

**EXOCOETIDAE**

flying fishes

**Parexocoetus mento**

(Valenciennes, 1837)



Relevant synonyms: *Exocoetus mento*, *Exocoetus gryllus*  
 Misidentification: *Parexocoetus brachypterus*  
 Meristic formula: D, 9-12; A, 10-12; P, 13-14; V, 6; GR, 27-30

Photo : Philip C. Heemstra

**SHORT DESCRIPTION**

Body elongated, compressed anteriorly becoming round posteriorly. Dorsal fin posterior in position, longest ray reaching caudal fin base. Anal fin base opposite dorsal fin base. Caudal fin deeply forked, lower lobe much longer than upper one. Pelvic fin origin close to midpoint. Pectoral fin long but not reaching beyond anal fin base. Large eyes. Upper jaw protruding. Cycloid scales, deciduous and easily detachable.

**color:** back dark blue with silvery white belly. Dorsal fin dark, other fins grey.

**common size:** 7-10 cm (max. 11 cm SL).

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

Other **Exocoetidae** spp: pectoral fin reaching back beyond anal fin base. Upper jaw not protrusible.

**BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY**

Schooling species. When threatened, capable of leaping out of the water and gliding for long distance. Feeds on zooplankton. Entire egg surface with filaments. Unlike most confamilies, juveniles have no barbels on chin.

**habitat:** epipelagic inshore.

**DISTRIBUTION**

**Worldwide:** wide Indo-Pacific from the Red Sea to Fiji.

**Mediterranean:** recorded first from Palestine (Bruun, 1935); successively recorded in Rhodes (Tortonese, 1938); Egypt (El Sayed, 1994), Syria (Saad, 2005), Libya (Ben-Tuvia, 1966), Tunisia (Ben Souissi *et al.*, 2004), Albania (Parin, 1986).

**MODE OF INTRODUCTION**

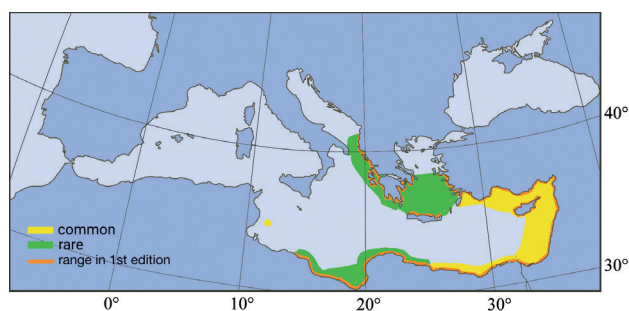
Via the Suez Canal.

**ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS**

Prevalent.

**IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS**

Caught occasionally in purse seine but, due to its relatively small size, its commercial importance is negligible.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Palestine, 1935.

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Ben Souissi J., Zaouali J., Bradai M.N., Quignard J.P. 2004. Lessepsian migrant fishes off the coast of Tunisia. First record of *Fistularia commersonii* (Osteichthyes, Fistulariidae) and *Parexocoetus mento* (Osteichthyes, Exocoetidae). *Vie et Milieu - Life and Environment* 5(4): 247-248.
- Bruun A.F. 1935. *Parexocoetus*, a Red Sea flying fish in the Mediterranean. *Nature*, 136: 553.
- Parin N.V. 1986. Exocoetidae. *In: Fishes of the north-eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean*.
- Saad A. 2005. Check-list of bony fish collected from the coast of Syria. *Turkish Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*, 5: 99-106.
- Whitehead P.J.P., M.-L. Bauchot, J.-C. Hureau, J. Nielsen and E. Tortonese (eds.) 1986. pp. 612-619. *In: Fishes of the north-eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean*. Unesco, Paris.