

## A recent record of the masked cardinalfish in Singapore

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**Subjects:** Masked cardinalfish, *Fibramia thermalis* (Teleostei: Apogonidae).

**Subjects identified by:** Daisuke Taira.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Strait off Pulau Seringat, near the Pulau Seringat ferry terminal; 21 December 2015; at around 1445 hrs.

**Habitat:** Marine. Coastal area of large granite boulders that extend from riprap sloping seawalls. At depth of about 5 m.

**Observer:** Daisuke Taira.

**Observation:** A group of at least 24 individuals of about 4 to 6 cm total length was observed hovering among the granite boulders. The accompanying photograph shows dorso-lateral views of the fish in-situ.



Photograph by Daisuke Taira

**Remarks:** The present observation represents a confirmation of the presence of *Fibramia thermalis* in Singapore waters. Ng & Lim (2014: 1062 as *Ostorhinchus thermalis*) list the species as unconfirmed based on an unsubstantiated record that appears in Weber & de Beaufort (1929: 343 as synonym *Apogon sangiensis*). The species was recently transferred to the genus *Fibramia* by Mabuchi et al. (2014: 189).

This cardinalfish is recognisable by its greyish brown body, whitish on lower head and belly, with a broad black stripe through the eye and snout. Its first dorsal fin has a black anterior edge, there are 2 or 3 small black spots at the base of the dorsal fins, and a larger black spot at the tail base. This gregarious species is widely distributed throughout the Indo-west Pacific from East Africa through Indonesia to Australia and Vanuatu, northwards to the Ryukyu Islands; and occurs in sheltered, silty coastal reefs to 12 m depth (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 405 as *Ostorhinchus thermalis*).

**References:**

- Allen, G. R. & M. V. Erdmann, 2012. *Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Volume I*. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. xiii + 424 pp.
- Mabuchi, K., T. H. Fraser, H. Song, Y. Azuma & M. Nishida, 2014. Revision of the systematics of the cardinalfishes (Percomorpha: Apogonidae) based on molecular analyses and comparative reevaluation of morphological characters. *Zootaxa*. 3846 (2): 151-203.
- 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.
- Weber, M. & L. F. de Beaufort, 1929. *The Fishes of the Indo-Australian Archipelago. V. Anacanthini, Allotriognathi, Heterosomata, Berycomorphi, Percomorphi: Families: Kuhliidae, Apogonidae, Plesiopidae, Pseudoplesiopidae, Priacanthidae, Centropomidae*. E. J. Brill, Leiden. xiv + 458 pp.

**Note:** This sighting was recorded as part of the project “Ecological engineering Singapore’s seawall to enhance biodiversity” funded by National Research Foundation (MSRDP-P05).