

SHORT COMMUNICATION

An occurrence of the blackfish, *Centrolophus niger* (Gmelin, 1789), in Iskenderun Bay, (northeastern Mediterranean, Turkey)

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Abstract

A single specimen of the blackfish, *Centrolophus niger* (Gmelin, 1789), was recorded on 25 March 2011 from the coast of Samandag in Iskenderun Bay (northeastern Mediterranean, Turkey). The present paper reports the first occurrence of the blackfish, *C. niger*, from the Mediterranean coast of Turkey.

Key words: Blackfish, *Centrolophus niger*, Mediterranean Sea, Iskenderun Bay, Turkey

The family Centrolophidae is represented by four species in the Mediterranean Sea: *Centrolophus niger* (Gmelin, 1789), *Hyperoglyphe perciformis* (Mitchill, 1818), *Schedophilus medusophagus* Coco, 1839, and *Schedophilus ovalis* (Cuvier, 1883) (Quignard and Tomasini, 2000), while it is represented by two species *Centrolophus niger* and *Schedophilus ovalis* in the Turkish coast of the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea. According to Golani *et al.* (2006), *C. niger* and *S. ovalis* are rarely found in the eastern basin.

The blackfish, *Centrolophus niger*, has a widespread distribution throughout Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Ocean (Froese and Pauly 2011). *C. niger* was recorded for the first time in the Mediterranean Sea in the 1980's by Karrer (1986), and later the species was reported in the Mediterranean by several researchers, such as Relini *et al.* (1994), Sartor *et al.* (2001), Dulcic and Lipej (2002), D'onghia *et al.* (2003) and Politou *et al.* (2003). *C. niger* was recorded for the first time from the Turkish coastal water waters in Izmir Bay, the Aegean Sea coast of Turkey (Akyol 2008). Lately this species was again reported in 2009 from Izmir Bay (Ceyhan and Akyol 2010).

On 25 March 2011, a young specimen of *Centrolophus niger* (112 mm in standard length (SL), 18.4 g in total weight) was captured by a purse seine at a depth of 34 m off Samandag coast (36° 02' 340'' N, 35° 56'187''E) in

Iskenderun Bay, the northeastern Mediterranean (Figure 1). Morphometric measurements were carried out to the nearest 0.1 mm by a caliper and meristic counts were made under the reflected light of a stereomicroscope. The specimen was identified as *C. niger* with the diagnostic characteristics described by Haedrich (1986), Golani *et al.* (2006), and Froese and Pauly (2011). The single specimen was preserved in 4% formaldehyde solution and deposited at the Museum of the Faculty of Fisheries, Mustafa Kemal University, Iskenderun-Hatay (MSM-PIS/2011-2) (Figure 2).

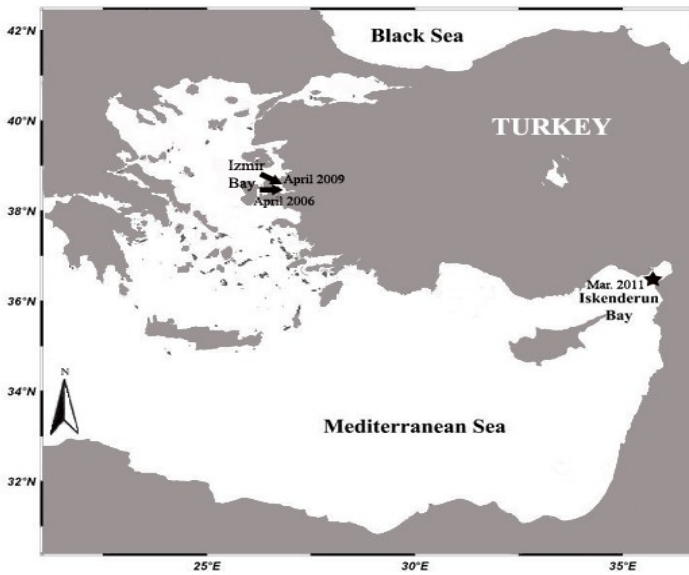


Figure 1. Occurrence of *Centrolophus niger* (Gmelin, 1789) in the Aegean and Mediterranean coast of Turkey: ★, present study; ➡, previous records.

The young specimen of *Centrolophus niger* had the following diagnostic characters: dorsal fin rays IV+35, anal fin rays III+21, pectoral fin rays 20; the body was generally uniformly purplish to dark brown, mouth with no teeth on palate; the snout slightly longer than the eye diameter; pelvic fins darker than body; head length (HL) 29.9%, pre-dorsal length 33.5%, pre-anal length 52.2%, maximum body depth 30.1% of SL; eye diameter 25.1%, snout length 26.2%, pre-orbital length 28.6%, interorbital distance 42.6% of HL.

C. niger is described as epipelagic or mesopelagic (Haedrich 1990). Golani *et al.* (2006) reported that this species usually occurs on the upper continental slope to depths of about 200-400 m. Froese and Pauly (2011) suggested that maximum depth distribution of this species was usually 300 and 700 m.

Although adults are usually found in deeper water, young individuals of the species are found in surface water (Haedrich 1986). *C. niger* reaches the max size of 150 cm in SL and feeds on small fish, squid, crustaceans and zooplankton (Haedrich 1986).

Consequently, although the blackfish has been reported from the western and central Mediterranean and Aegean Sea up to now, this species had not been reported in the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. Our finding from Iskenderun Bay is the first occurrence of this species from the northeastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey, which may suggest that *C. niger* has no rapid expansion to the eastward since its first occurrence was reported in the Aegean Sea in 2008 by Akyol (2008).



Figure 2. The specimen of *Centrolophus niger* (112 mm SL) captured in Iskenderun Bay, the northeastern Mediterranean, Turkey.

İskenderun Körfezi'nde (Kuzey-Doğu Akdeniz, Türkiye) karabalık *Centrolophus niger* (Gmelin, 1789)'in bulunuşu

Özet

25 Mart 2011 tarihinde İskenderun körfezi'nin Samandağı sahillerinden (Kuzeydoğu Akdeniz, Türkiye) bir adet *Centrolophus niger* (Gmelin, 1789) bireyi yakalanmıştır. Bu çalışmayla *C. niger*'in Türkiye'nin Akdeniz kıyılarından ilk kaydı verilmiştir.

Acknowledgements

The study was supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of Turkey with a project number of TAGEM-09AR-GE11 coordinated by C.T.

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Received: 15.12.2011

Accepted: 25.12.2011