

Scorpaenopsis barbata (Rüppell, 1838)



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Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Scorpaeniformes

Family: Scorpaenidae

Genus: *Scorpaenopsis*

Species: *S. barbata*

Scorpaenopsis barbata, lives along sandy beaches, rocky coastlines and coral reefs and in shallow waters. Its name refers to the fleshy outgrowth of skin protruding from its chin. They have a wide mouth and broad spiny head and venom glands that may occur at the base of fin spines which can produce deep and painful wounds. The feathery fins which cover the scorpion fish body help in the camouflaging of the animals into the surrounding coral. Also, the coral- like frilly, fleshy flaps of skin protruding from its chin add to the species camouflage ability and help the fish to blend with its surroundings. They rest during the daylight in crevices in the corals and from their position they suddenly leap at their un-suspecting prey which could be small fish and crustaceans. Maximum length female is 25 cm and male 17 cm in **Persian Gulf**. Eggs hatch in about 2 days into tiny fry that remain near the water surface until they grow bigger and they reach nearly about 5 cm in length, they swim down into the ocean to join the reef community.

Food: *S. barbata*, are ambush hunters feeding mainly on crustaceans and other fishes.

Distribution: : *S. barbata* found in the western Indian Ocean from the Red Sea to the coasts of Madagascar and South Africa. They are reef-associated and benthic (bottom-dwelling) to depths of at least 30 m. This species widely distributed in the **Persian Gulf**, we report *Scorpaenopsis barbata* for the first time from **Iran Persian Gulf (Kish Island)**.

