

TERAPONIDAE

terapons

Terapon puta

Cuvier, 1829*



Photo : David Darom

Relevant synonyms: *Authistes puta*, *Authisthes puta*
 Misidentification: None
 Meristic formula: D, XI-XII + 9-11; A, III + 8-9; P, 13-15; LL,
 70-85; GR, 26-34

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Body elongated and slightly compressed. Dorsal fin continuous with distinct notch between spinous and soft ray part. Spinous part strongly arched and interspinous membrane slightly incised. Penultimate dorsal spine much shorter than ultimate. Caudal fin truncated. Mouth terminal, jaws extend back to vertical line of posterior nostril. Outer row of strong conical teeth, inner teeth villiform arranged in bands. No vomerine or palatine teeth. Preoperculum serrated. Two spines on the operculum at eye level, the lower spine longer extending to or beyond opercular edge.

color: body silvery-grey. Four longitudinal stripes extending to caudal fin, upper three black, the lowermost stripe yellowish to brown. A large black spot on the upper part of dorsal fin between fourth to eighth spines.

common size: 5-15 cm (max. 18 cm).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

- *Terapon jarbua*: longitudinal stripes curved downward. Striped caudal fin.
- *Terapon theraps*: the width of the longitudinal stripes equals to the intervals between them.
- *Pelates quadrilineatus*: longitudinal stripes do not extend to caudal fin. The lower opercular spine does not reach opercular edge.
- *Pomadasys stridens*: two pores and a median pit on the chin.

Other families: lack of two spines on the operculum (three spines in Serranidae); lack of longitudinal dark stripes (young specimens of *Epinephelus costea* have brown longitudinal stripes).

BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY

Feeds on small fishes and invertebrates. Spawning season in the summer.

habitat: coastal waters to depths of 30 m. Penetrates estuaries or even continues upstream.

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide: wide Indo-Pacific, Red Sea to Zanzibar, entire Indian Ocean to Philippines and northern Australia.

Mediterranean: recorded first in Bardawil lagoon, northern Sinai, Egypt (Ben-Tuvia, 1977) ; successively recorded in Lebanon (Mouneimne, 1977) and Alexandria, Egypt, (El Sayed, 1994).

MODE OF INTRODUCTION

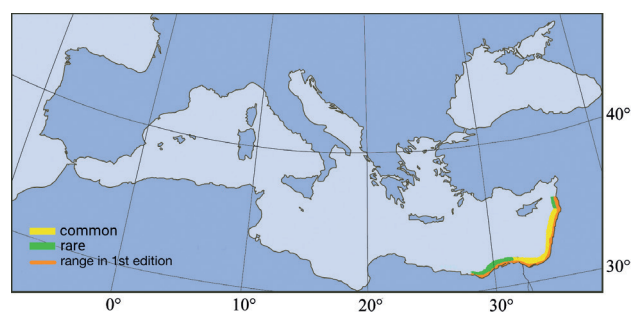
Via the Suez Canal.

ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS

Prevalent.

IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS

Single specimens are occasionally caught by trammel nets, purse seine or shallow water trawl. No commercial importance due to its small size.



1st Med. record
Bardawil Lagoon,
Northern Sinai,
Egypt, 1977.

* the generic name is often spelled "*Therapon*" in the scientific literature, which is invalid.

KEY REFERENCES

- Ben-Tuvia A. 1977. New records of Red Sea immigrants in the eastern Mediterranean. *Cybium*, 3: 95-102.
- El Drawany M.A. 2017. On the biology of *Terapon puta* (Cuvier, 1829) in the bitter lakes, Egypt. *International Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Research*, 2(6): 29-33.
- Golani D., Öztürk B. and Başusta N. 2006. Fishes of the Eastern Mediterranean. *Turkish Marine Research Foundation*, Publication n. 24, Istanbul, Turkey. 259 pp.