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- SHORT COMMUNICATION -

First Record of Elongate Bulleye *Priacanthus prolixus* in the Mediterranean Sea

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Abstract

Elongate bulleye, *Priacanthus prolixus* was first time recorded from the Mediterranean Sea. One specimen of *P. prolixus* was caught by a commercial trawler at a depth of 70 m in 7 November 2016 from İskenderun Bay, Northeastern Mediterranean Sea, Turkey. The occurrence of this species in the Mediterranean Sea is most probably due to migration from the Red Sea via the Suez Canal.

Keywords:

First record, the elongate bulleye, *Priacanthus prolixus*, the Mediterranean Sea

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Introduction

The elongate bulleye *Priacanthus prolixus* Starnes, 1988 is distributed in the western Indian Ocean region, ranging from the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden (Froese & Pauly, 2017). *P. prolixus* belongs to the Priacanthidae family that is represented by *Priacanthus* genus which is consists of 12 species in the world (Froese & Pauly 2017), with 1 species in the Mediterranean Sea (Goren et al., 2010). The family Priacanthidae is a relatively small (18 species in four genera) group of epibenthic predatory fishes occurring primarily in rocky or coral habitats at depths from 5 to 400 m (Starnes, 1988).

P. prolixus is a pelagic species and commonly found in outer reef slopes and sometimes schools in oceanic locations (Froese & Pauly, 2017). This species has been generally found between 35 m to 250 m depth (Sommer et al., 2017).

Up to now, *P. prolixus* has not so far been reported fom the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, the present paper gives the first report of *P. prolixus* from the Mediterranean.

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One specimens of *P. prolixus* was caught by a commercial trawler at a depth of 70 m in 7 November 2016 from the İskenderun Bay (36º 33’ N, 35º 51’ E) (Figure 1). The specimen preserved in deep-freezer and was deposited in the Museum of the Faculty of Marine Sciences and Technology, Iskenderun Technical University (MSM-PIS/2016-8) (Figure 2). Morphometric measurements were made to the nearest 0.01 mm using dial callipers. All measurements and counts, the morphological description and colour agree with the descriptions given by Hubbs & Lagler (1947); Starnes (1998) and Motomura et al. (2010).

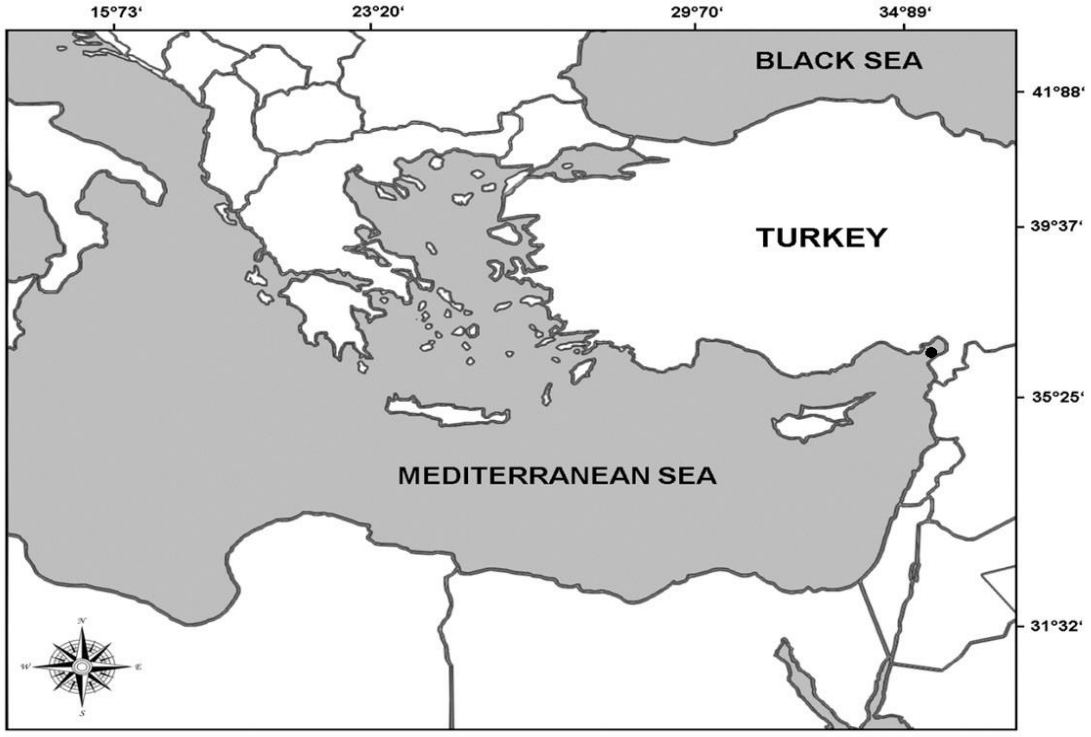

Figure 1. Map showing capture site (●) of *P. prolixus* from the Mediterranean, Turkey

