

African sailfin flying fish in the Singapore Straits

Subjects: African sailfin flying fish, *Parexocoetus mento* (Teleostei: Exocoetidae).

Subjects identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Straits, sea off south-western corner of Kusu Island; 3 & 4 June 2013; evening.

Habitat: Marine. At the surface of the sea over coral reef.

Observers: Tan Heok Hui, Lee Bee Yan and others.

Observation: Examples were collected at night from a boat, with long-handled nets, at the surface of the water under lights from the boat. 34 specimens between 21.2 and 77.3 mm standard length (between snout tip to tail base) are preserved as vouchers in the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore, under the catalogue numbers ZRC 54145, 54146 (see accompanying photograph) and 54147.

Remarks: *Parexocoetus mento* is distinguished from other flying fishes by the following characters combined: pectoral fins not reaching beyond posterior part of anal fin base; pectoral branch of lateral line present; upper jaw protrusible; black dorsal fin with longest rays hardly reaching base of upper caudal fin lobe; 16 to 21 predorsal scales; 10 to 12 anal fin rays. It grows to 100 mm in standard length and inhabits neritic surface waters, not in the open sea, across the tropical Indian and Pacific Oceans from the Red Sea and East Africa eastwards to southern Japan, Australia, Marshall Islands and Fiji (Parin, 1999). Chan & Lim (2013) mention a specimen (ZRC 3259) from Singapore without precise locality at the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum (then Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research).

References:

- Chan S. Y. & K. K. P. Lim, 2013. Flying fish *Parexocoetus* sp. at Tanah Merah shore. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2013: 84.
- Parin, N. V., 1999. Exocoetidae. In: Carpenter, K. E. & V. H. Niem (eds.). *FAO Species Identification Guide for Fishery Purposes: The Living Marine Resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 4. Bony fishes part 2 (Mugilidae to Carangidae)*. FAO, Rome. pp. 2162-2179.

Note: This is a contribution of the Singapore **Comprehensive Marine Biodiversity Survey** conducted by the National University of Singapore's Tropical Marine Science Institute and the National Parks Board.



Lateral view of *Parexocoetus mento* of 77.3 mm standard length (ZRC 54146). Photograph by Tan Heok Hui

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