

## Biodiversity Record: Sighting of the anemone, *Actinostephanus haeckeli*, at Sentosa

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**Subject:** Haeckel's anemone, *Actinostephanus haeckeli* (Cnidaria: Hexacorallia: Actiniaria: Actinodendridae).

**Subject identified by:** Riddian Jia Jun Chua and Nicholas Wei Liang Yap.

**Location, date and time:** Sentosa Island, Coastal Trail; 19 September 2024; around 0530 hrs.

**Habitat:** Marine. Sandy shore with silty substrate. At intertidal area during morning low tide of about 0.5 m.



Fig. 1. In-situ top view of *Actinostephanus haeckeli* with banded tentacles extended (Photograph by: Riddian Jia Jun Chua).

**Observers:** Riddian Jia Jun Chua, Shermaine Hui Min Teo, Kia Yi Ng, and Abel Meng Wei Yeo.

**Observation:** One individual was observed, extending from the sandy substratum near a small patch of seagrass (Fig. 1). Its tentacles were fully extended, the longest being twice the diameter of the oral disc, the shortest being approximately a third of the oral disc diameter (Fig. 1). The tentacles appeared to be arranged in four cycles, with the innermost extending upwards. Along the entire length of each tentacle, many almost conical protuberances of different sizes were arranged irregularly. The base colour of the animal was a dirty brownish-green, and each tentacle had a pattern of horizontal dark bands along its length. No other conspecifics were observed in the vicinity.

**Remarks:** This appears to be the first documented sighting of *Actinostephanus haeckeli* Kwietniewski (1897) at Sentosa Island. This species has been encountered on many of Singapore's shores. In the Johor Strait, it has been recorded from Beting Bronok, Tanah Merah, Pulau Sekudu, Chek Jawa, and Pasir Ris Park–Loyang. In the Singapore Strait, this species has been found at Tanah Merah, Kusu Island, Pulau Hantu, and Lazarus Island. It is listed as 'Least Concern' in the third edition of the Singapore Red Data Book (Yap et al., 2024).

This sea anemone can deliver a very painful sting when touched. It is the only recognised species of the genus *Actinostephanus*, identifiable by the short protuberances along its tapering tentacles (Tomascik et al., 1997). Its colours can vary between black, brown and green, often with stripes.

**Acknowledgments:** This sighting was recorded as part of a collaborative research project between Resorts World at Sentosa and the National University of Singapore.

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