

SIGANIDAE

rabbitfishes, spinefoots

Siganus rivulatus

(Forsskål, 1775)



Photo : Ernesto Azzurro

Relevant synonyms: *Teuthis signa*, *Teuthis rivulata*
 Misidentification: None
 Meristic formula: D, XIV+10; A, VII+8-10; P, 15-17; V, I+3+I

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body oval and compressed. First dorsal fin origin above pectoral fin base. Small first dorsal spine directed forward and usually covered with skin. Dorsal ray portion margin straight to slightly round. Caudal fin forked. Anal fin posterior margin straight to slightly curved. Pelvic fin inserted behind pectoral fin base, a membrane connecting its inner spine to the abdomen. Head moderately concave with blunt snout. Mouth small with distinct lips, the upper thicker and slightly overhanging. Jaws with a row of close - set incisor teeth. No teeth on palatine nor on vomer. Small embedded scales.

color: body grey-green to brown on back and light-brown to yellow on belly. Fine, often faded yellow-gold stripes on lower half of body.

common size: 5-25 cm (max. 27 cm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

- *Siganus luridus*: caudal fin truncated.

All other families: less than 7 spines in anal fin.

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Schooling species. The juveniles form very dense schools. Herbivorous. Feeds chiefly on fleshy green and red algae, mainly *Ulva* spp. and *Hypnea* spp. Spawning season lasts from May to August. Diameter of ripe oocyte - 0.5-0.6 mm. Eggs and larvae are planktonic.

habitat: over sandy substrate, often covered by algae and seagrass.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Mediterranean: recorded first in Palestine (Steinitz, 1927), Tunisia (Ktari and Ktari, 1974), northern Aegean (Gurbet and Kara, 2013), the Adriatic (Dulčić *et al.*, 2004).

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

Via the Suez Canal.

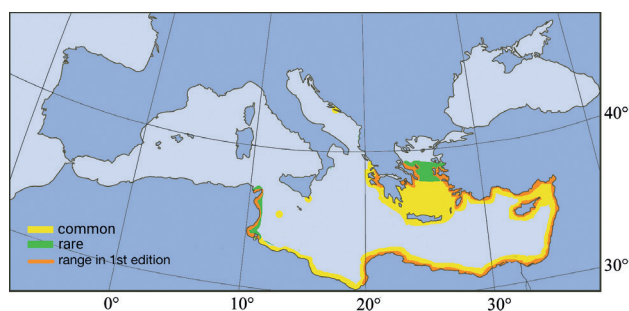
ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Very common.

speculated reasons for success: presumably occupied an unsaturated niche with scarce herbivorous indigenous fish species.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

Caught in large quantities in trammel net and purse seine. Successfully raised in cages but due to lack of demand this experiment in aquaculture ceased. All spines slightly venomous. Stinging very painful but non-lethal.



1st Med. record
Palestine, 1927.

KEY REFERENCES

- Dulčić J. and Pallaoro A. 2004. First record of the marbled spinefoot *Siganus rivulatus* (Pisces: Siganidae) in the Adriatic Sea. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom*, 84(5): 1087-1088.
- Lundberg B. and Golani D. 1995. Diet adaptation of Lessepsian migrant Rabbitfishes, *Siganus luridus* and *S. rivulatus*, to the algal resources of the Mediterranean coast of Israel. *Marine Ecology*, 16: 73-89.
- Steinitz W. 1927. Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Küstenfauna Palästinas. I. *Pubblicazioni della Stazione Zoologica di Napoli*, 8(3-4): 311-353.