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Recent data of maximum age and length of painted comber *Serranus scriba* (Linnaeus, 1758) in Mediterranean Sea

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*The present study was undertaken not only to register the new recently noticed maximum age and total length of *Serranus scriba* (Linnaeus, 1758), contributing to the knowledge of this species in the Mediterranean and Adriatic Sea inclusively. A painted comber specimen of 323 mm of total length and age 16 years was caught during August 2008 in the Lavdra Channel (middle-eastern Adriatic Sea).*

Key words: *Serranus scriba*, Serranidae, maximum length, maximum age, Adriatic Sea, Mediterranean

INTRODUCTION

In fisheries science, theoretical parameters such as maximum length, weight and age are very important as they directly and indirectly enter into most of the models used in stock assessments (BORGES, 2001). Thereupon, updating the maximum size of a species that might become commercially exploited is significant.

Painted comber, *Serranus scriba* (Linnaeus, 1758), is a subtropical species, which is found in the Eastern Atlantic from the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay to the Canary Islands and the Western Sahara, around the Azores and Madeira as well as in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. It is a benthic species found on rocky, muddy and algal or seagrass overgrowing substrates, down to the depths of 150 m but usually only down to 30 m (MAIGRET & LY, 1986; BAUCHOT, 1987). This species is known as simultaneous hermaphrodite, which tends to spawn from early spring to early summer (FEBVRE *et al.*, 1975; FISHER & PETERSEN, 1987).

This specimen was captured on August 3, 2008 off the northwest coast of Lavadra Mala

(43°55'N and 15°13'E) by a fishhook at a depth of 3.5 m. All lengths of the specimen were measured up to the nearest 0.1 cm and weighed with an electric balance to the nearest 0.1 g. The sagittal otolith was removed by opening the otic bulla under the operculum, washed in freshwater and stored in plastic tube prior to ageing. The fish was dissected for determination of sex and the gonads of the specimen were taken for histological analysis. Afterwards, specimen was preserved in formaldehyde and deposited in the ichthyologic collection of the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries in Split, Croatia (IOR-16).

The specimen measured 323 mm total length and weighted 456.7 g. The main morphometric and meristic data are reported in Table 1. Broad opaque and narrow hyaline zones of painted comber otolith alternated out of the nucleus of the sagittae. According to the total number of hyaline zones that were recorded and considered to be annuli, this specimen was 16 years old (Fig. 1). Histological analysis confirmed that this specimen was a matured hermaphrodite.



Fig. 1. Otolith of 16 years old *S. scriba*

The observed total length as well as the age are the maximal ones recorded for the species *Serranus scriba* in the area of its distribution. Namely, only TUSET *et al.* (2005) reported maximal total length of 290 mm, which was 11 year

old, for the painted comber population that inhabits Central-Eastern Atlantic. In the Adriatic Sea MILIŠIĆ (2007) published that the maximal total length of *S. scriba* was slightly lower than noted in this paper. The specimen had typical biometrical features of the species reported by ZORICA *et al.* (2010).

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Table 1. Morphologic and meristic characters of *S.scriba* specimen collected in middle-eastern Adriatic Sea, 2008

Morphologic characters (mm)	
Total length	323
Standard length	269
Preanal distance	173
Head length	95
Preocular head length	35
Eye diameter	13
Maximum body height	98
Minimum body height	33
Length of dorsal fin basis	141
Length of anal fin basis	40
Length of pectoral fin	73
Length of ventral fin	57
Meristic characters	
Number of rays in dorsal fin	X-17
Number of rays in anal fin	III-8
Number of rays in pectoral fin	13
Number of rays in ventral fin	I-6
Number of rays in caudal fin	18
Number of scales on <i>linea lateralis</i>	67

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Najnoviji podatci o maksimalnoj zabilježenoj starosti i dužini pirke *Serranus scriba* (Linnaeus, 1758) u Mediteranu

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SAŽETAK

Jedinka pirke *Serranus scriba* (Linnaeus, 1758) je ulovljena uz sjeverozapadnu obalu otoka Mala Lavadra (istočni dio srednjeg Jadrana). Totalna dužina tijela kao i starost ulovljene pirke je najveća zabilježena do sada na području njenog rasprostranjenja i iznosila je 323 mm odnosno 16 godina.

Ključne riječi: *Serranus scriba*, Serranidae, najveća dužina, maksimalna starost, Jadran, Mediteran