

New record of the volitans lionfish in Singapore

Subject: Volitans lionfish, *Pterois volitans* (Teleostei: Scorpaenidae).

Subject identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait, off Pulau Hantu; 30 May 2015; at around 1425 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Coral reef at around 15 m depth.

Observer: Heng Pei Yan.

Observation: A juvenile example of about 4 cm total length, was observed near the substrate (Fig. 1 & 2).

Remarks: The volitans lionfish is native to the tropical western Pacific, and occurs in the South China Sea (Randall & Lim, 2000: 605). However, this appears to be the first record of the species in Singapore waters (Fowler, 1938: 201-202).

The volitans lionfish is similar in appearance to the Russell's lionfish (*Pterois russellii*) which occurs in Singapore waters (Loh, 2014; Tan & Lim, 2014). It is distinguished from the latter species in having black spots on its median (soft dorsal, caudal and anal) fins and a long fleshy cirrus on the upper margin of each eye. The Russell's lionfish has translucent median fins without spots and the cirrus above the eye is comparatively short or absent (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 222-223).

Another very similar species, the Indian lionfish (*Pterois miles*), was recorded from Singapore by Tweedie (1940: 79) based on material deposited at the Raffles Museum (now the Zoological Reference Collection of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore). *Pterois miles*, however, is endemic to the Indian Ocean (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 221) and is unlikely to be found in the immediate area around Singapore. The two specimens (catalogue number ZRC 209) that Tweedie (1940: 79) apparently cited, were obtained in Singapore in February 1899. They were identified by A. W. C. T. Herre in 1940 as *Pterois miles*. K. K. P. Lim has re-examined these specimens and found them instead to be *Pterois russellii*.

References:

- Allen, G. R. & M. V. Erdmann, 2012. *Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Volume I*. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. xiii + 424 pp.
- Fowler, H. W., 1938. A list of the fishes known from Malaya. *Fisheries Bulletin*. 1: 1-268.
- Loh K. S., 2014. Russell's lionfish at Pulau Hantu. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2014: 240.
- Randall, J. E. & K. K. P. Lim (eds.), 2000. A checklist of the fishes of the South China Sea. *The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*. Supplement No. 8: 569-667.
- Tan H. H. & K. K. P. Lim, 2014. Russell's lionfish in the Singapore Straits. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2014: 11.
- Tweedie, M. W. F., 1940. Additions to the collection of fishes in the Raffles Museum. *Bulletin of the Raffles Museum, Singapore*. 16: 68-82.

Contributors: **Heng Pei Yan & Kelvin K. P. Lim**

Contact address: nhmlimkp@nus.edu.sg (Lim)

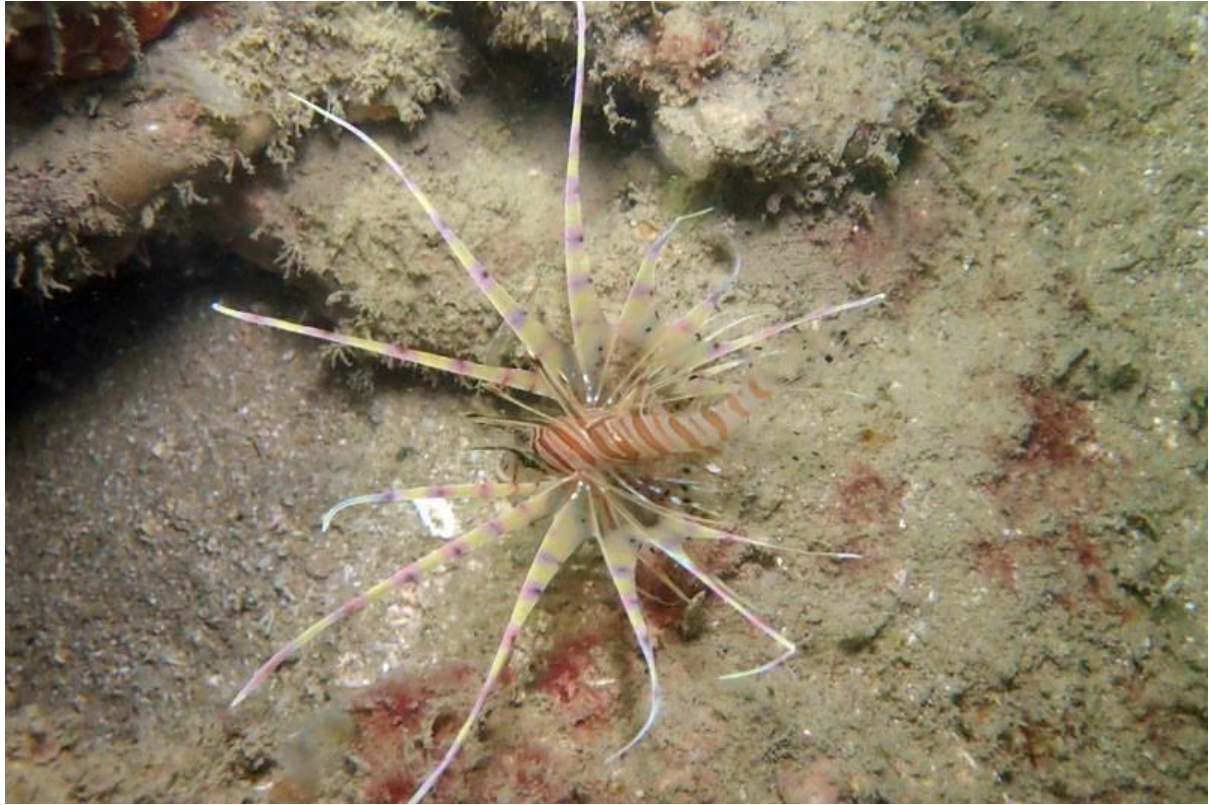


Fig. 1. Dorso-lateral view of juvenile *Pterois volitans* with its head facing left. Note the black spots on the soft dorsal, anal and caudal fins and relatively long cirrus above the eye.



Fig. 2. Dorsal view of juvenile *Pterois volitans* with head pointing downwards.

Photographs by Heng Pei Yan