

## A longnose stargazer at Changi Beach

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**Subject:** Longnose stargazer, *Ichthyoscopus lebeck* (Teleostei: Uranoscopidae).

**Subject identified by:** Tan Heok Hui.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Changi Beach, near Tekong Ferry Terminal; 24 December 2018; around 1900 hrs.

**Habitat:** Estuarine intertidal sand flats, exposed during low tide, with patches of algae and seagrass.

**Observers:** Chan Sow Yan, Tan Heok Hui, Iffah Iesa, Fatin Iesa, Lee Bee Yan, Leo Nguang & Tan Siong Kiat.

**Observation:** A small circular hole of under 1 cm diameter, with slight water movement inside, was noted on the exposed sand flat about 3 m from the water's edge. While excavating the hole, a blockish fish head was unearthed under 2 to 10 cm of sand. The fish was extricated just as it was digging itself deeper into the substrate. It measured 19 cm in total length.

**Remarks:** The specimen is preserved in the Zoological Reference Collection of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore, as part of a project documenting the marine fish fauna of Singapore. Although rarely seen probably due to its burrowing habits, this species has been recorded in Singapore from Chek Jawa and Changi (Tan & Lim, 2013; Ng et al., 2015; Tan, 2018).

### References:

- Nakabo, T. (ed.), 2002. *Fishes of Japan with pictorial keys to the species*. English edition. Tokai University Press, Tokyo. i-lxi, 1749 pp.
- Ng H. H., H. H. Tan, K. K. P. Lim, W. B. Ludt & P. Chakrabarty, 2015. Fishes of the eastern Johor Strait. *Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*. Supplement 31: 303-337.
- Tan, R., 2018. Stargazers. Family Uranoscopidae. *Wild Fact Sheets*. Updated May 2018. <http://www.wildsingapore.com/wildfacts/vertebrates/fish/uranoscopidae/uranoscopidae.htm>. Accessed on 25 December 2018.
- Tan, R. & K. K. P. Lim, 2013. Long-nosed stargazer at Changi. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2013: 90-91.



Fig. 1. Dorso-lateral view of the stargazer next to the hole from which it was extricated. Photograph by Tan Heok Hui



Fig. 2 (above). Composite views of *Ichthyoscopus lebeck*. Dorsal view on top, lateral aspect in middle, and ventral view at bottom. On the dorsal and lateral views, note the following diagnostic characters (see Nakabo, 2002): fimbriated and membranous appendage above the pectoral fin at the dorsal opening of the opercle, no spines at margin of opercle, dorsally orientated eyes, and large white spots on the body.

Fig. 3 (right). Close-up of the dorsal aspect of the head showing the complex papillated lips and elongated nasal protrusions that resemble worms.



Photographs by Tan Heok Hui