

## A striking seastar, *Euretaster insignis*, at Terumbu Hantu

Heng Pei Yan

[mojojopy@gmail.com](mailto:mojojopy@gmail.com)

---

**Subject:** Striking seastar, *Euretaster insignis* (Echinodermata: Asteroidea: Velatida: Pterasteridae).

**Subject identified by:** Heng Pei Yan.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Strait, western side of Terumbu Hantu; 18 July 2020; 1710 hrs.

**Habitat:** Marine. Coral reef, on coral rubble, at 14.5 m depth.

**Observer:** Heng Pei Yan.

**Observation:** During a leisure dive, one example (Fig. 1-3) with an approximate diameter of 13 cm, was spotted on the seabed at a depth of 14.5 m. When the seastar was first spotted, its open central orifice was expanding and contracting (Fig. 1), but no visible particles were expelled from the animal.

**Remarks:** This distinctively marked seastar is regarded as locally ‘endangered’ in Singapore (Lane, 2008: 135) where specimens have been reported from the Ayer Chawan Islands (now Jurong Island), Sultan Shoal and around Semakau (VandenSpiegel et. al., 1998: 435; Lane & Vandenspiegel, 2003: 72-73; Ng, 2012: 85). It is said to be ‘previously common on Labrador Beach but now rarely seen’ (Lane, 2008: 135). The extent and intensity of the red net-like markings appear to vary between individuals (compare featured subject with images in VandenSpiegel et al., 1998: 464, Pl. II, fig. 3; Lane & Vandenspiegel, 2003: 72; Ng, 2012: 85).

### References:

- Lane D (2008) Echinodermata. In: Davison GWH, Ng PKL & Ho HC (ed.) The Singapore Red Data Book. Threatened Plants and Animals of Singapore. Second edition. Nature Society (Singapore). Pp. 129-143.
- Lane DJW & Vandenspiegel D (2003) A Guide to Sea Stars and other Echinoderms of Singapore. Singapore Science Centre. 187 pp.
- Ng MFC (2012) Habitats in Harmony: The Story of Semakau Landfill. Second Edition. National Environment Agency, Singapore. 159 pp.
- VandenSpiegel D, Lane DJW, Stampanato S & Jangoux M (1998) The asteroid fauna (Echinodermata) of Singapore, with a distribution table and an illustrated identification to the species. The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology, 46 (2): 431-470.



Fig. 1. Dorsal surface of *Euretaster insignis*, in situ, showing the animal expelling water out of its open central orifice.

Photograph by Heng Pei Yan



Fig. 2. Dorsal surface of *Euretaster insignis*, in-situ.



Fig. 3. Ventral surface of *Euretaster insignis*, in-situ.

Photographs by Heng Pei Yan