

## POMACANTHIDAE

angelfishes, emperorfishes

### Pomacanthus maculosus

(Forsskål, 1775)



Relevant synonyms: None  
 Misidentification:  
 Pomacanthus asfur  
 Meristic formula: D, XII-  
 XIII+21-23; A, III+19-21;  
 P, 18-20; V, I+5; LL, 71-78

Photo : Hatem Moushir

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body deep and compressed. Small head with small and slightly oblique mouth. In both jaws bands of small tightly-packed depressible unicuspid teeth forming together a brush-like surface. Upper profile of head slightly concave in adults and straight in young. Posterior margin of preoperculum with a stout spine at its angle. The first 5-7 dorsal fin spines deeply notched. 4th and 5th dorsal rays and 4th and 5th anal rays very elongated. Caudal fin rounded. First pelvic ray elongated.

**color:** in adults : body bluish-grey with wide vertical yellow bar, slightly behind the center. Many black spots on the nape and posterior part of the head. Caudal fin yellow.

- In juveniles : body dark blue with fine, vertical light blue and white lines.

**common size:** 10-30 cm (max. 50 cm).

#### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The color pattern of this species differs significantly from all other Mediterranean species.

**BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY**

Live solitary or in pairs. Feeds chiefly on sponges and algae. The different color pattern of young specimens allows them to live in the vicinity of the adults' territory without being attacked. After the dominant adults are removed, the young change their color pattern and take over the territory. Eggs and larvae are pelagic.

**habitat:** among coral reefs and rocky habitats at depth of 5-60 m.

**DISTRIBUTION**

**Worldwide:** Red Sea, the Arabian (Persian) Gulf to Mozambique.

**Mediterranean:** Lebanon and Israel. First recorded from Lebanon (Bariche, 2012) based on a specimen that was photographed but not preserved. The first substantiated record was from Israel (Salameh *et al.*, (2012). Recorded also from Malta (Evans and Schembri, 2017) and Egypt (Mabruk *et al.*, 2021).

**MODE OF INTRODUCTION**

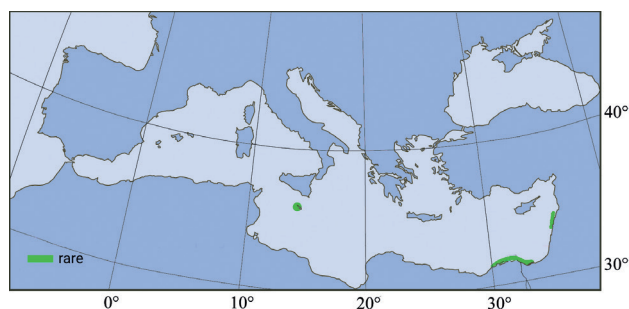
Via the Suez Canal or as aquarium release/escapee.

**ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS**

Rare.

**IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS**

None in the Mediterranean; use in the aquarium trade.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Lebanon, 2008.

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Allen G.R., Steene R. and Allen M. 1998. A guide to Angelfishes and Butterflyfishes. Odyssey Publishing/ Tropical Reef Res, Perth, Australia.
- Bariche M. 2012. First record of the angelfish *Pomacanthus maculosus* (Teleostei: Pomacanthidae) in the Mediterranean. *Aqua. International Journal of Ichthyology*, 16(1): 31-33.
- Evans J. and Schembri P.J. 2017. Not another first: the "first" Mediterranean record of *Pomacanthus asfur* (Forsskål, 1775) is probably based on a misidentification. *Cybium*, 41(1): 75-76.
- Salameh P., Sonin O., Edelist D. and Golani D. 2012. The first substantiated record of the Yellowbar Angelfish, *Pomacanthus maculosus* (Perciformes, Pomacanthidae) in the Mediterranean. *Acta Ichthyologica et Piscatoria*, 42(1): 73-74.