

**TETRAODONTIDAE**

pufferfishes

**Torquigener flavimaculosus**

Hardy and Randall, 1983



Photo : David Darom

Relevant synonyms: None  
 Misidentification: None  
 Meristic formula: D, 9; A, 7-8; P, 15-16

**SHORT DESCRIPTION**

Body inflatable. When not inflated, elongated and round dorsally with flat belly, tapering towards caudal fin. Dorsal and anal fins small, posteriorly in position. Origin of dorsal fin slightly in front of anal fin origin. Caudal fin truncated. Pectoral fin rounded with wide base. Head round with blunt snout. Mouth small and terminal with conspicuous lips, covered with short papillae. Two large teeth in each jaw fused to form beak-like shape. Elongated eyes, dorso-lateral in position, extending slightly above profile contour. No scales. Two branched lateral lines.

**color:** back brown-grey to green-olive with small interwoven olive-grey dots. A longitudinal series of yellow to olive-green dots separate the back from the white belly.

**common size:** 5-9 cm (max. 11 cm). (A single, exceptionally large specimen of 185 mm TL was collected in Haifa Bay, Israel).

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

- *Lagocephalus* spp.: caudal fin lunated.
- *Sphoeroides pachygaster*: smooth skin.
- *Tylerius spinosissimus*: the entire body except caudal peduncle covered with spinulus.
- *Chilomycterus spilostylus*: three-rooted spines fixed in erect position.

### BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Capable of very rapid inflation when threatened or taken out of the water. Feeds on small benthic invertebrates. Eggs and larvae are planktonic. Can be kept relatively easily in aquarium. Some internal organs are toxic.

**habitat:** shallow sandy shores often covered with seagrass.

### DISTRIBUTION

**Worldwide:** Red Sea, Arabian Gulf, eastern Africa to Seychelles.

**Mediterranean:** first recorded in Haifa Bay, Israel, trawl at 20 m (Golani, 1987) and developed abundant populations in Cyprus and along the Levantine coasts up to Rhodes (Corsini-Foka *et al.*, 2006). Recorded also in Egypt (Farrag *et al.*, 2016), Crete, Peloponnese and Libya (Al Mabruk *et al.*, 2018). Very common in Cyprus.

### MODE OF INTRODUCTION

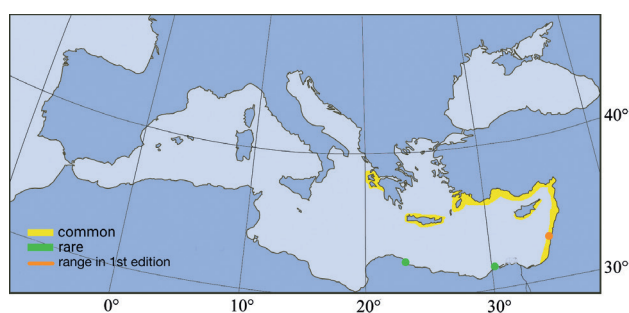
Via the Suez Canal.

### ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Common, many specimens captured by trawl in the Levant at depths of 20-50 m.

### IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

None.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Haifa Bay, Israel,  
1987

### KEY REFERENCES

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- Corsini-Foka M., Margies P., Kobdilatos G. and Economidis P.S. 2006. *Torquigener flavimaculosus* Hardy and Randall, 1983 (Pisces: Tetraodontidae) off Rhodes island marine area: a new alien fish in the Hellenic waters.
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