

## Echeneis

### Classification

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum :** Chordata

**Class :** Actinopterygii

**Order:** Carangiformes

**Family:** Echeneidae

**Genus:** Echeneis



For further details [link](#)

### Habit and habitat

**Commensalism:** Attaches to large host animals such as sharks, rays, sea turtles, whales, and dolphins using a modified dorsal fin that acts as a sucking disc.

**Feeding:** Feeds on food scraps from its host's prey and also acts as a parasite cleaner, consuming parasites from the host's body.

**Geographic Distribution:** Echeneis have a circumtropical distribution, meaning they are found in tropical and warm temperate waters worldwide.

**Marine and Brackish Waters:** They can be found in both fully marine and brackish environments.

### Characteristics

- *Echeneis naucrates* can be easily spotted due to the sucking disc on top of its head. Its sucking organ consists of numerous pairs of crests, which originated from a highly modified spiny dorsal fin.
- This sucking disc is capable of producing a strong vacuum that the species uses to attach to their hosts. The fish is usually 11 or 12 times as long as it is wide, and about five and a half times the length of its head.
- The slim body usually has a dark stripe on the side with narrower pale edges. The shark sucker's tail is pointed, and the jaw is protruded.
- Sharksuckers are poor swimmers and lack a swim bladder, they are therefore called "hitchhikers," because they hitchhike rides on other aquatic organisms.
- *Echeneis naucrates'* pectoral and ventral fins are dark in color, and the belly is a dark brownish color. The dorsal and anal fins are black, and are outlined with a lighter shade.
- Sharksuckers can reach approximately 100 centimeters in length, yet smaller ones are found more frequently. Adult females and males are difficult to distinguish. After the formation of the sucking disc, the young start to resemble the adults.
- The sexes are separate, sperm and eggs develop in male and female individuals. In males, sperm passes from the testis to the outside by a specially developed duct.
- Eggs are fertilized externally then enclosed in a hard shell, which protects them from damage and drying.