

Biodiversity Record: New record of the grouper, *Epinephelus ongus*, in Singapore

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Subject: White-streaked grouper, *Epinephelus ongus* (Teleostei: Perciformes: Epinephelidae).

Subject identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location and date: Singapore Strait, Terumbu Pandan; 2 May 1989.

Habitat: Marine. Coastal sea with coral reef.

Observer: Kelvin K. P. Lim, from the examination of a museum specimen.

Observation: A poorly preserved example of about 16 cm standard length (from tip of snout to base of caudal fin) was identified in the Zoological Reference Collection of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, at the National University of Singapore. It was assigned the catalogue number ZRC 48655 (Fig. 1).

Remarks: Despite having been identified some 35 years after its acquisition, this specimen represents the first record of *Epinephelus ongus* in Singapore (see Fowler, 1938; Herre & Myers, 1937; Tweedie, 1936, 1940).



Fig. 1. Lateral view of poorly preserved *Epinephelus ongus*, ZRC 48655. (Photograph by: Kelvin K. P. Lim)

Epinephelus ongus is similar in appearance to the white-spotted grouper, *Epinephelus coeruleopunctatus*, which has been recorded from Singapore (Herre & Myers, 1937), but can be distinguished from the latter most notably by its slightly convex (versus almost straight) dorsal head profile, and the upper edge of its opercle being strongly convex (versus straight or slightly convex) with the rear edge almost vertical (versus tapering) (see Heemstra & Randall, 1999).

Because *Epinephelus ongus* is widely distributed across the Indo-west Pacific from Africa to the Ryukyu and Marshall Islands, southwards to Fiji, New Caledonia and northern Australia (Heemstra & Randall, 1999), its occurrence in Singapore waters is not surprising.

Literature cited:

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