

Biodiversity Record: Spotted eagle rays at Palawan Beach, Sentosa

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Recommended citation. Ong HWD (2024) Biodiversity Record: Spotted eagle rays at Palawan Beach, Sentosa. Nature in Singapore, 17: e2024085. DOI: 10.26107/NIS-2024-0085

Subjects: Spotted eagle ray, *Aetobatus ocellatus* (Chondrichthyes: Myliobatiformes: Aetobatidae).

Subjects identified by: Ong Hui Wen Daphne.

Location, date and time: Sentosa Island, lagoon at Palawan Beach; 3 July 2024, around 1115–1130 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Partially enclosed lagoon with sandy substrate.

Observers: Ong Hui Wen Daphne, Ahmad Lutfi bin Saimin, Ian Mun and Jimmy Wong.

Observation: Two eagle rays, each estimated to be between 50–60 cm in disc width, were spotted swimming together in shallow water (Figs. 1–3).



Figs. 1–3. Dorsal views of two eagle rays swimming together in the lagoon, as observed from a floating bridge connecting the beach to a rocky islet (Screenshots from videos recorded by: Ong Hui Wen Daphne).

Remarks: The featured observation is of significance because eagle rays are not commonly seen in Singapore (Ahmad Lutfi & Tan, 2020). They were last documented on social media channels by members of the public in 2021, where a pair was noted in May, also at Palawan Beach, Sentosa (Sim, 2021), and one in August in the sea outside VivoCity (Lee, 2021). That same year, also in May, an eagle ray died after it was landed by an angler at East Coast Beach (Begum, 2021). According to the latest IUCN listing, *Aetobatus ocellatus* has undergone a population reduction of 50–79% over the last 39 years, and is presently assessed to be globally endangered, mainly due to an increased intensity of exploitation of marine resources (Finucci et al., 2024).

Literature cited:

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- Sim I (2021) A pair of eagle rays spotted at a Sentosa beach last weekend. Singapore Wildlife Sightings Facebook Group. https://www.facebook.com/groups/179531089457/posts/10159456430954458/?_rdc [video published on 24 May 2021] (Accessed 6 September 2024)