SHORT DESCRIPTION
Body extremely elongated, becoming depressed after head, which is very long, more than 1/3 of SL. Snout tubular and long. Two lateral ridges on length of snout, with serration on posterior part. Small slightly oblique mouth at end of snout. Teeth very small. Interorbital space flat with delicate ridges. Dorsal and anal fins posterior in position, opposite each other. Caudal fin forked, with two very elongated and filamented middle rays. Skin smooth, without bony plates along the midline of the back.

color: head, back and flank gray to olive-green (in Mediterranean) while specimens from outside of the Mediterranean often have blue spots or stripes on back.

common size: 20-100 cm (max. 150 cm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS
Fistularia petimba: bony plates along midline of back. Body shape and filamented middle rays distinguish this species from all other Mediterranean fishes.
**BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY**
Lives solitary or in small groups, near reefs. Feeds mainly on fish, which are caught by ambush or pursuit, as well as squids and shrimps. Signatures of rapid adaptive evolution have been highlighted in the Mediterranean population (Bernardi et al., 2016).

**habitat:** close vicinity of reefs.

**DISTRIBUTION**

**Worldwide:** Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean, including the coasts of Central and South America.

**Mediterranean:** recorded first in Israel, caught by trawl at depths of 15-35 m (Golani, 2000), although isolated introductions might have occurred prior to this date (Bariche et al., 2013). Since 2000, this species experienced a population explosion along the coast of Israel and a rapid spread westward, reaching the westernmost sectors of the Mediterranean in 2007 (Sánchez-Tocino et al., 2007). At this point *F. commersonii* has been recorded in all Mediterranean sub-basins, including vast areas of the western Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea (Dulčić et al., 2012), where observations remain occasional, probably due to population instability (Azzurro et al., 2012).

**MODE OF INTRODUCTION**
Via the Suez Canal.

**ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS**
Very common.

**speculated reasons for success:** reduced competition with native analogues.

**IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS**
Edible, of some commercial relevance in eastern Mediterranean countries.

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**KEY REFERENCES**