

Reticulate pufferfish sold for food at a market

Tan Heok Hui

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Subject: Reticulate pufferfish, *Arothron reticularis* (Teleostei: Tetraodontiformes: Tetraodontidae).

Subject identified by: Tan Heok Hui.

Location and date: Singapore Island, purchased at Yew Tee wet market; 22 July 2018.

Habitat: Marine. Presumably from coral reef.

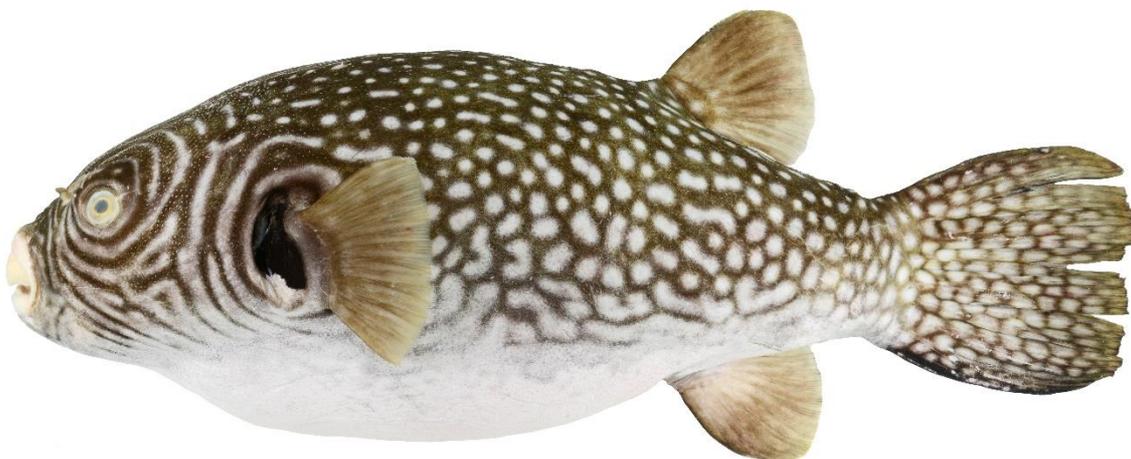
Observer: Tan Heok Hui.

Observation: An example of the reticulate pufferfish was seen being sold as food at the wet market. This fish was said to be caught with fish trap/bubu in the Singapore Strait. The fish of 38 cm standard length (tip of snout to base of caudal fin) and 3.5 kg (see accompanying picture) was bought. The specimen was not consumed, but preserved and deposited as a voucher (ZRC 60169) in the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore. The emission of a white viscous fluid from near the anal opening of the fish suggests that it is male.

Remarks: This is the second species of pufferfish that the author has encountered being publicly sold as food in Singapore despite the general assumption that most members of the family Tetraodontidae are poisonous (Matsuura, 2001). According to the fishmonger, its flesh is edible and esteemed by the Malay community. It is assumed that whoever purchase these fishes will have the knowledge to properly prepare them to render them safe for eating. The starry pufferfish (*Arothron stellatus*) has been recorded being offered for sale as food (Tan, 2016).

References:

- Matsuura, K., 2001. Tetraodontidae. Puffers. In: Carpenter, K. E. & V. H. Niem (eds.). *FAO Species Identification Guide for Fishery Purposes. The Living Marine Resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 6. Bony fishes part 4 (Labridae to Latimeriidae), estuarine crocodiles, sea turtles, sea snakes and marine mammals*. FAO, Rome. pp. 3954-3957.
- Tan H. H., 2016. Starry pufferfish with barnacles in its gut sold for food in a market. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2016: 102-103.



Lateral view of *Arothron reticularis* (ZRC 60169). Photograph by Tan Heok Hui