

Moon wrasse off Kusu Island

Subject: Moon wrasse, *Thalassoma lunare* (Teleostei: Labridae).

Subject identified by: Contributors.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait, off Kusu Island; 18 November 1998; afternoon.

Habitat: Marine. Coral reef at depth of about 10 m.

Observer: Tan Heok Hui.

Observation: An individual of 10.6 cm standard length (tip of snout to base of tail) was collected with two hand-held nets. It was swimming in mid-water near the bottom together with about three individuals of the chain-lined or silty wrasse (*Halichoeres leucurus*).

Remarks: The specimen was deposited in the Zoological Reference Collection of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, at the National University of Singapore, under the catalogue number ZRC 43366. The accompanying picture shows the specimen soon after it was freshly preserved.

Thalassoma lunare was recorded from Singapore way back in 1859 (Fowler, 1938: 196). Until the herein featured specimen was obtained some 16 years ago, there were apparently no subsequent records from Singapore waters. This species is widespread across the tropical Indo-west Pacific from the Red Sea and East Africa to Micronesia, Line Islands and Tonga, Australia, northern New Zealand, throughout the East Indies, to Japan and the Ogasawara Islands (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 722). The moon wrasse is common in the South China Sea around Pulau Tioman where the waters are relatively clear (personal observations). However, it seems to be rare in the usually turbid waters around Singapore.

References:

- Allen, G. R. & M. V. Erdmann, 2012. *Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Volume II*. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. p. 425-856.
Fowler, H. W., 1938. A list of the fishes known from Malaya. *Fisheries Bulletin, Singapore*. 1: 1-268.



Thalassoma lunare (ZRC 43366) obtained off Kusu Island in November 1998. Photograph by Kelvin K. P. Lim

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