervals between them. Last three bars much narrower. The soft rays portions of dorsal, anal and the entire ventral fin are black. Large specimens become brown-grey, the bars faint or completely absent.

**common size:** 10-50 cm (max. 80 cm).

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

• *Abudefduf* spp. : five vertical bars.

**Scaridae, Tetraodontidae and Diodontidae:** no vertical bars on the body.  
 Other families: teeth are not fused to form a dental plate in each jaw.

**BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY**

Omnivorous species but feeds mainly on hard shells or external skeletons which they crack with their sharp edged teeth. Juveniles know how to associate with floating objects.

**habitat:** coastal rocky substrate.

**DISTRIBUTION**

**Worldwide:** Far East from Japan and Korea to Taiwan and the Hawaiian Islands.

**Mediterranean:** several specimens were collected from Malta (Schembri *et al.*; 2010) and the Adriatic Sea (Ciriaco and Lipej, 2015 ; Dulčić *et al.*; 2016).

**MODE OF INTRODUCTION**

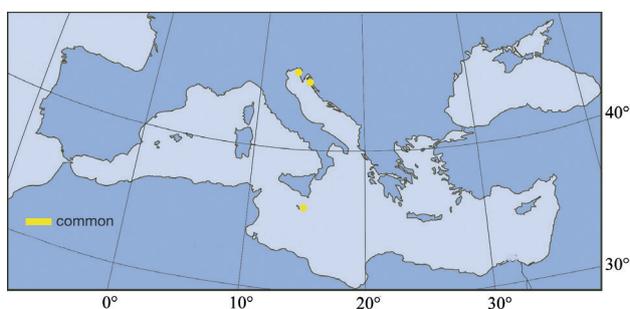
Most likely via ballast water (sea chest).

**ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS**

Very rare.

**IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS**

None.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Malta, 2009

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Ciriaco S. and Lipej L. 2015. First record of *Oplegnathus fasciatus* from Italy and Adriatic Sea. p. 686. In: Crocetta F. *et al.* : New Mediterranean Biodiversity Records (October 2015). *Mediterranean Marine Science*, 16 (3): 682-702.
- Dulčić J., Dragičević B., Vrgoč N., Isaljlović I., Dodo Ž. and Antolović N. 2016. A new record of the barred knifejaw *Oplegnathus fasciatus* (Perciformes: Oplegnathidae), a Pacific fish, in the Adriatic Sea (Urinj, Croatia). *Cybium*, 40(3): 261-262.
- Schembri P.J., Bodilis P., Evans J. and Francour P. 2010. Occurrence of Barred knifejaw, *Oplegnathus fasciatus* (Actinopterygii: Perciformes: Oplegnathidae), in Malta (Central Mediterranean) with a discussion on possible modes of entry. *Acta Ichthyologica et Piscatoria*, 40(2): 101-104.