

Riau viviparous brotula at Pulau Sekudu

Subject: Riau viviparous brotula, *Ungusurculus riauensis* (Teleostei: Bythitidae).

Subject identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Johor Straits, Pulau Sekudu off southeastern corner of Pulau Ubin; 13 June 2014; around 0430 hrs.

Habitat: Among seagrass on sandflat off the southern end of Pulau Sekudu, during low tide in water less than 30 cm deep.

Observers: Contributor & Toh Chay Hoon.

Observation: The fish was about 7 cm in total length, and swimming close to the sandy substrate in a wobbly, sinuous manner.

Remarks: It is difficult to identify this cryptic fish without a close examination of the distribution of scales on the head. On this specimen, the scales are restricted to a patch on the posterior cheek, which identifies it as an *Ungusurculus*, and not the similar looking *Dinematichthys ilucoeteoides*, which also occurs in Singapore and has scales covering most of its head (see Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 139; Lim & Low, 1998: 70). *Ungusurculus riauensis* was described based on specimens collected from Pulau Sudong in the Singapore Straits. Its live colouration seems to be unknown (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 139), and this may be the first record. The posterior two-thirds of the fish is distinctly yellow, the anterior part and the head pinkish, and the abdominal region is silvery white.



Photograph by Marcus F. C. Ng

References:

- Allen, G. R. & M. V. Erdmann, 2012. *Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Volume I*. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. xiii + 1-424 pp.
- Lim, K. K. P. & J. K. Y. Low, 1998. *A Guide to Common Marine Fishes of Singapore*. Singapore Science Centre. 163 pp.

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