

APOGONIDAE

cardinalfishes

Apogonichthyoides pharaonis

(Bellotti, 1874)



Relevant synonyms: *Apogon duops*, *Apogon nigripinnis*, *Apogon pharaonis*, *Apogon thurstoni*, *Apogonichthyoides nigripinnis*

Misidentification: *Apogon taeniatus* - *Apogon nigripinnis*

Meristic formula: D1, VII; D2, I + 8-9; A, II+7-8; P, 15-16; V, I + 5; LL, 24-27; GR, 16-18

Photo : David Darom

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body oblong and compressed. Two distinct dorsal fins. The first two dorsal spines very short, the third the longest. A single spine on the second dorsal fin. Caudal fin truncated. Pelvic fin origin under pectoral fin base. Large oblique mouth with villiform teeth in jaws, vomer and palatine. Large eye, its diameter greater than snout length. Preoperculum with smooth ridge and serrated edge. A single opercular spine at the level of center of eye.

color: three vertical black bars on grey-brown background. A black "eye-spots" encircled by a yellow ring at the midside within the first bar.

common size: 5-8 cm (max. 12 cm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

- *Apogon imberbis* : red color, 6 spines in the first dorsal fin.
- *Jaydia queketti*, *Jaydia smithi*, *Ostorhinchus fasciatus*, *Cheilodipterus novemstriatus*: no "eye spot" on the body's sides below first dorsal fin.
- *Epigonus spp.* : base of soft rays portion of dorsal, anal and caudal fins covered with scales.

Serranidae, Teraponidae, Haemulidae, Sparidae and Labridae: A single dorsal fin.

* Nomenclature change: according to Gon and Randall (2003), the species formerly known in the Mediterranean as *Apogon nigripinnis* Cuvier, 1828, should be referred to as *Apogon pharaonis* Bellotti, 1874. *A. nigripinnis* is restricted to the eastern Indian and western Pacific Oceans (Gon and Randall, 2003).

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

A nocturnal species. During the day hides in caves and crevices at depths of 1-50 m. Feeds at night on zooplankton. Mouth brooder, the males incubate the eggs.

habitat: rocky.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: Indo-Pacific. Red Sea, eastern Africa coasts to Australia.

Mediterranean: recorded first in Palestine, misidentified as *Apogon taeniatus* by Haas and Steinitz, (1947); successively recorded in Cyprus (Demetropoulos and Neocleous, 1969), Iskenderun, Turkey (Mater and Kaya, 1987) up to Libyan waters (Al Mabruk *et al.*, 2021).

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

Via the Suez Canal.

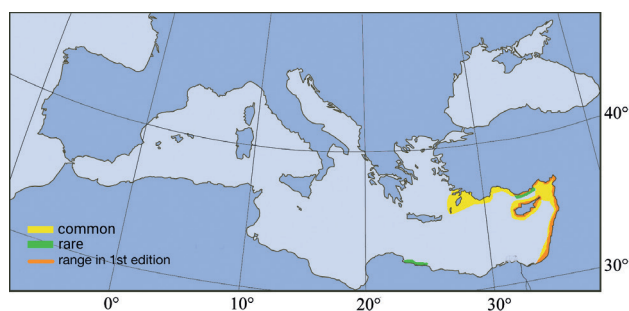
ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Very common.

speculated reasons for success: Paucity of nocturnal competitors might facilitate its population growth and expansion.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

None. Single individuals are occasionally caught in trammel nets. No commercial importance due to its small size.



1st Med. record
Palestine, 1947.

KEY REFERENCES

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- Gon O. and Randall J.E. 2003. A Review of the Cardinalfishes (Perciformes: Apogonidae) of the Red Sea. *Smithiana Publications in Aquatic Biodiversity*, 1: 1-46.
- Gücü A.C., Bingel F. Avsar D. and Uysal N. 1994. Distribution and occurrence of Red Sea fish at the Turkish Mediterranean coast - northern Cilician basin. *Acta Adriatica*, 34(1/2):103-113.
- Haas G. and Steinitz H. 1947. Erythrean fishes on the Mediterranean coast of Palestine. *Nature*, 160: 28.