

**SPHYRAENIDAE**

barracudas

**Sphyraena flavicauda**

Rüppell, 1838



Photo : David Darom

Relevant synonyms: None

Misidentification: *Sphyraena pinguis*

Meristic formula: D1, V; D2, I + 9; A, II + 9; P, 14; V, I + 5; LL, 72-90; GR, 2

**SHORT DESCRIPTION**

Body very elongated. Two well-separated dorsal fins. Five spines in the first fin, the first the largest. Second dorsal fin origin slightly in front of anal fin origin. Pelvic fin beneath tip of pectoral fin. Tip of pectoral fin does not reach the vertical of first dorsal fin origin. Large head, slightly flattened dorsally with pointed snout. Long jaws, lower jaw projected. Several fang-like teeth in front of upper jaw. A single row of 4-5 sharp teeth on the palatine; a row of small teeth on premaxilla. Lower jaw with a single canine at apex followed by a row of sharp teeth.

**color:** grey on the back with white belly, often a touch of yellow-grey on the flank. Caudal fin yellow with upper, lower and posterior black margin.

**common size:** 20-45 cm (max. 60 cm).

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

- *Sphyraena chrysotaenia*: pectoral fin tip reaching the vertical of first dorsal origin.
- *Sphyraena sphyraena* and *S. viridensis*: pelvic fin located behind pectoral fin tip.

**Mugilidae:** four dorsal spines. Short snout.

**Atherinidae:** short snout and small mouth.

**Sillaginidae:** small mouth. Dorsal fins very close to each other.

**BIOLOGY / ECOLOGY**

Schooling fish. Feeds on fishes and large invertebrates. Eggs and larvae are planktonic.

**habitat:** inshore-pelagic.

**DISTRIBUTION**

**Worldwide:** Indo-Pacific. Red Sea, eastern Africa, southern to Durban.

**Mediterranean:** recorded first in Israel (Golani, 1992) and then in Antalya Bay, Turkey (Bilecenoglu *et al.*, 2002). Recorded from Rhodes (Corsini *et al.*, 2005), Libya (Ben Abdallah *et al.*, 2005), Cyprus (Iglésias and Frotté, 2015) and Tunisia (Amor *et al.*, 2016).

**MODE OF INTRODUCTION**

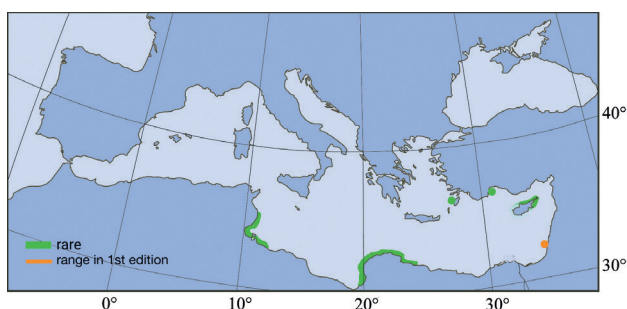
Via the Suez Canal.

**ESTABLISHMENT SUCCESS**

Rare.

**IMPORTANCE TO HUMANS**

None in the Mediterranean. Commercially important species throughout its original range.



1<sup>st</sup> Med. record  
Israel, 1992.

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Ben Abdallah A.R., Alturky A.A. and Fituri A.A. 2005. Records of exotic fishes on the Libyan coast. *Libyan Journal of Marine Sciences*, 10: 1-14.
- Bilecenoglu M., Taskavak E. and Kurt K.B. 2002. Range extension of three lessepsian migrant fish (*Fistularia commersoni*, *Sphyræna flavicauda*, *Lagocephalus suezensis*) in the Mediterranean. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom*, 82: 525-526.
- Golani D. 1992. *Rhabdosargus haffara* (Forsskål, 1775) and *Sphyræna flavicauda* Rüppell, 1833- New Red Sea immigrants in the Mediterranean. *Journal of Fish Biology*, 40: 139-140.
- Iglésias S. and Frotté L. 2015. Alien marine fishes in Cyprus: update and new records. *Aquatic Invasions*, 10(4): 425-438.