A cobia in the Singapore Strait

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Subject identified by: Daisuke Taira.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait off western Pulau Hantu; 18 April 2018; at around 1130 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Along sloping riprap seawall, at around one metre depth.

Observer: Daisuke Taira

Observation: One example of about 80 cm total length was recorded on video footage by a 360 degree camera (Garmin Virb 360) in the shallow area near the sloping riprap seawall during a high tide (see attached picture). Apparently the same individual swam past the camera a few times.

Remarks: The generally pelagic cobia attains a maximum known total length of 2 m, and occurs in tropical and subtropical seas throughout much of the world, except the eastern Pacific. The young cobia bears a striking resemblance to the shark sucker (*Echeneis naucrates*), with which it is sympatric, in body shape and colour pattern but lacks the suction disk on top of the head (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 424). Although native to Singapore, the cobia is commercially reared in cages as food fish (Jaafar et al., 2012: 82; Ng et al., 2015: 319). It is possible that some wild examples are farm escapees.

References:


Note: This sighting was recorded as part of the project ‘Ecological engineering Singapore’s seawall to enhance biodiversity’ (MSRDP-P05) funded by Singapore’s National Research Foundation (R-154-000-566-490).