

A variegated cardinalfish at Sisters Islands

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Subject: Variegated cardinalfish, *Fowleria variegata* (Teleostei: Apogonidae).

Subject identified by: Marcus F. C. Ng & Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait, Sisters Islands Marine Park, lagoon at Big Sister Island; 11 June 2017; at around 0800 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Artificial lagoon near coral reef. At low tide in water of 15 cm depth at high intertidal zone among coral rubble.

Observer: Marcus F. C. Ng.

Observation: An example of about 5 cm total length was found in the open among coral rubble. It appeared to be quite inactive (see accompanying picture).

Remarks: The variegated cardinalfish is widely distributed throughout the tropical Indo-west Pacific. Although apparently common, it has cryptic habits and is rarely seen (Kuitert & Kozawa, 1999: 97). The species occurs individually or in small groups on coastal coral reefs, but has been recorded from seagrass and weed beds and mangroves (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 381). In Singapore, it has been collected from the Singapore Strait at Sultan Shoal, Pulau Satumu and Semakau (Ng & Lim, 2014: 1064). It is not known what caused the featured example to be in an exposed situation. In the attached picture, the usually distinct blackish round blotch at the upper edge of the gill cover is obscured by iridescent chromatophores.

References:

- Allen, G. R. & M. V. Erdmann, 2012. *Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Volume I*. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. xiii + 424 pp.
- Kuitert, R. H. & T. Kozawa, 2001. *Fishes of the Indo-west Pacific. Apogonidae Pictorial Guide*. Second edition. Aquatic Photographics, Australia & Anthis (Nexus), Japan. 132 pp.
- Ng H. H. & K. K. P. Lim, 2014. A preliminary checklist of the cardinalfishes (Actinopterygii: Gobiiformes: Apogonidae) of Singapore. *Check List*. 10 (5): 1061-1070.



Dorso-lateral view of the subject. Photograph by Marcus F. C. Ng