

## Biodiversity Record: A Picasso triggerfish, *Rhinecanthus aculeatus*, at Marina South

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**Recommended citation.** Adib A, Sim JH, Lim TK & Heng KS (2023) Biodiversity Record: A Picasso triggerfish, *Rhinecanthus aculeatus*, at Marina South. Nature in Singapore, 16: e2023104. DOI: 10.26107/NIS-2023-0104

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**Subject:** Picasso triggerfish, *Rhinecanthus aculeatus* (Teleostei: Tetraodontiformes: Balistidae).

**Subject identified by:** Jiayuan Lin.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Strait, Marina South; 3 September 2023; 1048 hrs and 1612 hrs.

**Habitat:** Marine. Sea shore with embankment of concrete and granite rocks.

**Observers:** Lim Tee Kiat and Kimberley Heng Shiun (at 1048 hrs), Sim Jin Heng and Adib Adris (at 1612 hrs).

**Observations:** One example of around 10 cm standard length (Fig. 1) was landed by hook and line baited with pieces of cut prawn meat at 1048 hrs. It was released.

At 1612 hrs, a triggerfish of the same species and identical size (Fig. 2) was caught with similar equipment.

Comparison of the markings on the fish in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 albeit at slightly different angles appears to indicate that they are of the same individual.

**Remarks:** There appears to be no previous record of *Rhinecanthus aculeatus*, nor of the genus *Rhinecanthus*, in Singapore waters (see Fowler, 1938; Wang & Lim, 2011) and the featured observations constitute a new record of the genus and species in the country. This is not surprising considering the fact that *Rhinecanthus aculeatus* is widely distributed across the Indo-Pacific from East Africa eastwards through Indonesia and Australia, north to Japan, and further east to the Hawaiian, Marquesas and Tuamotu Islands (Allen & Erdmann, 2012).

The apparent rarity of *Rhinecanthus aculeatus* in Singapore waters could be an indication that the silty reef habitat there is not an environment preferred by this species, and this single example could have strayed in from neighbouring areas. Another possibility is that the individual was an abandoned pet. Picasso triggerfishes are popular ornamental fish (Michael, 2001) and are commonly imported from surrounding regions like the Philippines and Indonesia for the aquarium trade (personal observations).

### Literature cited:

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- Michael SW (2001) Marine Fishes. 500+ Essential-to-know Aquarium Species. TFH Publications, Neptune City, New Jersey, USA, 448 pp.
- Wang LK & Lim KKP (2011) Triggerfish. Family Balistidae. In: Ng PKL, Corlett RT & Tan HTW (eds.) Singapore Biodiversity. An Encyclopedia of the Natural Environment and Sustainable Development. Editions Didier Millet and The Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore, p. 488.



Fig. 1. Lateral view of the Picasso triggerfish caught at 1048 hrs (Photograph by: Lim Tee Kiat).



Fig. 1. Lateral view of the Picasso triggerfish caught at 1612 hrs (Photograph by: Sim Jin Heng).