

Biodiversity Record: Spotted box crab at Changi Beach

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Recommended citation. Cheong YLB (2025) Biodiversity Record: Spotted box crab at Changi Beach. Nature in Singapore, 18: e2025015. DOI: 10.26107/NIS-2025-0015

Subject: Spotted box crab, *Calappa philargius* (Crustacea: Decapoda: Brachyura: Calappidae).

Subject identified by: Cheong Yi Loong Benny.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Changi Beach; 17 November 2024; around 1745 hrs.

Habitat: Estuarine shore. Seagrass meadow at intertidal zone, exposed during late afternoon low tide.

Observer: Cheong Yi Loong Benny.

Observation: One example of about 8 cm carapace width (Figs. 1, 2) was found fully exposed on the sand. The crab initially remained still when approached, allowing photographs to be obtained. Subsequently, it bubbled and spewed water through its mouth, then burrowed into the sand and disappeared from the observer's view. The encounter took place hours after a thunderstorm, under partial sunny conditions.

Remarks: The spotted box crab is listed as 'Near Threatened' in the third edition of the Singapore Red Data Book (Mendoza et al., 2024). This species is nocturnal and typically seen at night, preferring to hide in the sand in the day (Tan, 2019). It, therefore, seems unusual to see one exposed in daylight. The species was last recorded locally at Lazarus Island (Lee, 2024).



Fig. 1. Frontal view of *Calappa philargius* insitu. Fig. 2. Dorso-frontal view of the same crab. (Photographs by: Cheong Yi Loong Benny)

Literature cited:

Lee BY (2024) Biodiversity Record: Spotted box crab, *Calappa philargius*, at Lazarus Island. Nature in Singapore, 17: e2024111. DOI: 10.26107/NIS-2024-0111

Mendoza JCE, Lee BY, Ng PKL & Yeo DCJ (2024) Checklist of Arthropoda – Horseshoe crab (order: Xiphosurida) and marine decapod crustacean (order: Decapoda) species with their category of threat status for Singapore. In: Davison GWH, JWM Gan, D Huang, WS Hwang, SKY Lum & DCJ Yeo (eds.) The Singapore Red Data Book. Red Lists of Singapore Biodiversity. Third Edition. National Parks Board, Singapore, pp. 634–639.

Tan R (2019) Spotted box crab, *Calappa philargius*. Family Calappidae. Wild Fact Sheets. <http://www.wildsingapore.com/wildfacts/crustacea/crab/calappidae/philargius.htm> (Accessed 19 November 2024)