The small eye squaretail *Tetragonurus cuvieri* Risso, 1810, also known as the cross-squared tailed fish (Hart 1973), is a meso-bathypelagic (down to 4000 m) medium sized (up to about 700 mm of length) fish.

It shows a wide geographical distribution, occurring in the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans and the Mediterranean Sea (Haedrich 1986, 1990, Froese & Pauly 2001). In the Mediterranean Sea, although the species was traditionally considered as very rare, the paucity of captures was mainly related to the solitary habit of the adults (Tortonese 1970). As a matter of fact, the small eye squaretail was considered quite common at least in the Ligurian Sea (Tortonese 1970) and in the southern waters of Sardinia Island (Cau 1980).

Beside these considerations on the supposed rarity, the species shows a non-homogeneous horizontal distribution within the Mediterranean Sea. The historical documented records concerned only the Western basin (Fons & Villiers 1979, Berdar *et al.* 1982, Demestre & Roig 1982, Fredj & Maurin 1986, Haedrich 1986).

In fact, excluding the doubtful record in the Hellenic waters (Economidis 1973, Fons & Villiers 1979, Demestre & Roig 1982), the first documented capture of the small eye squaretail (285 mm of standard length; SL) in the Eastern basin occurred in 1997 (Ionian sea; Basanisi *et al.* 1999).

Concerning the waters surrounding Sicily and the Strait of Sicily in particular, *Tetragonurus cuvieri* was reported as very rare (Sarà & Sarà 1990) or even absent (Arena & Li Greci 1973), respectively. In this short note, the first finding of the small eye squaretail in the Strait of Sicily is reported.

The specimen was caught in June 1999 in a daylight bottom trawl hauled at about 658 m. The ship was trawling a deep-water red shrimps fishing ground located at about 30 km south of the Pantelleria Island (Mediterranean Sea). The present finding, which represents the 2nd documented record for the Eastern basin, is illustrated and compared with the updated distribution and information of the species in the Mediterranean.

The small eye squaretail *Tetragonurus cuvieri* Risso, 1810 (Tetragonuridae) in the Strait of Sicily is reported. The specimen of 330 mm standard length was caught at a depth of 658 m during a commercial bottom trawling fishing trip, in June 1999. The haul was located at about 30 km south of the Pantelleria Island (Mediterranean Sea). The present finding, which represents the 2nd documented record for the Eastern basin, is illustrated and compared with the updated distribution and information of the species in the Mediterranean.

### First Record of *Tetragonurus cuvieri* (Perciform, Stromateoidei) in the Strait of Sicily (Mediterranean Sea)

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**SUMMARY.** – The first record of *Tetragonurus cuvieri* Risso, 1810 (Tetragonuridae) in the Strait of Sicily is reported. The specimen of 330 mm standard length was caught at a depth of 658 m during a commercial bottom trawling fishing trip, in June 1999. The haul was located at about 30 km south of the Pantelleria Island (Mediterranean Sea). The present finding, which represents the 2nd documented record for the Eastern basin, is illustrated and compared with the updated distribution and information of the species in the Mediterranean.

**RÉSUMÉ.** – Les auteurs signalent la capture d’un Poisson rare, *Tetragonurus cuvieri* Risso, 1810 (Tetragonuridae), qui n’avait jamais été signalé dans le détroit de Sicile. Un chalutier mouillant à Mazara (Sicile) a capturé le spécimen en juin 1999, par 658 m de fond au large de l’île de Pantelleria en Méditerranée. Cette récolte est la seconde dans l’Est méditerranéen. L’exemplaire est illustré et comparé aux exemplaires méditerranéens connus. La répartition de l’espèce en Méditerranée est révisée.

### Concerning the Waters Surrounding Sicily and the Strait of Sicily in Particular

The small eye squaretail *Tetragonurus cuvieri* Risso, 1810, was reported as very rare (Sarà & Sarà 1990) or even absent (Arena & Li Greci 1973), respectively. In this short note, the first finding of the small eye squaretail in the Strait of Sicily is reported.

The specimen was caught in June 1999 in a daylight bottom trawl hauled at about 658 m. The ship was trawling a deep-water red shrimps fishing ground located at about 30 km south of the Pantelleria Island (co-ordinates GPS: 36°32’ N; 12°02’ E; Central Mediterranean Sea; Fig. 1). The fish was frozen on board. Once in the laboratory, the specimen was defrosted, appearing in good shape, photographed, weighed and measured by using a clock-calliper. For total and standard lengths (TL; SL) a measuring board was used. The most relevant meristic counts were also recorded. The number of vertebrae was determined on the base of an X-rays.

Taxonomic identification and general nomenclature were mainly based on the specific literature (Tortonese 1970, Haedrich 1986). The specimen was preserved as a whole (the sex was not determined) in formalin and stored in the IRMA-CNR collection.

The specimen of *T. cuvieri* from the Strait of Sicily (Fig. 2) showed the typical dark brown colour pattern, paler at base of tail and on head. The most macroscopic streaking features were also evident: the keeled scales (less pronounced in juveniles; Berdar *et al.* 1982), the double lateral keels on each side of the peduncle and the box-like dia-
mond-shaped mouth (Tortonese 1970, Haedrich 1986, Froese & Pauly 2001). The basic morphometric measures (as absolute values and indexes of standard length) and meristic counts (Table I) were compared with those available for the Mediterranean records and did fall within the ranges of the species (Tortonese 1970, Hart 1973, Haedrich 1986). Indeed, some allometric disharmony is suspected: the head length/SL index (18% in the present finding), for example, seems higher in “juveniles” (25.4-29.2) than in larger (18.0-19.3) specimens.

Fig. 1. – Location (*) of the specimen of Tetragonurus cuvieri Risso, 1810 trawled in the Strait of Sicily (Mediterranean Sea) in June 1999.

Fig. 2. – Tetragonurus cuvieri Risso, 1810, 330 mm standard length and 252 g body weight, trawled in the Strait of Sicily (Mediterranean Sea).
The Tetragonuridae is the most widely distributed family of all the stromateoid genera (Nelson 1994). It includes only the genus *Tetragonurus* and three species: the Pacific (*T. pacificus* Abe 1953), the Bigeye (*T. atlanticus* Lowe 1839) and the smalleye (*T. cuvieri*) squaretail. These fish feed on jellyfishes (medusae and ctenophores) and large salps, which also serve as refugium for juveniles. The Bigeye and smalleye squaretails are distinct species (Haedrich 1986), and are sympatric in the NE Atlantic (Haedrich 1990).

Specimens of the Mediterranean population of *T. cuvieri* have been caught at different depths without any clear sign of decompression phenomena (Demestre & Roig 1982). Furthermore, there is no general agreement about the spawning periodicity of the Mediterranean population: continuous (Tortonese 1970) or discrete with a peak in July – August (Fons & Villiers 1979). These authors have suggested that the ripe females went up in the water column to reproduce, a moment in which they should be more vulnerable to the capture. Some
specimens were also caught in other months and with immature or recovering gonads (Demestre & Roig 1982); consequently, the hypothesis of a significant relationship between spawning and capture remain to verify. Despite intensive trawling, the smalleye squaretail is very rarely caught, either because the population is small and dispersal or because the species effectively avoids fishing gears.

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