

**A NEW RECORD OF A LESSEPSIAN FISH, *LAGOCEPHALUS SUEZENSIS*
(ACTINOPTERYGII: TETRAODONTIFORMES: TETRAODONTIDAE),
IN THE SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN (LIBYAN COAST)**

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Abstract. The Lessepsian invasive fish, *Lagocephalus suezensis* was recorded for the first time in the eastern part of the Libyan coast, adding a new invasive species to the 16 Lessepsian species recorded in the Libyan waters.

Keywords: Lessepsian migration, *Lagocephalus suezensis*, Libya

Libya is located in the south Mediterranean with about 2000 km coast line, which is characterized by a diverse topography and wide range of habitats. Since the opening of the Suez Canal, between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean in 1869, a total of 309 species, called “Lessepsian” species, entered into the Mediterranean waters, including ca. 77 fish species (Golani 2010). To date, 22 invasive fish species have been recorded from the Libyan coast (Ben Abdallah et al. 2010), out of which 16 are Lessepsian (Shakman and Kinzelbach 2006, 2007a, 2007b).

Lagocephalus suezensis Clark et Gohar, 1953 is a Lessepsian migrant that lives on the benthic sandy and muddy habitat down to the depth of 40 m. It feeds on benthic invertebrates, spawns in the summer, and its eggs and larvae are planktonic. The first record of this species was

in 1977 from the Lebanon coast (Mouneimné 1977). Since then its distribution expanded to other parts of the Mediterranean (Israeli coast: Golani 1996, Syrian coast: Saad 2005, Rhodes Island: Corsini et al. 2005).

The presently reported record is based on a single specimen captured off the eastern section of the Libyan coast (Tobruk), with a trammel net (inner mesh 26 mm, outer mesh 120 mm) on a rocky bottom covered with algae at the depth of about 30 m. The specimen was washed with fresh water immediately after identification, and photographed (Fig. 1). Prior to preservation in formaldehyde (5%), its morphometric and meristic characteristics were determined (Table 1). The specimen was deposited in the Marine Biology Research Center Museum, Tajura, Libya, receiving the number MBRC, F147. *L. suezensis* was



Fig. 1. *Lagocephalus suezensis* from the Libyan coast

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Table 1
Morphometric and meristic characteristics of the
Lagocephalus suezensis from Libyan coast

	Character	Value
Morphometric [mm]	Total length	190
	Fork length	183
	Standard length	165
	Head length	49
	Eye diameter	11, 18
	Pre-orbital	23
	Post-orbital	14
	Pre-dorsal	115
	Pre-anal	115
	Base of dorsal fin	9
	Base of anal fin	8
Meristic (No. of rays)	Dorsal fin	10
	Anal fin	9
	Pectoral fin	15
	Pelvic fin	I + 5

caught together with other fish, namely *Oblada melanura*, *Diplodus sargus*, *D. vulgaris*, *Siganus luridus*, *S. rivulatus*, *Sparus aurata*, *Labrus viridis*, and *Sparisoma cretense* in coastal waters, showing that most the Lessepsian fish species live in the coastal water (Por 1978). This species is added to the sixteen Lessepsian fish species previously recorded in Libyan waters (Shakman and Kinzelbach 2007a).

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