

PLATYCEPHALIDAE

flatheads

Platycephalus indicus

(Linnaeus, 1758)



Photo : Katherine Attack

Relevant synonyms: None

Misidentification: None

Meristic formula: D, X + 13; A, 13; P, 18-20; V, I + 5; LL, 67-84; GR, 8-11

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body elongated with depressed head. The first dorsal fin barely connected to the second part, its first and last spines separate from the remaining spines. Soft rays of dorsal and anal fins moderately incised. Caudal fin truncated. Pectoral fin thoracic. Large head (2.9-3.2 in SL) with smooth bony ridges. Lower jaw projected. Small teeth in both jaws. Vomerine teeth in a single transverse patch. Eye dorsally situated. Scales ctenoid.

color: back brown grey with whitish belly. Several dark bars on the back of most specimens. Numerous dark spots and blotches on pectoral and pelvic fins. Two (rarely, three) distinct black stripes on caudal fin.

common size: 30-50 cm (max. 70 cm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

- *Elates ransonnetti*: more than 82 lateral line scales. Long preopercular spine
- *Papilloculiceps longiceps* and *Sorsogona prionota*: less than 65 scales in lateral line; two separate vomerine teeth patches.

Scorpaenidae: clearly continuous dorsal fin.

Triglidae: three lowermost pectoral rays detached.

Callionymidae: much smaller species; pointed snout with small mouth; no spiny ridges on the head.

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Feeds mainly on crustacean and fish. Hunts by "sit and wait" method. Eggs and larvae are pelagic.

habitat: benthic on sandy or muddy substrate to depth of 40 m. Euryhaline species reported to penetrate estuaries.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: wide Indo-Pacific, Red Sea to eastern Africa, south to Durban and Madagascar to Japan and northern Australia.

Mediterranean: recorded first in Israel (Ben-Tuvia, 1953a); successively recorded in Egypt (Krefft, 1963) and Lebanon (Mouneimne, 1977).

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

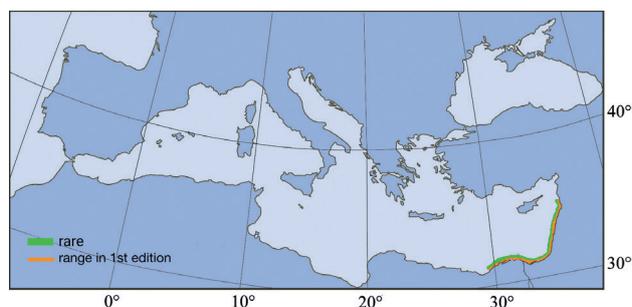
Via the Suez Canal.

ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Specimens occasionally collected by trawl at depth of 30-50 m.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

None.



1st Med. record
Israel, 1953

KEY REFERENCES

- Ben-Tuvia A. 1953a. Mediterranean fishes of Israel. *Bulletin of the Sea Fisheries Research Station, Haifa*, 8: 1-40.
- Golani D., Öztürk B. and Başusta N. 2006. *Fishes of the Eastern Mediterranean*. Turkish Marine Research Foundation, Publication no. 24, Istanbul, Turkey. 259 pp.
- Krefft G. 1963. *Platycephalus indicus* (L.), 1758, ein neues Faunenelement der ägyptischen Mittelmeerküste. *Archiv für Fischereiwissenschaft.*, 14(3): 148-152.
- Mouneimne N. 1977. Liste des poissons de la côte du Liban (Méditerranée orientale). *Cybium*, 1: 37-66.