

New record of blue-spotted pufferfish in Singapore

Subject: Blue-spotted pufferfish, *Arothron caeruleopunctatus* (Teleostei: Tetraodontidae).

Subject identified by: Ahmad Rafiuddin.

Location, date and time: Johor Strait, beach at Pasir Ris Park; 1 March 2015; around 1030 hrs.

Habitat: Estuarine.

Observers: Contributors.

Observation: A large individual of about 70 cm total length was found dead and stranded on a sandy beach. It was found alongside large numbers of dead fish, including members of its congeners *Arothron immaculatus*, *A. reticularis*, *A. stellatus* and *A. mappa*. The accompanying picture shows the fish on its side. It appears to have been dead for at least one day.

Remarks: The featured pufferfish was apparently a casualty of a plankton bloom in the Johor Strait since 28 February 2015 that killed large numbers of fish there (Cheong, 2015; Khew, 2015). This specimen represents the first record of *Arothron caeruleopunctatus* in Singapore (Fowler, 1938; Kelvin K. P. Lim, personal communication). It is distinguished from the similar looking map pufferfish (*Arothron mappa*) in being yellowish-brown on its dorsum; having dark-coloured rings around its eye; small blue spots on its head, body and fins; and a black patch with white spots at the base of its pectoral fin. It attains a maximum size of about 80 cm and occurs from the Réunion and Maldive Islands throughout the East Indian region to New Caledonia and Marshall Islands, northwards to Japan (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 1086).

References:

- Allen, G. R. & M. V. Erdmann, 2012. *Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Volume III*. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. pp. 857-1292.
- Cheong, K., 2015. Mass fish deaths overnight hit Changi farmers hard. *The Sunday Times*. 1 March 2015: 8.
- Fowler, H. W., 1938. A list of the fishes known from Malaya. *Fisheries Bulletin*. 1: 1-268.
- Khew, C., 2015. Fish farms may move from Changi after mass deaths. *The Straits Times*. Wednesday, 4 March 2015: A3.



Photograph by Sean Yap

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