

A juvenile peacock grouper off Kusu Island

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Subject: Peacock grouper, *Cephalopholis argus* (Teleostei: Perciformes: Serranidae).

Subject identified by: Adib Adris.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait, off Kusu Island; 25 July 2020; around 1300 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Coral reef, from a depth of about 3 m.

Observers: Adib Adris and Vincent Ting.

Observation: An example of about 7 cm total length was caught on hook baited with fresh prawn meat during cloudy weather. It was photographed while temporarily held in a plastic receptacle (see accompanying picture) before release.



Lateral view of juvenile peacock grouper. Photograph by Adib Adris

Remarks: The peacock grouper grows to a maximum size of 60 cm total length, and is widely distributed throughout the Indo-west Pacific from the Red Sea and East Africa eastwards throughout Indonesia to Micronesia and French Polynesia (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 260). It is recorded in Singapore waters (Bleeker, 1859-60: 448 as *Serranus myriaster*), but seems to be uncommon. The colour pattern of adult fish resembles *Cephalopholis cyanostigma* (blue-spotted grouper) and *Cephalopholis miniata* (red coral grouper), both also recorded from Singapore (Tweedie, 1940: 80 as *Epinephelus cyanostigma*; Heemstra & Randall, 1993: 49). However, their juveniles of similar size as the featured example have different colour patterns. *Cephalopholis cyanostigma* is uniformly grey or brown with yellow fins, and *Cephalopholis miniata* is yellow with considerably fewer and scattered blue spots (see Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 260, 262-263).

References:

- Allen GR & Erdmann MV (2012) Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. xiii + 1-424 (Vol. 1), 425-856 (Vol. 2), 857-1292 (Vol. 3).
- Bleeker P (1859-1860) Nieuwe vischsoorten van Singapore, verzameld door Fr. Graaf de Castelnau. Natuurkundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche-Indië, 20: 216-217, 236-239.
- Tweedie MWF (1940) Additions to the collection of fishes in the Raffles Museum. Bulletin of the Raffles Museum, Singapore, 16: 68-82.
- Heemstra PC & Randall JE (1993) FAO species catalogue. Vol. 16. Groupers of the world (family Serranidae, subfamily Epinephelinae). An annotated and illustrated catalogue of the grouper, rockcod, hind, coral grouper and lyretail species known to date. FAO Fisheries Synopsis. No. 125: viii + 382 pp., 522 figs., 31 colour plates.