

Spawn of the saddleback anemonefish

Subjects: Saddleback anemonefish, *Amphiprion polymnus* (Teleostei: Pomacentridae).
Carpet anemone, *Stichodactyla haddoni* (Cnidaria: Actiniaria: Stichodactylidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Straits, patch reef west of Pulau Hantu; 23 March 2014; around 1700 hrs.

Habitat: Coral reef at depth of about 10 m.

Observer: Contributor and others.

Observation: A bright orange patch formed by a cluster of eggs (about 8 cm in diameter), was found on a rock next to a large carpet anemone (about 30 cm in diameter) inhabited by three saddleback anemonefish of between 5 and 10 cm in total length (Fig. 1). The patch was just within the reach of the anemone's tentacles, and was tended to by all members of the trio (Fig. 2).

Remarks: This is the same carpet anemone with the same group (sans one member) of saddleback anemonefish reported about three months earlier on 15 December 2013 (Toh, 2013), but no spawn was seen then. The eggs were most likely laid by the female, which is the largest member of the group. The breeding male (usually the second largest member) assists her in tending to the spawn. The bright orange colour of the eggs suggests that they were freshly laid, perhaps only about one or two days old. The eggs of anemonefishes usually hatch in around 7 to 8 days (see Michael, 2008: 189). It is interesting to note that apart from the breeding pair, the smallest member of the trio was also tending to the spawn.

References:

- Michael, S. W., 2008. *Reef Fishes Series. Book 4. Damsel-fishes & Anemonefishes. The Complete Illustrated Guide to their Identification, Behaviors, and Captive Care.* T. F. H. Publications, Inc., Neptune City, USA. 256 pp.
- Toh C. H., 2013. Shrimps and saddleback anemonefish on carpet anemone off Pulau Hantu. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2013: 126-127.



Fig. 1. Patch of spawn at lower half of picture, with carpet anemone at the top, and a parent fish sheltering underneath the anemone.



Fig. 2. One of the larger saddleback anemonefish tending to the eggs.

Photographs by Toh Chay Hoon

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