

New additional records of *Cubiceps gracilis* (LOWE, 1843) (Pisces, Nomeidae) in the eastern Adriatic

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Four specimens of very rare species Cubiceps gracilis (LOWE, 1843) (Pisces, Nomeidae) were caught offshore from the Island Mljet (southern eastern Adriatic) at the depth about 100 m. This record represents the southernmost record in the Adriatic Sea.

Key words: *Cubiceps gracilis*, Adriatic Sea, new additional records, southernmost record

INTRODUCTION

Cubiceps gracilis is an oceanic fish distributed in the eastern Atlantic and western Mediterranean not uncommon off the Azores and Madeira (Adriatic excluded) (HAEDRICH, 1986). BAUCHOT (1987) included in its distribution also the Adriatic Sea. This species is the only representative of the family Nomeidae known in the Mediterranean Sea. In general cubiceps fishes are rare and little known, and they are mentioned in the western Mediterranean (ARIOLA, 1912), central and eastern Atlantic Ocean (HAEDRICH, 1972) and western Pacific (ABE, 1955) with discontinued distribution. This species is known in the Mediterranean only from the Ligurian Sea (ALASSIO), Sicily and the coasts of France, Spain and Algeria (TORTONESE, 1975). It is very rare in the Adriatic Sea (JARDAS, 1996). The aim of this paper is to present some new additional records of this very rare species in the eastern Adriatic.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In September 2001 four specimens of *Cubiceps gracilis* were caught by professional fishermen (bottom trawl) 7 nautical miles offshore from the Island Mljet (southern eastern Adriatic) at the depth about 100 m (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. First record of *Cubiceps gracilis* in the Adriatic Sea (TORTONESE, 1967); 2 - Records presented by GRAMITTO (1988); 3 - Record presented in this paper

In the catch were also present specimens of *Trachurus trachurus* and *Scomber japonicus*. Main meristic and morphometric characters were taken in the Port Žuljana-peninsula Pelješac (author didn't have a possibility to take more parameters since the fish were taken to the market). Specimens were identified according to JARDAS (1996). Immediately after capture the specimens were measured to the nearest mm.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This record (island Mljet) represents the southernmost record in the Adriatic Sea. TORTONESE (1967, 1975) noted the first record of *C. gracilis* ($SL=150$ mm) in the Adriatic Sea (Gulf of Trieste) on 9th September 1959. GRAMITTO (1988) reported about three additional records of this species in the Adriatic Sea (total 5 specimens): A - 2 specimens, October 1970 ($SL=147$ mm, $SL=144$ mm), Western Jabuka Pit (Pomo Pit), depth 220 m; B - 1 specimen, August 1978, Western Jabuka Pit, depth 218 m ($SL=136$ mm) and C - 2 specimens, July 1985, Kvarner Gulf ($SL=162$ mm, $SL=138$ mm). It is very hard to explain such distribution

in the Adriatic Sea (records from north to south) since we have not enough data on biology of this species. KASPIRIS and ONDRIAS (1984) reported a specimen caught in the Patraikos Gulf (Ionian Sea) on July 1981 ($TL=130$ mm).

C. gracilis is an oceanic and pelagic species that reaches 107 cm in size (HEADRICH, 1990), but such large specimens are rarely caught whereas most records refer to juvenile and subadult specimens, collected in oceanic as well as neritic waters, like all specimens collected in the Adriatic Sea and in Patraikos Gulf. The scarcity of adults may be accounted for either due to their size and agility that enable them to avoid most nets, or because of marked changes in appearance during growth (HAEDRICH, 1972).

The main meristic and morphometric characters (Table 1) closely correspond with data by TORTONESE (1967), HAEDRICH (1972, 1986) and GRAMITTO (1988). Scales were very deciduous, and their count was based on skin marks.

In conclusion, these records could highlight aspects of the population dynamics and distribution of *C. gracilis* in the Adriatic Sea and the status of this species needs to be evaluated on a continuous basis.

Table 1. Meristic and morphometric characters recorded in examined specimens of *C. gracilis* in the eastern Adriatic: (D_1 - first dorsal fin rays; D_2 - second dorsal fin rays; A - anal fin rays; P - pectoral fin rays; TL-total length; SL-standard length)

	Specimen 1	Specimen 2	Specimen 3	Specimen 4
D_1	X	XI	X	XI
D_2	I-24	I-23	I-23	I-23
A	III-20	III-20	II-20	III-20
P	22	24	22	23
TL (mm)	179	159	167	172
SL (mm)	147	135	138	142
Head length (mm)	39	32	33	36
Max. height (mm)	42	33	35	37
Number of scales along the lateral line	60	60	60	60
Number of scales in transversal series	20	20	20	20

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Novi dodatni nalazi vrste *Cubiceps gracilis* (LOWE, 1843) (Pisces, Nomeidae) u istočnom Jadranu

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SAŽETAK

Četiri primjerka vrlo rijetke vrste *Cubiceps gracilis* (LOWE, 1843) (Pisces, Nomeidae) su ulovljena 7 nautičkih milja od otoka Mljeta prema otvorenom moru, što predstavlja prvi nalaz ove vrste u južnom Jadranu.

Ključne riječi: *Cubiceps gracilis*, Jadransko more, novi nalaz u najjužnijem dijelu Jadrana
