

## OSTRACIIDAE

boxfishes, trunkfishes

### *Ostracion cubicus*

Linnaeus, 1758



Photo : Oz Ritner

Relevant synonyms: None  
 Misidentification: None  
 Meristic formula: D, 9; A, 9, P, 10

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body rectangular in cross section, covered with hard and rough bony hexagonal plates, with openings for mouth and nostril, gill opening, anus, caudal peduncle and dorsal, anal and pectoral fins. Small head and small mouth with thick lips. Ten teeth on the upper jaw and eight on the lower jaw. Eyes in upper position. Dorsal fin in posterior position. All fins are rounded.

**color:** Body yellowish to brown. White to blueish spots surrounded by black edges on the body plates. All fins are yellow. Juveniles, until the size of 4 cm, are bright yellow with black spots. The number of spots on the body increases with growth.

**size:** 4-30 cm (max. 45 cm)

#### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The rectangle box-like body shape distinguishes this species from all Mediterranean species

**BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY**

Solitary, slow-swimming fish. Feeds on small invertebrates. During the spawning season, several females gather in male territory for reproduction activity. Eggs and larvae are planktonic. Capable of secret toxic substance when threatened.

**habitat:** live in vicinity of rocky substrate or coral reef habitat to depth of 50 m.

**DISTRIBUTION**

**Worldwide:** Indo-Pacific.

**Mediterranean:** Lebanon (Bariche, 2011), Antalya, Turkey (Gökoğlu and Korum, 2017) and Israel (Katsanevakis *et al.*, 2020).

**MODE OF INTRODUCTION**

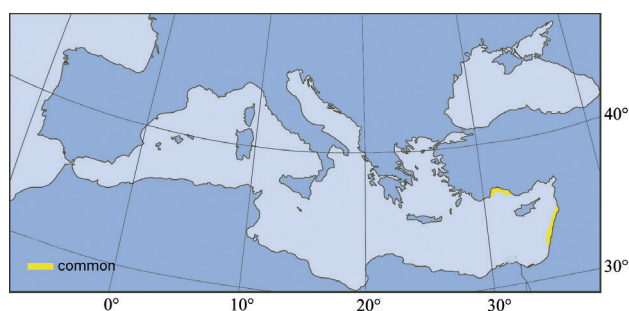
Via the Suez Canal.

**ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS**

Rare.

**IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS**

Not an edible fish, but used in the aquarium trade market.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Lebanon  
(Bariche, 2011).

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Bariche M. 2011. First record of the cube boxfish *Ostracion cubicus* (Ostraciidae) and addition record of *Champsodon vorax* (Champsodontidae) from the Mediterranean. *Aqua, International Journal of Ichthyology*, 17(4): 181-184.
- Crocetta F. and Bariche M. 2016. Citizen scientists contribute to better knowledge of the Mediterranean marine biota: records of five alien and a native species from Lebanon. *Mediterranean Marine Science* 17(2): 620-623.
- Gökoğlu M. and Korum J. 2017. First record of the yellow boxfish, *Ostracion cubicus* Linnaeus, 1758 (Tetraodontiformes: Ostraciidae) in the Turkish Mediterranean. *Mediterranean Marine Science* 18(2): 372-373.
- Katsanevakis S., Poursanidis D., Hoffman R. *et al.* 2020. Unpublished Mediterranean records of marine alien and cryptogenic species. *BioInvasions Records*, 9(2): 165-182.