

## OSTRACIIDAE

boxfishes, trunkfishes

### *Tetrosomus gibbosus*

(Linnaeus, 1758)

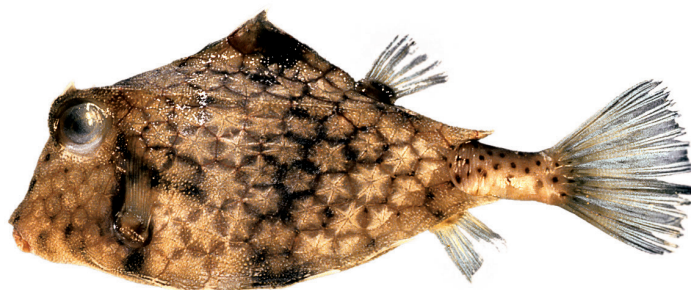


Photo : David Darom

Relevant synonyms: None  
 Misidentification: None  
 Meristic formula: D, 9; A, 9; P, 11

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Carapace deep, body triangular in cross section, very wide ventrally with mid-dorsal ridge elevating to acute tip above middle of body. Carapace made of hexagonal-shaped thickened scales, firmly sutured to one another. There are openings in the carapace for the mouth, eyes, gills slits, dorsal, anal and pectoral fins and caudal peduncle. Dorsal fin in front of anal fin. Caudal fin rounded. Pelvic fin absent. Snout pointed and dorsally concave. Large eye, extending above dorsal contour. 4-5 backward-directed spines on the ventrolateral ridge.

**color :** body yellow-gray often with greyish-blue dots. Dark lines outline the hexagonal scales. Small dark spots on the caudal peduncle.

**common size :** 12-20 cm (max. 28 cm).

#### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Body shape easily distinguishes *T. gibbosus* from all other Mediterranean species.

**BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY**

Feeds on small benthic invertebrates. Eggs and larvae are planktonic.

**habitat:** sandy substrate, usually covered with seagrass, to 50 m.

**DISTRIBUTION**

**Worldwide:** wide Indo-Pacific. Red Sea, eastern Africa south to Natal, Japan to northern Australia.

**Mediterranean:** recorded first from Israel (Spanier and Goren, 1988). A dozen specimens were collected in Levant.

**MODE OF INTRODUCTION**

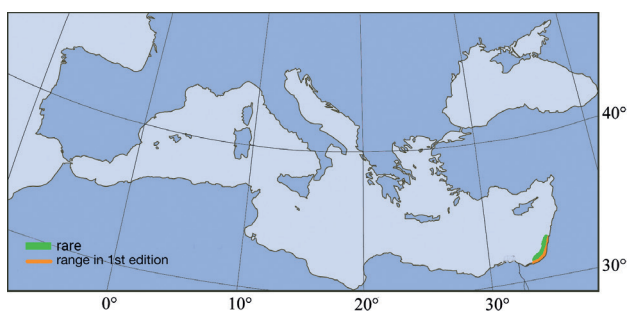
Via the Suez Canal.

**ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS**

Rare. Only a few specimens have been recorded, most of them from trawl catch.

**IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS**

None.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Israel, 1988.

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Golani D., Öztürk B. and Başusta N. 2006. *Fishes of the Eastern Mediterranean*. Turkish Marine Research Foundation, Publication n. 24, Istanbul, Turkey. 259 pp.
- Smith M.M. 1976. Ostraciidae. pp. 890-893. *In: Smiths' Sea Fishes*. Smith M.M. and Heemstra P.C. (eds.) Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Spanier E. and Goren M. 1988. An Indo-Pacific trunkfish *Tetrosomus gibbosus* (Linnaeus): first record of the family Ostracionidae in the Mediterranean. *Journal of Fish Biology*, 32: 797-798.