

TETRAODONTIDAE

pufferfishes

Sphoeroides marmoratus

(Lowe, 1839)

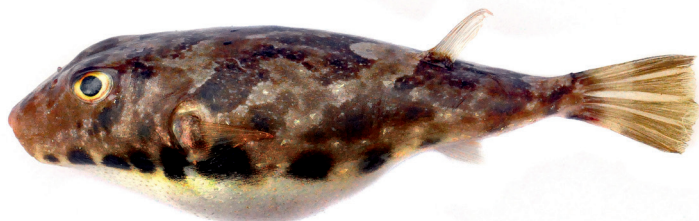


Photo : José González

Relevant synonyms: None

Misidentification: *Lagocephalus lagocephalus*, *Sphoeroides spengleri*

Meristic formula: D, 7-9; A, 7-8; P, 15

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body inflatable; when not inflated it is elongated and almost round in cross section. Dorsal and anal fins are small, opposite each other and located at the last third of the body. Caudal fin truncated. Pectoral fin round. Pelvic fin absent. Snout moderately pointed. Small terminal mouth. Four teeth, two in each jaw with a suture between them. Dorso-lateral eye extending slightly above profile contour. Small spinules on ventral surface. A single lateral line.

color: body greenish-grey to almost brown with white belly. Series of dark spots along the lower flank. Dorsal, anal and pectoral fins whitish to almost transparent.

common size: 5-15 cm (max. 20 cm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

- *Sphoeroides pachygaster*: smooth skin; no black spots on the body.
- *Sphoeroides spengleri*: no black spots on the body.
- *Canthigaster* spp.: no lateral line.
- *Lagocephalus* spp., *Ephippion* spp. and *Torquigener flavimaculosus*: two lateral lines.
- *Tylerius spinosissimus*: the entire body except caudal peduncle covered with spinules; no black spots on the body.

Diodontidae: a single wide teeth in each jaw.

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Not known.

habitat: sandy or rocky substrate at depths <100 m.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: eastern Atlantic from Portugal to Angola, including Madeira, Azores, Cape Verde and the Canary Islands.

Mediterranean: captured first in south-eastern Italy, based on a specimen captured in 1977 misidentified as *Lagocephalus lagocephalus* (Vacchi *et al.*, 2007); later off southeastern Iberian Peninsula, Spain (Reina-Hervás *et al.*, 2004; Mendiola, 2005).

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

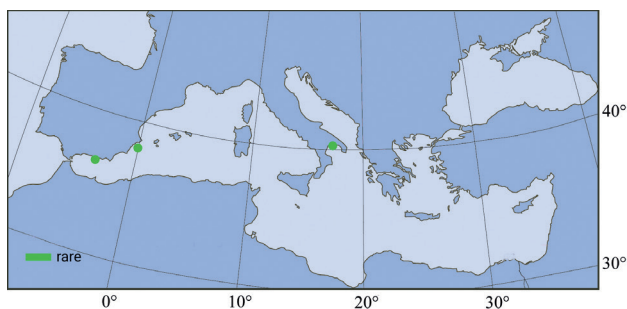
Via Gibraltar.

ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Rare.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

None.



1st Med. record
Gallipoli (Italy),
2007 [based on a
capture in 1977].

KEY REFERENCES

- Mendiola C. 2005. Presence of *Sphoeroides marmoratus* (Lowe, 1838) and *Sphoeroides pachygaster* (Müller and Troschel, 1848) (Osteichthyes, Tetraodontidae) in occidental Mediterranean (bay of Santa Pola, Southeast of Spain). *Revista de la Societat Paleontològica d'Elx. Sección Vertebrados Actuales*, 7: 1-11.
- Reina-Hervás J.A., Garcia Raso J.A. and Manjòn-Cabeza M.E. 2004. First record of *Sphoeroides spengleri* (Osteichthyes, Tetraodontidae) in the Mediterranean Sea. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom*, 84: 1089-1090.
- Vacchi M., Bussotti S., Miglietta A.M. and Guidetti P. 2007. Presence of the Guinean puffer *Sphoeroides marmoratus* (Lowe, 1838) in the Mediterranean. *Journal of Fish Biology*, 71: 1215-1219.