Figure 2. The captured elongate bulleye *Priacanthus prolixus* from the Iskenderun Bay

The recorded specimen of elongate bulleye *Priacanthus prolixus* was at 177 mm total length (TL) and weighed as 68.40 g. Body elongate; caudal fin crescentic; soft portions of dorsal and anal fins broadly rounded, of moderate length; pectoral fins relatively short; pelvic fins less than head length.

P. prolixus specimen had the following features: Dorsal fin rays X +14 anal fin rays III +14, pectoral fin rays 20, and caudal fin rays 18, gill rakers 22 on lower limb and and 7 upper limb of first arch, 87 in scales lateral line series, below lateral line 44, above lateral line 10, linea lateral 77, vertical scale rows 46. Head length is 31.7% of SL; body depth is 27.2% of SL; eye diameter is 29.66% of head length; interorbital width is 21,99% of head length; Pelvic fin length is %77 of head length; Distance between orbit and upper lip is 20.74% of head length; distance between upper lip to origin of dorsal fin is 25.32% of SL; distance between upper lip to origin of anal fin is 51.51% of SL; longest pectoral ray is 16.44% of SL; longest pelvic ray is 24.34% of SL; first dorsal spine is 5.99% of SL; second dorsal spine is 8.1% of SL and 62,4% of tenth spine; tenth spine is 13% of SL; first anal spine 8,68% of SL; second anal spine is 10.1% of SL; third spine is 11.1% of SL; body depth at sixth dorsal-fin spine 3.2 times in SL.
Colour of fresh specimen of *P. prolixus* was upper side of head and trunk tinged with dark red, dorsal fin without black margins; yellowih patches on distal margin of membranes between dorsal fin ray; pectoral fin reddish-yellow; pelvic fin spine and rays whitish: a black spot on membranes at base of pelvic fin; 11 small dark spots along lateral line; anal fin uniformly tinged with deeper red than dorsal fin: narrow black margin on posterior of caudal fin.

Elongate bulleye *Priacanthus prolixus* can be distinguished from member of the hamrur subgroup *Prolixus* species (*P. hamrur*, *P. arenatus*, *P. meeki*). *P. prolixus* is almost identical in appearance to the *P. hamrur*. The characteristic differences between the two species are the total number of gill rakers (29-31 for *P. prolixus*, 24-26 for *P. hamrur*), the number of scales in the lateral series (86-93 for *P. prolixus*, 79-96 for *P. hamrur*), vertical scale rows (44-51 for *P. prolixus*, 48-57 for *P. hamrur*) and much more elongate body structure (body depth at sixth dorsal-fin spine 3 or more times in standard length for *P. prolixus*, body depth at sixth dorsal-fin spine about 2.6 to 2.8 times in standard length for *P. hamrur*). *P. arenatus* differ from *P. prolixus* by more elongate body (body depth at sixth dorsal-fin spine 3 or more times in standard length in *P. prolixus*, body depth at sixth dorsal spine goes about 2.6-2.8 for standart lenght for *P. arenatus*) and fewer vertical scale rows (44-51 for *P. prolixus*, 49-59 for *P. arenatus*). *P. meeki* can be distinguished from *P. prolixus* by the lateral series counts (86-93 for *P. prolixus*, 104-115 for *P. meeki*) and more elongate body (Starnes, 1988; Motomura et al., 2001).

Moreover, *P. prolixus* can be distinguished from the other *Priacanthus* (*P. sagittarus*) species occurring in the Mediterranean Sea. *P. sagittarus* differ from *P. prolixus* by having the first two spinous dorsal-fin membranes with black blotches; length of second dorsal spine about twice in tenth spine (Starnes, 1988).

P. prolixus grows to maximum 25 cm (Starnes, 1998) and feeds mainly on small fish, crustaceans, and other small invertebrates. According to Froese & Pauly (2017), the most of *Prolixus* specimens can be caught by trawler over presumably relatively open bottom.

In the present study, *P. prolixus* is reported for the first time from the Mediterranean Sea. The occurrence of this species in the Mediterranean Sea is most probably due to migration from the Red Sea via the Suez Canal. The rising sea-water temperatures (Turan et al. 2016) can limit their present distributions in the Mediterranean Sea and may determine the success of geographical expansion in the Mediterranean Sea (Turan et al. 2016).

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