

Biodiversity Record: Spotted needlefish, *Tylosurus punctulatus*, in Singapore

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Subjects: Spotted needlefish, *Tylosurus punctulatus* (Teleostei: Beloniformes: Belonidae).

Subjects identified by: Aidan Raphael Keh and Jiayuan Lin.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait, Sentosa Island, Sentosa Cove; 25 January 2026; 1230–1330 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Shallow cove with abundance of coral and rocky rubble.

Observers: Aidan Raphael Keh and Dexter Lau.

Observations: Three individuals, each around 60 cm total length (Figs. 1–3), were observed hovering near the surface of the water. They were solitary and showed signs of aggression when approached by other needlefish (Fig 3), particularly towards members of the more common congener, *Tylosurus crocodilus*.



Fig. 1. In-situ dorso-lateral view of a *Tylosurus punctulatus* at 1250 hrs (Photograph by: Dexter Lau).

Remarks: *Tylosurus punctulatus* is distinguished from its congener *Tylosurus crocodilus* by having the tip of its lower jaw slightly curved upward anteriorly, ending in a thick fleshy formation (Collette, 1999; Fig 4) and the body covered with numerous brown spots (Günther, 1872). This document confirms the occurrence of *Tylosurus punctulatus* in Singapore waters. The species was last recorded there by Tweedie (1940) based on material from a fish market, and by Herre (1940, as synonym *Busuanga philippina*) based on a 338 mm (standard length) specimen ‘taken at Singapore’.



Fig. 2. In-situ dorso-lateral view of the second *Tylosurus punctulatus* at 1310 hrs (Photograph by: Aidan Raphael Keh).



Fig. 3. In-situ dorso-lateral view of *Tylosurus crocodilus* (left) and the third *Tylosurus punctulatus* (right) at 1325 hrs. Note the fleshy tip of the lower jaw on the individual on the right (Photograph by: Dexter Lau).

Fig 4. Close up lateral view of the fleshy formation at the tip of the lower jaw of a market-purchased *Tylosurus punctulatus* (Photograph by: Jiayuan Lin).



Literature cited:

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- Günther A (1872) Report on several collections of fishes recently obtained for the British Museum. Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, 1871, pt 3, art. 1: 652–675, pls. 53–70.
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