

New records and rare occurrences of fish species from the Mediterranean coast of Israel

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Abstract. The present study reports the first record of *Lagocephalus sceleratus* and the first substantiated record of *Bathophilus nigerrimus* from the Mediterranean coast of Israel. Specimens of another four species, *Mobula mobular*, *Tylosurus choram*, *Scarus ghobban* and *Tetrapturus belone*, constitute second records from this region.

Kurzfassung. In vorliegender Arbeit wird über den ersten Nachweis von *Lagocephalus sceleratus* im Mittelmeer berichtet, sowie den ersten belegten Nachweis von *Bathophilus nigerrimus* an der Mittelmeerküste Israels. Belege von vier weiteren Arten – *Mobula mobular*, *Tylosurus choram*, *Scarus ghobban* und *Tetrapturus belone* – stellen jeweils die zweiten Feststellungen in der Region dar.

Key words. New records, rare fish species, Mediterranean, Israel, Middle East.

Introduction

The most recent all-inclusive list of the marine ichthyofauna of Israel was published in the comprehensive study of the ichthyology of the eastern Levant by GOLANI (1996). This study was preceded by two general articles focusing on the fish of Israel (BEN-TUVIA 1953, 1971). Since 1996, several species have been added to this list. New fish species have entered the eastern Mediterranean primarily from the Red Sea via the Suez Canal (Lessepsian migrants) (see GOLANI et al. 2004), and others have been discovered in previously less exploited habitats, such as deepwater (GALIL 2004).

It is self-evident that the first records of fish species in a new region receive attention and are usually published quickly upon their discovery. However, subsequent records are important as well. It is of great importance to document the rate of establishment of migrant species that are new to a particular region, especially when that new habitat is the eastern Mediterranean, which has been subject to the invasion of Red Sea species for over 130 years. The records of indigenous rare species are no less important. Subsequent records indicate that previous records were not mere accidental sightings of stray fish but rather evidence that the Israeli Mediterranean coastline is included in the zoogeographic range of these fish species.

In this paper we report a first record, a first substantiated record, and four second records of rare fish species from the Mediterranean coast of Israel.

Counts and measurements follow standard procedures. The last soft ray in the dorsal and anal fins which is usually divided almost to the base was counted as a single ray. The length recorded for specimens is in standard length (SL) unless otherwise stated. The number of vertebrae of *Tylosurus choram* was counted with the aid of X-ray photographs. All specimens are deposited in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Fish Collection (HUJ).