

## Biodiversity Record: Domino damselfish, *Dascyllus trimaculatus*, in the Singapore Strait

Heok Hui Tan

Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, National University of Singapore, Singapore 117377;

Email: [heokhui@nus.edu.sg](mailto:heokhui@nus.edu.sg)

**Recommended citation.** Tan HH (2023) Biodiversity Record: Domino damselfish, *Dascyllus trimaculatus*, in the Singapore Strait. Nature in Singapore, 16: e2023121. DOI: 10.26107/NIS-2023-0121

---

**Subject:** Domino damselfish, *Dascyllus trimaculatus* (Teleostei: Cichliformes: Pomacentridae).

**Subject identified by:** Heok Hui Tan.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Strait, lagoon at Pulau Satumu; 1 October 2023, around 1930 hrs.

**Habitat:** Marine. Coral reef flat.

**Observer:** Heok Hui Tan.

**Observation:** During a biodiversity survey, one young example (Fig. 1) of 4.2 cm standard length (measured from tip of snout to base of caudal fin) was scooped with a hand net from beneath a large sea-anemone.

**Remarks:** *Dascyllus trimaculatus* appears to have been first reported from Singapore by Khoo & Tay (1990). Although apparently uncommon in the country, examples have been recorded from the Singapore Strait off Sisters Islands, Kusu Island, Pulau Hantu (Low, 2013), as well as from an artificial reef adjacent to Terumbu Pempang Tengah (Chua & Chou, 1994). The present record seems to be the first from Pulau Satumu.

This is a common species in the aquarium hobby (personal observations). Individuals offered for sale in Singapore are juveniles imported from neighbouring areas such as the Philippines and Indonesia (personal communications with aquarium fish vendors).

*Dascyllus trimaculatus* is widely distributed in the Indo-west Pacific from East Africa and the Red Sea eastwards to the islands of Oceania (except for the Hawaiian and Marquesas Islands), northwards to southern Japan, and southwards to the Sydney area of Australia. It attains a maximum known size of 11 cm standard length, and the young fish are commensal with large sea anemones (Allen, 1991).

### Literature cited:

Allen GR (1991) Damsel-fishes of the World. Mergus, Hans A. Baensch, Melle, Germany, 271 pp.

Chua CYY & Chou LM (1994) The use of artificial reefs in enhancing fish communities in Singapore. In: Sasekumar A, Marshall N & MacIntosh DJ (eds.) Ecology and Conservation of Southeast Asian Marine and Freshwater Environments including Wetlands. Hydrobiologia, 285: 177–187.

Khoo HW & Tay SW (1990) Coral reef fishes of Singapore. In: Chou LM & Ng PKL (eds.). Essays in Zoology. Department of Zoology, National University of Singapore, pp. 61–82.

Low JKY (2013) More noteworthy fishes observed in the Singapore Straits. Nature in Singapore, 6: 31–37.



Fig. 1. Lateral view of the juvenile domino damselfish from Pulau Satumu (Photograph by: Heok Hui Tan).