

Sightings of live *Alaerato angistoma* snails in Singapore

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Subjects: Semi-cowrie, *Alaerato angistoma* (Mollusca: Gastropoda: Eratoidea).

Subjects identified by: Tan Siong Kiat and Chan Sow-Yan.

Location, date and time: Johor Strait, Changi Beach; 26 December 2019; 1613 hours.

Habitat: Estuarine shore. In intertidal area, on a bio-fouled boulder during low tide.

Observer: Lau Wing Lup.

Observation: Two live examples were observed, one on the ventral side of a rock snail, *Reishia* sp. (Fig. 1a); the other on the shell of a tuberculate gyre triton, *Gyrineum natator* (Fig. 1b).

Remarks: Live *Alaerato angistoma* snails are rarely encountered. Empty shells are, however, often washed ashore, and can be very common among the debris on strand lines of beaches in Singapore, such as those on Kusu Island, Sentosa, East Coast Park and Changi (personal observations). Shells of live animals are glossy and translucent, which allow the colour of the snails' yellow flesh with dark brown or black patches to show through (Fig. 2–6). Notably, the specimens are not identical in shell size and shape, which may indicate sexual dimorphism.



Fig. 1a. Live *Alaerato angistoma* snail (circled in red) on the shell of a *Reishia* sp.



Fig. 1b. Live *Alaerato angistoma* snail (in red circle) on the shell of a *Gyrineum natator*.

Photographs by Lau Wing Lup

The specimens match the original descriptions of the species in Sowerby (1832) and the lectotype illustrated in Cate (1977). The other congener recorded from Singapore, *Alaerato angulifera* (see Tan & Woo, 2000 - *Alaerato angistoma* as *Proterato angistoma*), has a similar-looking but squatter shell with a shorter and blunt spire. However, attention needs to be paid to other details of the shell characters for proper identification (see Cate, 1977; Fehse, 2011).

References:

Cate CN (1977) A review of the Eratoidae (Mollusca: Gastropoda). *The Veliger*, 19(3): 341-366, figs. 1-53.
Fehse D (2011) Contributions to the knowledge of the Eratoidae. VI. A new species of *Alaerato* Cate, 1977 from Palawan, Philippines. *Spixiana*, 34: 147-152.
Sowerby GB II (1832) A catalogue of the Recent species of Cypraeadae. *Conchological Illustrations*, 2: 1-20, 3 index pp., figs. 1-187.
Tan SK & Woo HPM (2010) A Preliminary Checklist of the Molluscs of Singapore. Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore. 78 pp.

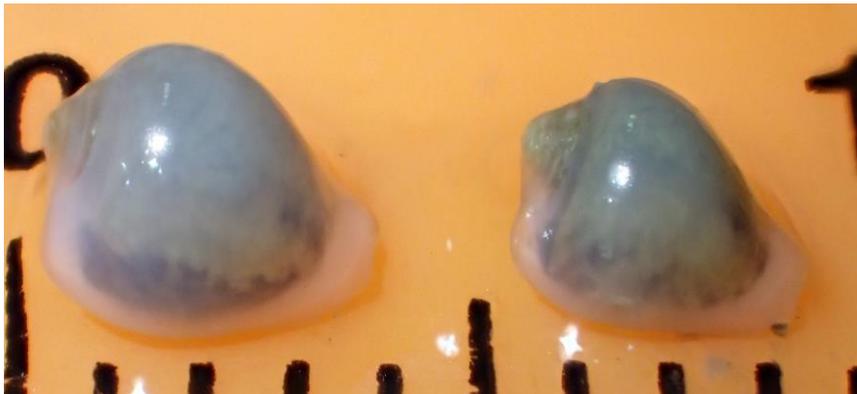


Fig. 2. Dorsal view of shells of *Alaerato angistoma*.



Fig. 3. Lateral view of shells.



Fig. 4. Apical view of shells.



Fig. 5. Ventral or apertural view of shells.



Fig. 6. Ventral view of shells showing feet of living animals retracted into their shells.

Photographs by Lau Wing Lup