

Biodiversity Record: A juvenile boxfish at Pulau Hantu

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Subject: Shortnose boxfish, *Ostracion nasus* (Teleostei: Tetraodontiformes: Ostraciidae).

Subject identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait, western reef off Pulau Hantu; 26 June 2021; 1410 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Fringing reef with silty substrate. At a depth of about 10 m.

Observer: Tsu Soo Tan.

Observation: A juvenile example of about 15 mm was found near the substrate (Fig. 1).

Remarks: The identification of the featured specimen is tentative. *Ostracion nasus* appears to be the best fit in relation to body shape and colour markings among the five species of Ostraciidae recorded from Singapore waters (see Herre & Myers, 1937; Fowler, 1938; Kuiter & Debelius, 2006), which also include the yellow trunkfish (*Ostracion cubicus*), the large-nose boxfish (*Ostracion rhinorhynchos*), the longhorn cowfish (*Lactoria cornuta*) and the hump-backed turretfish (*Tetrasonus gibbosus*). *Ostracion nasus*, which grows to 30 cm, seems to be the commonest among its confamilials in Singapore (Lim & Low, 1998, as *Rhynchostracion nasus*). However, the authors have not seen its juvenile form illustrated in literature. In comparison, a 15 mm *Ostracion cubicus* is bright yellow with fewer and solid black spots (see Kuiter & Tonzuka, 2001), and a 30 mm *Lactoria cornuta*, which has a similar shape, has much smaller dark spots (see Tan, 2017).



Fig. 1. Dorso-lateral view of juvenile *Ostracion nasus* in situ. (Photograph by: Tsu Soo Tan).

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