

River jellyfish, *Acromitus hardenbergi*, at Sungei Buloh

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Subject: River jellyfish, *Acromitus hardenbergi* (Cnidaria: Scyphozoa: Rhizostomeae: Catostylidae); Fig. 1.

Subject identified by: Iffah Iesa.

Location, date and time: Johor Strait, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, beside Coastal Trail boardwalk, near Mudskipper Pod; 10 October 2017; around 1700 hrs.

Habitat: Estuarine. Waterway lined with mangrove vegetation (Fig. 2).

Observer: Uwe Will.

Observations: An example of about 8 cm bell diameter was observed at the surface of the water (Fig. 1) during high tide.

Remarks: Of the five species in the genus *Acromitus*, *Acromitus hardenbergi* is easily distinguished from its congeners by the absence of a terminal thread-like appendage on each mouth arm (see Kitamura & Omori, 2010: 109). It has been suggested that *Acromitus maculosus* is the only species in the genus, and the rest (including *Acromitus hardenbergi*) are merely varieties of it (see World Register of Marine Species, 2008b; Maaden, 1935). However, this is not universally accepted (see Kitamura & Omori, 2010: 109).

Acromitus hardenbergi can be found at mouths of rivers (see Kitamura & Omori, 2010: 109) and even further inland, up to about 24 km upstream from the river mouth (Stiasny, 1934: 1). The medusae of live individuals of *Acromitus hardenbergi* have been reported to be white or slightly brown and lightly pink or purple (see Kitamura & Omori, 2010: 109), but not blue (as in Fig. 1). Closer examination of the medusa's oral arms, gastric canals and sub-genital projection (to be seen from the oral side of the jellyfish) is required for a better diagnosis. The present identification should, therefore, be regarded as tentative.

Another possible candidate would be *Acromitus flagellatus* which inhabits coastal areas, sometimes in brackish or silty waters, and is distributed from the western Indian Ocean to the central Pacific. Some individuals of *Acromitus flagellatus* do not have the long terminal filaments (see World Register of Marine Species, 2008a) and can be mistaken for *Acromitus hardenbergi*. However, the length of the oral arms of *Acromitus flagellatus* is approximately as long as the diameter of the bell, while the oral arm to bell diameter ratio is halved in *Acromitus hardenbergi* (see Stiasny, 1934: 5). In this aspect, the featured example resembles *Acromitus hardenbergi*.

References:

- Kitamura, M. & M. Omori, 2010. Synopsis of edible jellyfishes collected from Southeast Asia, with notes on jellyfish fisheries. *Plankton Benthos Research*. 5 (3): 106-118.
- Maaden, H. van der, 1935. Kritische Bemerkungen uber die beschriebenen Arten der Rhizostomeen-Gattung *Acromitus*. *Zoologische Mededelingen*. 18: 228-236.
- Stiasny, G., 1934. *Acromitus hardenbergi* nov. spec., eine neue Rhizostome meduse aus dem Malayischen Archipel. *Zoologische Mededelingen*. 17 (1-2): 1-7.
- World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS), 2008a. *Acromitus flagellatus* (Haeckel). In: Jarms, G. & A. C. Morandini. *World list of Scyphozoa*. <http://marinespecies.org/aphia.php?p=taxdetails&id=220489>. Accessed on 21 November 2017.
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Fig. 1. Lateral view of the jellyfish as it drifts below the surface of the water.



Fig. 2. The jellyfish was spotted in the water behind the shelter in the middle of the picture.

Photographs by Uwe Will