

Biodiversity Record: Singapore record of the flathead, *Platycephalus cultellatus*

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Subject: Flagtail flathead, *Platycephalus cultellatus* (Teleostei: Perciformes: Platycephalidae).

Subject identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Locations, dates and time: Singapore, Johor Strait, Sungai Besar on Pulau Ubin; undated July 2001, around 1700 hrs.

Habitat: Estuarine. At the mouth of a small mangrove creek.

Observer: Nick Baker.

Observation: A preserved specimen of 28 cm standard length has been identified in the Zoological Reference Collection of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, at the National University of Singapore, where it was accessioned as ZRC 46652. It was obtained with hook-and-line by the observer.

Remarks: Although not explicitly stated previously, *Platycephalus cultellatus* is not a new record for Singapore. Imamura (2015) records it from the western Johor Strait on the Malaysian side, and mentions its occurrence in ‘Johor Shoals’, a locality in the eastern part of the Singapore Strait within Singapore’s port limits. The featured specimen from Pulau Ubin confirms the presence of this species in Singapore waters. It was listed by Ng et al. (2015) as *Platycephalus indicus*.

Platycephalus cultellatus is very similar in appearance to the bar-tailed flathead (*Platycephalus indicus*) with which it is sympatric and often mis-identified. It differs from *Platycephalus indicus* in having four distinct black stripes [Fig. 4A] (versus two stripes with a marginal black blotch in between [Fig. 4B]), and lacking yellow marks on the caudal fin (versus presence of a yellow patch near the middle of the fin, which is obvious only on live and freshly dead individuals). *Platycephalus cultellatus* grows to at least 45 cm SL and has been recorded from the South China Sea to India (see Imamura, 2015).



Fig. 1. Dorsal (A) and lateral (B) views of *Platycephalus cultellatus* [ZRC 46652]. (Photographs by: Kelvin K. P. Lim).

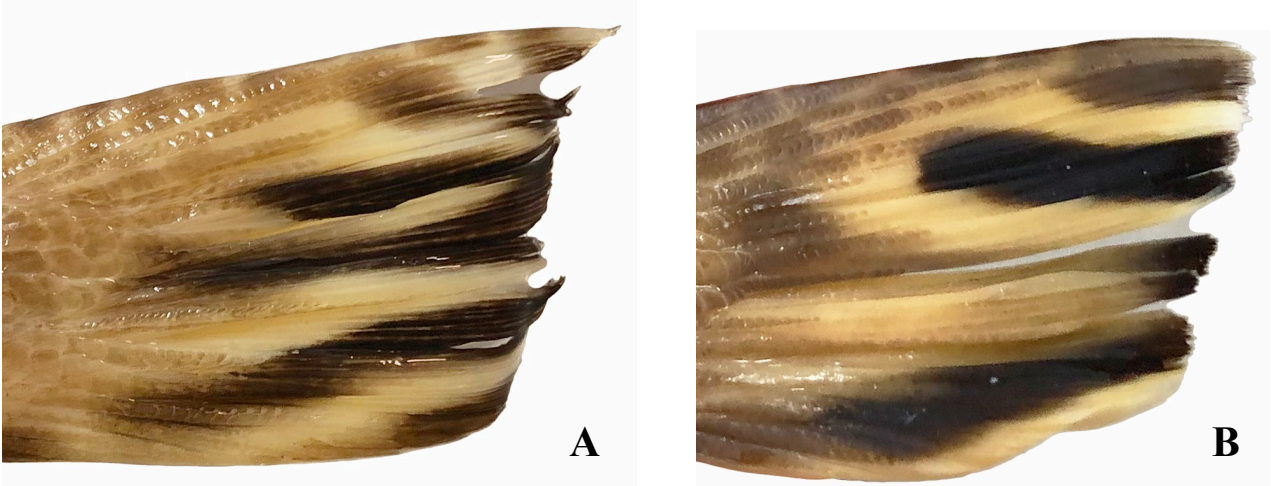


Fig. 2. Colour pattern on the caudal fin of (A) *Platycephalus cultellatus* [ZRC 46652] and (B) *Platycephalus indicus* [ZRC 51274, 32.5 cm SL example from Pulau Seletar in 2008]. (Photographs by: Kelvin K. P. Lim).

Literature cited:

- Imamura H (2015) Platycephalidae. Flatheads. In: Kimura S, Aziz A, Imamura H & Mazlan AG (eds.) Fishes of the Northwestern Johor Strait, Peninsular Malaysia. Universiti Putra Malaysia Press & Mie University, Serdang, viii+108 pp.
- Ng HH, Tan HH, Lim KKP, Ludt WB & Chakrabarty P (2015) Fishes of the eastern Johor Strait. Raffles Bulletin of Zoology, Supplement No. 31: 303–337.