

Shorthead fang-blenny in the Singapore Strait

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Subject: Shorthead fang-blenny, *Petroscirtes breviceps* (Teleostei: Blenniidae).

Subject identified by: Daisuke Taira.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait off Seringat Island; 22 March 2016; 1219 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Sandy bottom, at about 3 m depth.

Observer: Daisuke Taira.

Observation: One individual of about 5 cm in total length (see accompanying picture) was observed in the sandy area near the sloping riprap seawalls. The fish was taking shelter among cable ties attached to the legs of coral nursery tables which are made of PVC pipes.

Remarks: The first record of *Petroscirtes breviceps* in Singapore is based on four specimens (43 to 71 mm standard length) in the Stanford University (California, USA) collections from Singapore cited by Smith-Vaniz, (1976: 38 as *Petroscirtes (Dasson) breviceps*). They appear to be collected by A. W. C. T. Herre in the 1930s. However, we are unable to match this series with any of the blenniid species mentioned in Herre's reports on fishes collected from Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore during that period (see Herre & Myers, 1937 and Herre, 1940).



Photograph by Daisuke Taira

The presence of *Petroscirtes breviceps* in Singapore waters was recently recorded on video. At a fish farm situated in the Singapore Strait off the Semakau Landfill, many examples of the shorthead fang-blenny were filmed underwater among fouling organisms on ropes and nets. Two of the fish were apparently courting and possibly spawning. These footage are featured in episode 3, 'Islands', of 'Wild City', a television documentary on Singapore's wildlife produced by Beach House Pictures for Channel News Asia. The episode first aired in Singapore on Mediacorp's Channel News Asia on 30 March 2016.

Petroscirtes breviceps grows to a maximum known size of 13 cm total length, and is frequently white or yellow with one to three blackish stripes. It usually occurs alone or in pairs, in coastal reefs, often in weedy and sandy areas, down to 15 m depth. It is known to use small-necked bottles and abandoned worm tubes and shells for shelter and nesting. This species is widely distributed across the Indo-west Pacific from East Africa throughout Indonesia, western Australia, and northwards to Japan (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 794).

References:

- Allen, G. R. & M. V. Erdmann, 2012. *Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Volume II*. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. pp. 425-856.
- Herre, A. W. C. T., 1940. Additions to the fish fauna of Malaya and notes on rare or little known Malayan and Bornean fishes. *Bulletin of the Raffles Museum, Singapore*. 16: 27-55.
- Herre, A. W. C. T. & G. S. Myers, 1937. A contribution to the ichthyology of the Malay Peninsula. *Bulletin of the Raffles Museum, Singapore*. 13: 5-75.
- Smith-Vaniz, W. F., 1976. The saber-toothed blennies, tribe Nemophini (Pisces: Blenniidae). *The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Monograph* 19: vii + 196 pp.