

Biodiversity Record: New record of the wentletrap, *Epitonium fauroti*, in Singapore

Chan Sow-Yan* & Lau Wing Lup

Email: chansowyan@gmail.com (*corresponding author), suiseki1984@yahoo.com.sg

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Subjects: Faurot's wentletrap, *Epitonium fauroti* (Mollusca: Gastropoda: Epitoniidae).

Subjects identified by: Chan Sow-Yan and Lau Wing Lup.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island / Johor Strait, Changi Beach Park; 11 February 2021 at about 0845 hrs, 14 December 2024 at around 1445 hrs.

Habitat: Estuarine. Intertidal shore at low tide.

Observer: Lau Wing Lup

Observation: Two examples — An empty shell of about 3.5 mm was obtained on 11 February 2021 (Fig. 1). A live specimen, slightly smaller than the earlier one, was encountered on 14 December 2024 (Fig. 2). Both were found on *Placuna* clams.

The dull white shell appears thick and solid, its surface sculptured with strong, incurved and reflected axial costae, and slightly elevated at the deep and narrowly open suture to form an angle. The apex is acute, the first three whorls smooth, the subsequent four teleoconch whorls increase regularly in size, appearing broad and considerably heavy-set relative to its size. The peristome is relatively wide and thick and the aperture is oval (Figs. 1, 2 & 4). The intervals between the ribs are smooth. The umbilicus is closed. The soft part of the animal is generally white with widely spaced blackish eyespots (Fig. 3). The operculum appears transparent (Fig. 4).



Fig. 1. Dorsal view of the dead example from 2021 (Photograph by: Lau Wing Lup).

Remarks: The family Epitoniidae is a group of small to medium-sized gastropods that occur worldwide, from the intertidal zone to abyssal sea-beds. Most species are rare (Huang & Lee, 2016). They are known to be either predators or temporary ectoparasites of cnidarians such as corals, zoanths, and sea anemones. Different species are known to feed on peripheral tentacles, taking bits off the body column, and even on the ectodermal mucus of their hosts. They are protandrous hermaphrodites. Their shells are among the most sought-after natural history objects. Although the price bubble has long since burst, they continue to be desired and procured by collectors (Tan et al., 2019).

Epitonium fauroti can be found from the Red Sea to Aden and Djibouti (Weil et al., 1999). In Taiwan, one dead shell was found on the beach at Lu-tao Island in 1995. (Huang & Lee, 2016). Rarely mentioned in literature, nothing is known about *Epitonium fauroti*'s exact distributional range, life habits and associated hosts.

Epitonium fauroti is herein documented as a new record for Singapore (see Tan & Woo, 2010; Tan et al., 2019; Tan & Low, 2022). The specimens herein featured match the original description and photographs of the species by Jousseaume (1912, as *Turbiniscala fauroti*).

More than 30 species of wentletraps have hitherto been reported from Singapore (e.g., Tan & Woo, 2010; Tan & Low, 2022). Examples include confamilials, *Epitonium tomlini* and *Opalia tortipunctata*, that were first described from specimens collected in Singapore (Tan et al., 2019). Recently, Tan & Low (2022) recorded *Cycloscala hyalina*, *Epitonium replicatum*, *Epitonium* cf. *townsendi*, *Epitonium moolenbeeki*, *Epitonium angustum*, and *Epitonium minorum*, from the Singapore Strait at Pulau Satumu, with the last three being first records for Singapore.



Fig. 2. Dorsal view of live snail from 2024. Fig. 3. Dorsal view of the snail's head showing the widely-spaced eye spots. Fig. 4. Aperture view of the live snail showing the transparent operculum (Photographs by: Lau Wing Lup).

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