

# New record of a Lessepsian migrant *Pteragogus pelycus* Randall, 1981 (Teleostei: Labridae) for northern Cyprus

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**Abstract:** The fish *Pteragogus pelycus* Randall, 1981 is reported from the coast of northern Cyprus for the first time. The species has apparently reached the Mediterranean from the Red Sea through the Suez Canal as a Lessepsian migrant. This record is one of the first of the species in the Mediterranean Sea.

**Kurzfassung:** Es wird der erste Fund des Fisches *Pteragogus pelycus* Randall, 1981 von der Küste im nördlichen Teil von Zypern berichtet. Die Art stammt aus dem Roten Meer und hat das Mittelmeer im Zuge der Lessepsischen Wanderung über den Suez-Kanal erreicht. Es handelt sich um einen der ersten Nachweise im Mittelmeer.

**Key words:** *Pteragogus pelycus*, Mediterranean Sea, Cyprus, ichthyofauna, Lessepsian migration, Middle East.

## Introduction

Since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, 56 Red Sea (Lessepsian) migrant fishes have been recorded from the eastern Levant (GOREN & GALIL 1998). This ever increasing invasion is well monitored along the Israeli (e.g. POR 1978, GOLANI 1996) and Lebanese coasts (MOUNEIMNE 1977) and is also reported from Turkey (GÜCÜ et al. 1994), but our knowledge for Cyprus is still not adequate. The first scientific study on the Cypriot ichthyofauna was probably by STEINITZ (1952), who listed 16 species, two of which were from freshwater, followed by FOWLER & STEINITZ (1956). BEN-TUVIA (1962) collected 45 species, including 5 new records from the area. The first comprehensive study of the Cypriot ichthyofauna was by DEMETROPOULOS & NEOCLEOUS (1969), who published a checklist with 198 species. These included 12 Lessepsian migrants: *Hemiramphus far*, *Sargocentron rubrum* (as *Holocentrus ruber*), *Sphyræna chrysotaenia*, *Atherinomorus lacunosus* (as *Atherina pinguis*), *Apogon nigripinnis* (as *Apogon thurstoni*), *Upeneus moluccensis*, *Alepes djedaba* (as *Caranx djedaba*), *Leiognathus klunzingeri*, *Siganus rivulatus*, *Siganus luridus*, *Stephanolepis diaspros* (as *Stephanolepis ocheticus*), and *Lagocephalus spadiceus* (as *Gastrophysus spadiceus*).

In this paper, we present a new Lessepsian migrant fish, *Pteragogus pelycus* Randall, 1981, which was previously unrecorded from northern Cyprus waters.