

SECOND RECORD OF *Sphoeroides cutaneus* (GUNTHER, 1870) (TETRAODONTIDAE) FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

One specimen of *Sphoeroides cutaneus* (fig. 1) was caught by the fishing boat "Guadalupe" in a trawl net on the 26th of April of 1983 off the Bay of Cala Ratjada, NE of the Island of Majorca, between this island and Minorca ( $39^{\circ}, 41' N, 3^{\circ}, 30' E$ ) at a depth of 72 m. This fish is absolutely unknown to the local fishermen, although the first record is also from Cala Ratjada, fished on the 17th

of January of 1979 from a depth of 80 m (OLIVER, 1981).

AREA

The area in which this specimen was collected is a fully exploited fishing ground, where the trawl boats of the local fishing ports, specially Cala Ratjada, regularly fish. In this part of the island of Majorca, where the water is very clean, the continental platform is very narrow, so it is very near the steep continental slope, rich in shrimps. It must be pointed out that the first specimen recorded from the Mediterranean, captured in 1979 was also fished in this area (fig. 2). The most abundant fish species ordinary caught in this area are *Mullus surmuletus*, *Scorpaena scrofa* and *Scyliorhinus canicula*.

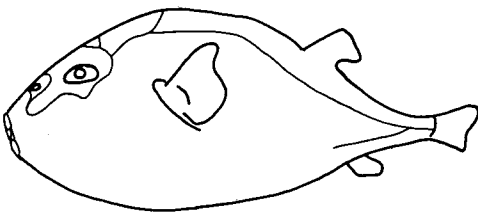


Fig. 1. *Sphoeroides cutaneus*.

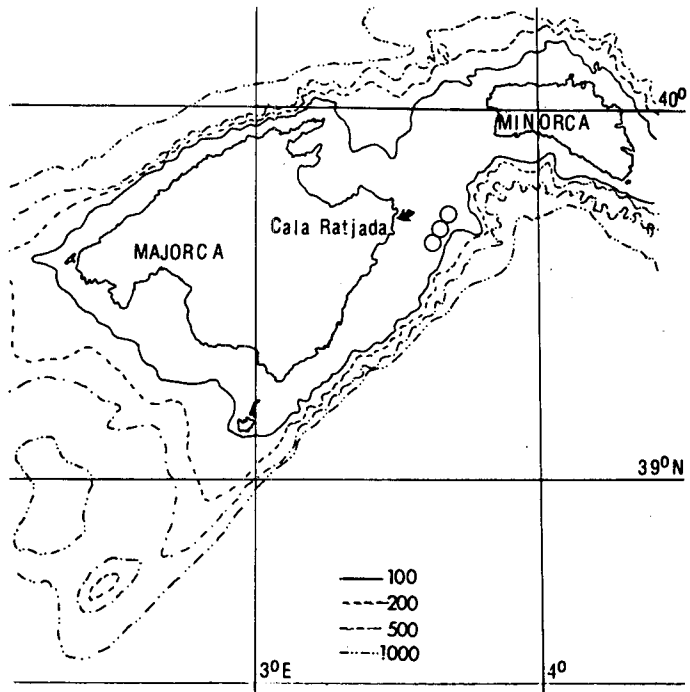


Fig. 2. Area in which *Sphoeroides cutaneus* was caught. The arrow points out the fishing port of Cala Ratjada, and the three circles the area in which it was captured.

Area en la que *Sphoeroides cutaneus* fue capturado. La flecha señala el puerto de Cala Ratjada, y los tres círculos el área en la que se capturó.

## DESCRIPTION

The specimen is a mature female of 32,20 cm long (total length), with the characteristic features of the family. It has smooth naked skin without any prickles, a cylindrical stout body, greyish brown at the back and whitish pale grey on its inflatable belly. Ventral fins absent and a short truncate caudal fin. Large head, rounded snout, its large two teeth in each jaw forming a beak with an entire even cutting edge, fleshy lips, two nostrils in either side on a papilla, gill openings just in front of the pectoral fins. Big oval green blueish eyes, with a flat interorbital space. The fin rays are soft, segmented and branched.

Measurements: total length, 322 mm; standard length, 188 mm; head length, 110 mm; head depth (contracted), 136 mm; maximum body width, 75 mm; preocular length, 40 mm; ocular diameter, 27 mm.

Rays: pectoral fin, 14; anal fin, 8; dorsal fin, 9; caudal fin, 10-12.

State of the gonads: mature.

