

## Biodiversity Record: Russel's lionfish at Kusu Island

Jonas Chee Haw **Khaw**<sup>1\*</sup> & Zeehan **Jaafar**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tropical Marine Science Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore 119222

Email: [khawcheehaw@gmail.com](mailto:khawcheehaw@gmail.com) (\*corresponding author)

<sup>2</sup>Department of Biological Sciences, National University of Singapore, Singapore 117543

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**Subject:** Russel's or plintail lionfish, *Pterois russelii* (Teleostei: Perciformes: Scorpaenidae).

**Subject identified by:** Zeehan Jaafar.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Strait, north-eastern reef of Kusu Island; 21 September 2023; around 1430 hrs.

**Habitat:** Marine. Coral reef slope, rocky crevices at around 5 m depth.

**Observer:** Jonas Chee Haw Khaw.

**Observation:** An individual of about 15 cm total length was observed swimming slowly, alone near a small cave. It continued swimming out into an unobstructed area but stayed close to the silty substrate and did not appear to be alarmed by the observer taking photographs.

**Remarks:** Of the five species of *Pterois* recorded from Singapore, only *Pterois russelii* and *Pterois volitans* are of confirmed occurrence (Kwik & Lim, 2015). Although *Pterois russelii* seems to be the most frequently encountered, with records from intertidal areas at Changi and Pulau Hantu (Loh, 2014 as *Pterois russellii*; Kwik & Lim, 2020), down to depths of 18 m off Pulau Satumu (Tan & Lim, 2014 as *Pterois russellii*), it is regarded as 'critically endangered' in Singapore (Jaafar et al., 2024). *Pterois russelii* is distinguished from *Pterois volitans* by its translucent median fins that have no black spots (Allen & Erdmann, 2012).

### Literature cited:

Allen GR & Erdmann MV (2012) Reef Fishes of the East Indies. Vol. I. Tropical Reef Research, Perth, Australia. xiii + 424 pp.

Jaafar Z, Low JKY & Lim KKP (2024) Checklist of marine fish species with their category of threat status for Singapore. In: Davison GWH, Gan JWM, Huang D, Huang WS, Lum SKY & Yeo DCJ (eds.) The Singapore Red Data Book. Red Lists of Singapore Biodiversity. Third edition. National Parks Board, Singapore, pp. 649–670.

Kwik JTB & Lim KKP (2020) Scorpionfishes (Teleostei: Scorpaenoidei) of Singapore. Nature in Singapore, 13: 11–26.

Loh KS (2014) Russell's lionfish at Pulau Hantu. Singapore Biodiversity Records, 2014: 240.

Tan HH & Lim KKP (2014) Russell's lionfish in the Singapore Straits. Singapore Biodiversity Records, 2014: 11.



Fig. 1. Dorso-lateral view of the lionfish (Photograph by: Jonas Chee Haw Khaw).



Fig. 2. Rear dorsal view of the subject (Photograph by: Jonas Chee Haw Khaw).