

Biodiversity Record: New record of the scorpionfish, *Parascorpaena aurita*, in Singapore

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Subject: Golden scorpionfish, *Parascorpaena aurita* (Teleostei: Perciformes; Scorpaenidae).

Subject identified by: Aidan Raphael Keh.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait along Marina South Pier; 16 June 2023; around 2118 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Rocky shoreline proximal to a sandy patch with sparse coral growth, with rocks exposed at low tide.

Observers: Aidan Raphael Keh and Jiayuan Lin.

Observation: One example of about 6 cm total length was caught at night with hook and line from a depth of around 2 m, alongside various cardinalfishes (family Apogonidae).



Fig 1. Ex-situ lateral view of the left side of the subject minutes after capture (Photograph by: Aidan Raphael Keh).

Remarks: In Singapore, the only recorded members from this genus of scorpionfishes are *Parascorpaena picta* and *Parascorpaena bandanensis* (see Kwik & Lim, 2020). Although the occurrence of *Parascorpaena aurita* is expected, it is herein reported as a new record for Singapore. Owing to its superficial similarity to the locally common *Parascorpaena picta*, this species was likely overlooked in the past.

According to Motomura et al. (2009), *Parascorpaena aurita* can be distinguished from *Parascorpaena picta* in having the first and second suborbital ridges well separated, the posterior part of the first ridge overlapping with the anterior part of the second ridge (Fig. 2), instead of the ridges being fused together on *Parascorpaena picta*. On *Parascorpaena aurita*, the interorbital ridges are well-developed and form a broad loop at the rear of the interorbit, enclosing a depression (Fig. 3). In contrast, the interorbital ridges on *Parascorpaena picta* are weakly developed and do not enclose a depression.

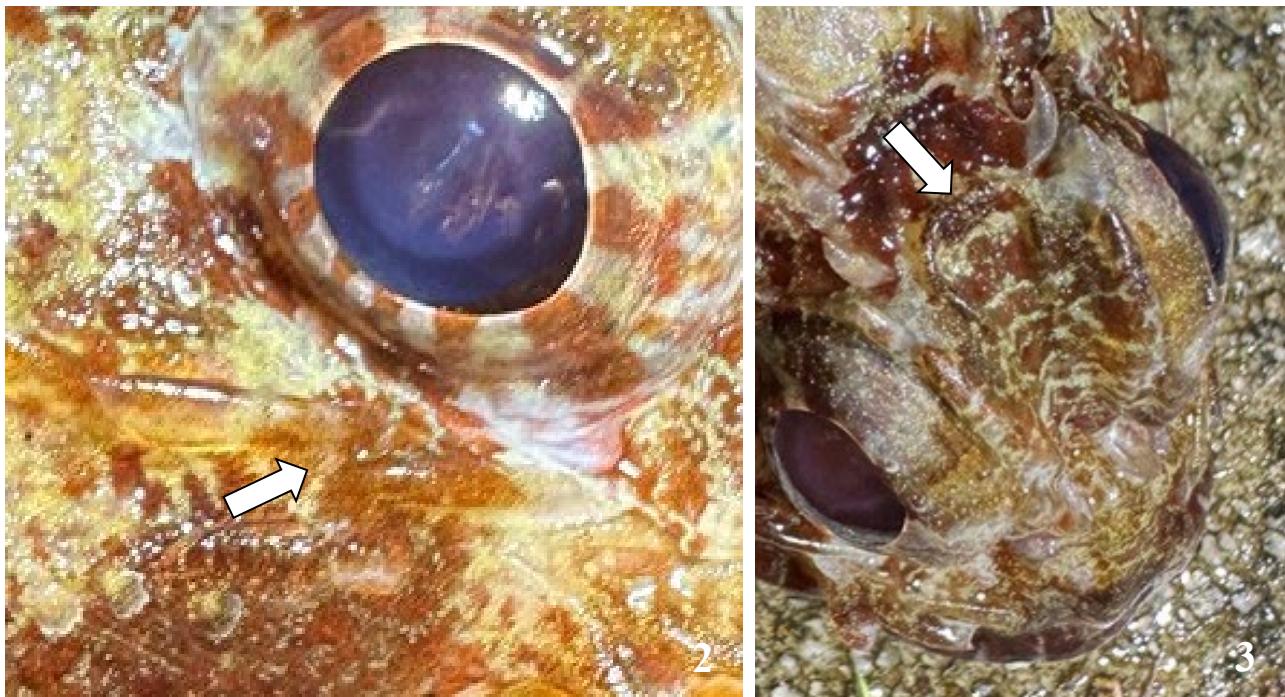


Fig. 2. Lateral view of the right side of the head, with snout facing to the right, showing the gap (indicated by arrow) between the first and second bony ridges beneath the eye. Fig. 3: Dorsal view of the head with snout pointing towards the lower right corner, showing the distinct interorbital ridges (indicated by arrow) forming a broad loop and enclosing a depression (Photographs by: Jiayuan Lin).

Literature cited:

Kwik JTB & Lim KKP (2020) Scorpionfishes (Teleostei: Scorpaenoidei) of Singapore. *Nature in Singapore*, 13: 11–26.
 Motomura H, Sakurai Y, Senou H & Ho H (2009) Morphological comparisons of the Indo-West Pacific scorpionfish, *Parascorpaena aurita*, with a closely related species, *P. picta*, with first records of *P. aurita* from East Asia (Scorpaeniformes: Scorpaenidae). *Zootaxa*, 2191(1): 41–57.