Stomach contents: remnants of two red mullets (*Mullus surmuletus*).

As far as it has been checked, this specimen is the biggest recorded.

This species described as *Tetrodon cutaneus*, was changed by FOWLER (1920) to the genus *Liosaccus*, being *L. cutaneus* its only species. FRASER-BRUNNER (1943) includes this species in the genus *Sphoeroides* because he states that the presence or absence of dermal spines is a matter of individual variation in some American species and it is not a significant enough feature to separate two genera.

## DISTRIBUTION

When GUNTHER (1870) described this species he reported it from Saint Helen Island and since then, it has been considered a rare species from the Tropical West Africa (ALBURQUERQUE, 1954-56; TORTONESE, 1973). FOWLER (1936) considers it circum-tropical. It has been reported from the Azore

res Islands (FOWLER, 1920), for the Tropical Atlantic (POLL, 1959; BLACHE et al., 1970), for Portugal (GONÇALVEZ, 1941) and also from Japan and Hawaii. In the ichthyological works on the Mediterranean (LOZANO, 1952; TORTONESE, 1975) it is not recorded. In all its geographical area this species is considered a rare one, rather coastal and ranging from 20 to 200 m in depth. The atlantic spanish fishermen that go to the Azorean fishing grounds consider it a rare fish and it is known by the vernacular name of "sapo" or "zapo"

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the captain and crew of the "Gualupe" who kindly gave us the specimen, as well as the information of where it had been caught.

## RESUMEN

Se cita por segunda vez en el Mar Mediterráneo un ejemplar de *Sphoeroides cutaneus* recogido también en la zona costera del NE de la Isla de Mallorca a 72 m de profundidad. Se trata de una hembra madura de gran talla, la mayor reseñada hasta ahora. Es un pez de piel desnuda, cuerpo cilíndrico redondeado, pardo grisáceo en el dorso, grisáceo blancuzco en el vientre extensible. La cabeza es grande, el hocico romo, con dos dientes en cada mandíbula formando un pico, labios carnosos, dos orificios nasales a cada lado, sobre una papila y el opérculo justo delante de las aletas pectorales. Presenta ojos grandes ovalados verde-azulados, con el espacio interorbital plano. Los radios de las aletas son blandos, segmentados y ramificados.

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## SOBRE LA OBSERVACIÓN DE PIQUITUERTOS (*LOXIA CURVIROSTRA*) CON FRANJA ALAR BLANCA.

El fenómeno de la franja alar blanca presente en algunos piquituertos (*Loxia spp.*), ha sido recientemente revisado por BERTHOLD & SCHLENKER (1982). La frecuencia de aparición de este carácter es muy baja, del orden de uno a dos por cada mil ejemplares en *Loxia curvirostra*, e inferior a uno por mil en *Loxia pytyopsittacus* (BERTHOLD & GWINNER, 1978; BERTHOLD & SCHLENKER, 1982).

La presencia de estos individuos con franja alar blanca ha sido interpretada de muy diversas maneras, llegando incluso a ser considerados como pertenecientes a una especie distinta (Thienemann in BERTHOLD & SCHLENKER, 1982). En la actualidad, la hipótesis más aceptada es que se trata de un carácter atávico, siendo ésta una de las evidencias aducidas para explicar la evolución de *Loxia curvirostra* y *Loxia pytyopsittacus* a partir de *Loxia leucoptera* (HORVATH, 1975; NETHERSOLE-THOMPSON, 1975).

La valoración de las características atávicas reside en la frecuencia y extensión geográfica de éstas (HORVATH, 1975), y de

aquí el interés que tiene el documentar la aparición de estas anomalías cromáticas. En los piquituertos, sin embargo, la interpretación de este fenómeno se dificulta por su dinámica irruptiva que periódicamente ocasiona el contacto de poblaciones muy distanciadas (NEWTON, 1972). A pesar de ese carácter irruptivo, la mayoría de citas y trabajos proceden de Centroeuroa; la causa posiblemente reside en lo deficientemente prospectada que está el área sur. Las observaciones de dos *Loxia curvirostra* con franja alar blanca realizadas por los autores en agosto de 1975 y septiembre de 1982 en los bosques de Rasos de Peguera (Barcelona), amplían hacia el sur el área en la que ha sido descrito este fenómeno.

### ABSTRACT

*On the observation of Common Crossbills (Loxia curvirostra) with whitish wing-bar.* In this note two observations of Common Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*) with a prominent whitish wing-bar are reported. One of them was made in August 1975, and