

A record of the giant moray, *Gymnothorax javanicus*, in Singapore

Tan Heok Hui, Lee Co Sin & Kelvin K. P. Lim

nhmthh@nus.edu.sg (Tan), nhmlimkp@nus.edu.sg (Lim)

Subject: Giant moray, *Gymnothorax javanicus* (Teleostei: Anguilliformes: Muraenidae).

Subject identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location and date: Singapore Strait off Saint John's Island; 30 March 2019.

Habitat: Marine shore. Coral reef at low tide.

Observer: The record is contributed by an anonymous person who caught the subject.

Observation: An example of about 1.5 m total length, and weighing at around 7 kg, was caught by hook and line. The attached photograph shows a lateral view of the freshly caught specimen which is believed to have been subsequently consumed.

Remarks: This may be the first confirmed record of the giant moray in Singapore waters. *Gymnothorax javanicus* is listed as occurring in Singapore by Chou et al. (1994: 102) but based on an unknown source. In the East Indian region, the giant moray resembles the sympatric yellow-margin moray (*Gymnothorax flavimarginatus*) in having its gill opening set in a conspicuous dark blotch, and a body with discrete dark markings on a pale background. While the giant moray is light brown with numerous dark spots (which appear distinct and separated in young fish but become large, diffused and mottled in adults), the yellow-margin moray is densely covered with small, overlapping brown spots. The yellow-margin moray also differs in having the front of its head purplish grey. The giant moray is known to grow to at least 2.2 m in total length, while the yellow-margin moray reaches around 1.2 m (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 85-86; Böhlke et al., 1999: 1651).

References:

- Allen, G. R. & M. V. Erdmann, 2012. *Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Volume I*. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. xiii + 424 pp.
- Böhlke, E. B., J. E. McCosker & D. G. Smith, Muraenidae. Morays. 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 3. Batoid fishes, chimaeras and bony fishes Part 1 (Elopidae to Linophryniidae)*. FAO, Rome. pp. 1643-1657.
- Chou L. M., P. K. L. Ng & K. K. P. Lim, 1994. Animalia. In: Wee Y. C. & P. K. L. Ng (eds.). *A First Look at Biodiversity in Singapore*. National Council on the Environment, Singapore. p. 70-106.



Photograph by Anonymous