

Vinegar crab, *Episesarma singaporense*, feeding on dead congener

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Subjects: Singapore vinegar crab, *Episesarma singaporense* (Crustacea: Brachyura: Sesarmidae);
Unidentified vinegar crab, *Episesarma* sp. (Crustacea: Brachyura: Sesarmidae).

Subjects identified by: Lee Bee Yan

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, mangrove boardwalk; 21 June 2017; 0945 hrs.

Habitat: Mangrove forest, on the mud in the intertidal zone.

Observer: Author.

Observation: An adult *Episesarma singaporense* of about 4 cm carapace width was observed feeding on a larger dead congener (see accompanying pictures). As the dead crab was missing most of its limbs and pincers, its specific identity could not be ascertained (Lee Bee Yan, personal communication). Videos of the feeding behaviour can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/onDTXuNMbrM> and <https://youtu.be/OMpHuHnNOIQ>.

Remarks: Vinegar crabs of the genus *Episesarma* can commonly be seen in the mangroves of the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, especially during low tides. Of the five species recorded from Singapore (Lee, Ng & Ng, 2015), three are known to occur at Sungei Buloh. Apart from *Episesarma singaporense*, there are *Episesarma palawanese* and *Episesarma versicolor*. Despite being largely herbivorous, these tree-climbing crabs will scavenge on meat if given the opportunity (Ng & Sivasothi, 1997). The present observation shows that *Episesarma singaporense* will eat a congener and most likely a conspecific.

References:

- Lee B. Y., N. K. Ng & P. K. L. Ng, 2015. The taxonomy of five species of *Episesarma* De Man, 1895, in Singapore (Crustacea: Decapoda: Brachyura: Sesarmidae). *The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*. Supplement 31: 199-215.
- Ng, P. K. L. & N. Sivasothi (eds.), 1999, *A Guide to the Mangroves of Singapore II*. Singapore Science Centre. 168 pp.



Photographs by Benjamin Lee Chengfa