

Recent record of black-spined murex at Pulau Sudong

Subjects: Black-spined murex, *Murex ternispina* (Mollusca: Gastropoda: Muricidae).

Subjects identified by: Tan Siong Kiat.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait, southwestern shore of Pulau Sudong; 17 November 2014; around 1030 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Fringing coral reef, with bed of coral rubble, at depths of between 5 and 12 m.

Observers: Tan Heok Hui & Toh Chay Hoon.

Observation: While diving, the observers collected five empty shells of *Murex ternispina* from a 10 m² area of level coral rubble at around 8 m depth. The specimens, including a juvenile measuring 21.8 mm in shell length, were in varying states of decay. Two were riddled with holes made by boring sponges. The most intact specimen (see figure attached) measures 82.2 mm in shell length (apex to anterior tip of siphonal canal, excluding the spines). The specimens have been deposited in the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore, and registered as ZRC.MOL.7737.



Apertural (left) and dorsal views of 82.2 mm *Murex ternispina*.
Composite photograph by Tan Heok Hui

Remarks: *Murex ternispina* is rarely seen in Singapore and was not recovered in a recent survey of the Singapore Strait (Sanpanich & Tan, 2016). Data from specimens collected before the 1960s deposited in the ZRC and other museums (see also Ponder & Vokes, 1988), indicate that it occurred along the eastern and south-eastern coasts of Singapore Island (e.g., Telok Paku, Siglap, Tanjong Katong, Bedok). There seems to be no report of this species since the aforementioned coastlines were reclaimed, and only the locally common *Murex trapa* has been found recently in the same area (e.g., Sanpanich & Tan, 2016; TSK personal observations). It is uncertain if *Murex ternispina* is restricted to the vicinity of the southern islands today. About half a dozen species of the genus *Murex* have been recorded from Singapore (e.g., Ponder & Vokes, 1988). Based on museum specimens with reliable locality information, only three species, namely *Murex aduncospinosus*, *Murex ternispina*, and *Murex trapa*, are confirmed to be present. Further investigation is needed to substantiate the records of the other species.

References:

- Ponder, W. F. & E. H. Vokes, 1988. A revision of the Indo-West Pacific fossil and recent species of *Murex* s.s. and *Haustellum* (Mollusca: Gastropoda: Muricidae). *Records of the Australian Museum*. Supplement 8: 1-160.
- Sanpanich, K. & S. K. Tan, 2016. Shell-bearing gastropod molluscs of the Singapore Strait. *Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*. Supplement 34: 528-538.

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