

PLOTOSIDAE

eel catfishes

Plotosus lineatus

(Thunberg, 1787)

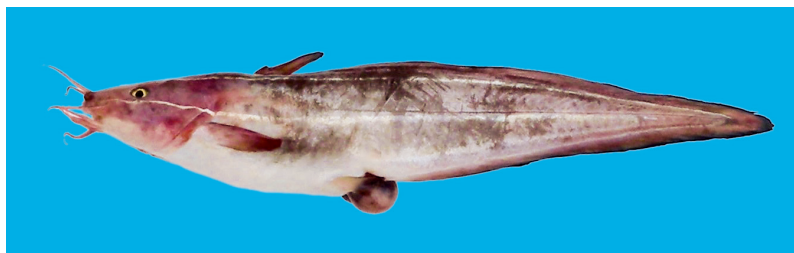


Photo : Michel Bariche

Relevant synonyms: None

Misidentification: None

Meristic formula: D1, I+4; D2, 80-96; A, 65-71; P, I+10-11; V, 11-12

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body elongated, becoming compressed after anus. Head round, large and broad. Moderately large eye. Upper jaw overhanging with distinct lips. Conical teeth in upper jaw visible when mouth closed. Triangular vomerine patch with granular teeth. Four pairs of barbels, one nasal, one maxillary and two pairs on lower jaw. Two dorsal fins, the first with a stout spine. Second dorsal fin long and confluent with anal fin. A strong spine at pectoral fin origin. No scales on the body. A distinct dendritic organ made of folded tissue.

color: brown body with two narrow white stripes originating at snout, one crossing above eye, the other below. Ventral surface white, with brownish-red dendritic organ.

common size: 10-25 cm (max. 32 cm)

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Four pairs of barbels distinguish this fish from all other Mediterranean species.

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Feeds on benthic invertebrates, mainly crustaceans and small fish. Juveniles form dense groups that move back and forth, resembling a large organism.

habitat: inshore in a variety of habitats, including lagoons, sandy or rocky substrate. Rocky and coral reefs in its original distribution.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: Indo-Pacific, from the Red Sea and east Africa to Japan and Samoa.

Mediterranean: several specimens were recorded from Israel (Golani, 2002) and subsequently more were collected along the coast of Israel by trawl. More recently recorded in Lebanon (Bariche and Azzurro, 2016), Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia (Ounifi-Ben Amor *et al.*, 2016).

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

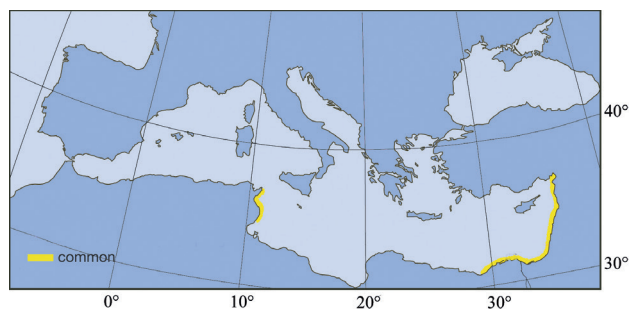
Via the Suez Canal.

ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Common.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

No commercial value. Dorsal and pectoral spines highly venomous. Several cases of injury followed by hospitalization occurred in Israel.



1st Med. record
Israel, 2002.

KEY REFERENCES

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- Golani D. 2002. The Indo-Pacific striped eel catfish, *Plotosus lineatus* (Thunberg, 1787) (Osteichthyes: Siluriformes) a new record from the Mediterranean. *Scientia Marina*, 66: 321-323.
- Ounifi-Ben Amor K., Rifi M., Ghanem R., Draief I., Zaouali J. and Ben Souissi J. 2016. Update of alien fauna and new records from Tunisia marine waters. *Mediterranean Marine Science*, 124-143.
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