

BIOLOGY OF *SYNGNATHUS ABASTER* IN THE EASTERN IONIAN SEA, GREECE

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Syngnathid fishes have evolved pronounced adaptations for male parental care. The literature on the syngnathids in Greece is limited. The aim of the present study was to provide information on the biology of *Syngnathus abaster* of the Eastern Ionian Sea. Samples were collected on a monthly basis from July 2008 to March 2010 in two locations of different types of habitat in the sublittoral zone of the E. Ionian Sea, using a beach seine. Population structure, length-weight relationship, gonadosomatic (GSI) and hepatosomatic (HSI) indices of the population were estimated. Of the 431 collected specimens, 100 (23.2%) were male, 160 (37.1%) female and 171 (39.67%) juvenile and unsexed specimens; sex ratio was F:M = 1.6:1. The population composed of specimens from 2.3 cm (juvenile) to 22.9 cm (female). The growth pattern of the population was positive allometric ($b = 3.22$; 95% c.i = 3.15-3.29). The highest values of GSI were recorded in July and June for females and males respectively, while the peak of the brooding period was in August. HSI showed the highest values in the same months as GSI and the lowest in winter months for both sexes. The present study is the first record on the biology of *S. abaster* in Greece.

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