

Ramose murex snails at Changi Beach

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Subjects: Ramose murex, *Chicoreus ramosus* (Mollusca: Gastropoda: Muricidae).

Subjects identified by: Spencer Yau Jia Ming.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Changi Beach 7; 5 July 2020; 0440 hrs

Habitat: Estuarine shore. Seagrass meadow at intertidal zone, exposed during early morning low tide.

Observers: Spencer Yau Jia Ming, Sarah Priyanka Nelson and Bryan Wong Kang Ing.

Observation: Two examples, both estimated to be 20 cm in shell length (Fig. 1-4), were found submerged in knee deep water, and temporarily removed for photography. Both shells have brown patterns over a white base, a dorsal surface with short spines and were relatively free of encrusting organisms, particularly on the left dorsal side of the shell. The opercula were dark brown with a spiral pattern (Fig. 2). The animal of the first specimen was shut behind its operculum (Fig. 1 & 2). The second individual was firmly adhered by its foot to the surface of a dead fan shell (Fig. 3).

Remarks: The ramose murex is distributed throughout the Indo-Pacific region, but is regarded as rare and 'endangered' in Singapore (Chou & Tan, 2008). Juveniles have been found in the sandy intertidal areas of Changi and Tanah Merah, while larger specimens have been seen subtidally around the southern islands where they are known to spawn. Individuals are occasionally caught in trammel nets by fishermen in the area around Changi and Pulau Ubin (Tan & Toh, 2015). A description of the shell morphology and colour pattern of this species is provided by Hylleberg & Nateewathana (1992).



Fig 1. Dorsal view of the first example of *Chicoreus ramosus* at Changi Beach. Photograph by Spencer J. M. Yau



Fig 2. Ventral view of the first example of *Chicoreus ramosus*. Note the spiral pattern on the surface of the operculum. Photograph by Spencer J. M. Yau

References:

Chou LM & Tan KS (2008) Corals, worms and molluscs. In: Davison GWH, Ng PKL & Ho HC (eds.) The Singapore Red Data Book. Threatened Plants & Animals of Singapore. Second Edition. Nature Society (Singapore). Pp. 190-207.

Hylleberg J & Nateewathana A (1992). Description of *Chicoreus ramosus* shells, with notes on *Chicoreus torrefactus*. Special Publication of the Phuket Marine Biological Center, 10: 109–112.

Tan SK & Toh CH (2015). Ramose murex *Chicoreus ramosus* spawning at Pulau Hantu. Singapore Biodiversity Records 2015: 92–93.



Fig. 3. Dorsal view of the second individual of *Chicoreus ramosus* with hand placed beside it for size comparison. Photograph by Spencer J. M. Yau