

TETRAODONTIDAE

pufferfishes

Lagocephalus guentheri

Miranda Ribero, 1915



Photo : Michel Bariche

Relevant synonyms: *Sphoeroides spadiceus*, *Tetrodon spadiceus*

Misidentification: *Lagocephalus spadiceus*

Meristic formula: D, 12-13; A, 10-12; P, 17-18

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body inflatable; when not inflated, elongated moderately deep, round with flat belly. Short-based dorsal and anal fins, posterior in position, the origin of the former slightly in front of the later. Caudal fin moderately emarginate lanulated. Wide based pectoral fin, with round posterior edge. Pelvic fin absent. Head large with blunt snout. Mouth small. Two large teeth in each jaw with median suture. Gill slit in front of pectoral fin base. No scales, but small spinules on the belly and on the dorsal surface in a patch which does not extend posteriorly beyond pectoral fin margin. Two lateral lines, both extending to the head and curving around the eye.

color: back-dark grey (adults) to olive-green with dark blotches (young). Side of head and flank-silvery, often with golden sheen. Belly-white.

common size: 5-30 cm (max. 40 cm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

- *Lagocephalus sceleratus*: black dots on the back.
- *Lagocephalus suezensis*: small spinules on the dorsal surface extending back to the origin of dorsal fin.
- *Torquigener flavimaculosus*: truncated caudal fin.
- *Sphoeroides pachygaster*: smooth skin.
- *Tylerius spinosissimus*: the entire body except caudal peduncle covered with spinules.
- *Chilomycterus spilostylus*: three-rooted spines, fixed in erected position.

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

When provoked capable of inflation of the body, by rapidly drawing water (or air) into its body. Feeds on benthic invertebrates. Eggs and larvae are planktonic.

habitat: benthic-pelagic.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: wide Indo-Pacific. Red Sea, east Africa to Somalia, Japan and northern Australia.

Mediterranean: recorded first in Dodecanese Islands, Greece (Sanzo, 1930); successively recorded in the Mediterranean in Turkey (Kosswig, 1950), Israel (Ben-Tuvia, 1953a), eastern Libya (Ben Abdallah *et al.*, 2011) and Tunisia (Charfi-Cheikhrouha, 2008).

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

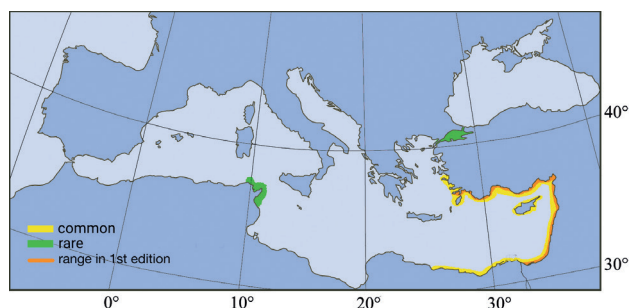
Via the Suez Canal.

ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Common species taken by trawl and purse seine.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

No commercial value. Several organs are very toxic, potentially lethal.



1st Med. record
Dodecanese
Islands, Greece,
1930.

KEY REFERENCES

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- Giusti A., Guarducci M., Stern N., Davidovich N., Golani D. and Armani A. 2019. The importance of distinguishing pufferfish species (*Lagocephalus* spp.) in the Mediterranean Sea ensuring public health: Evaluation of the generic database reliability in supporting species identification. *Fisheries Research*, 210: 14-21.
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- Matsuura K., Golani D. and Bogorodsky S. 2011. The first record of *Lagocephalus guentheri* Miranda Riberio, 1915 from the Red Sea with note on previous records of *L. lunaris* (Actinopterygii, Tetraodontiformes, Tetraodontidae). *Bulletin of the National Science Museum, Tokyo, Japan*, 37(3): 163-169.