

Bearded leatherjacket at Sentosa

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Subject: Bearded leatherjacket, *Anacanthus barbatus* (Teleostei: Tetraodontiformes: Monacanthidae).

Subject identified by: Kelvin K.P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait, Sentosa Island at One°15 Marina; 10 May 2018; 1325-1345 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Boat marina in an open area of about 3 m depth, with silty substrate.

Observers: Sam Shu Qin, with Toh Tai Chong, Kikuzawa Yuichi Preslie & Lionel Ng Chin Soon.

Observation: One individual of about 10 cm total length was observed swimming near the water surface (Fig. 1 & 2). A video footage can be viewed at - <https://youtu.be/hKFnaXDwyqY>

Remarks: *Anacanthus barbatus* is an atypical filefish. Its dorsal spine is short and ineffective in defending itself from predators (Hutchins & Swainston, 1985). Instead, it protects itself with camouflage. With its flattened and elongated body, a long barbel on its chin, and cryptic colouration, as well as the way it drifts about in the water column (see video), *Anacanthus barbatus* can possibly be mistaken for a detached blade of sea grass. As such this fish is often overlooked.

The bearded leatherjacket has been recorded in Singapore in the shallow waters of Changi Point Beach (Kwik et al., 2010; Tan & Lee, 2014) and Raffles Marina (Jaafar et al., 2004).

References:

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- Kwik, J. T. B., P. Z. Chen, P. K. L. Ng & T. M. Sin, 2010. Diel variations and diversity of fish communities along the unreclaimed shallow coastal habitats of Changi Point Beach, Singapore. *The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*. 58 (1): 125-135.
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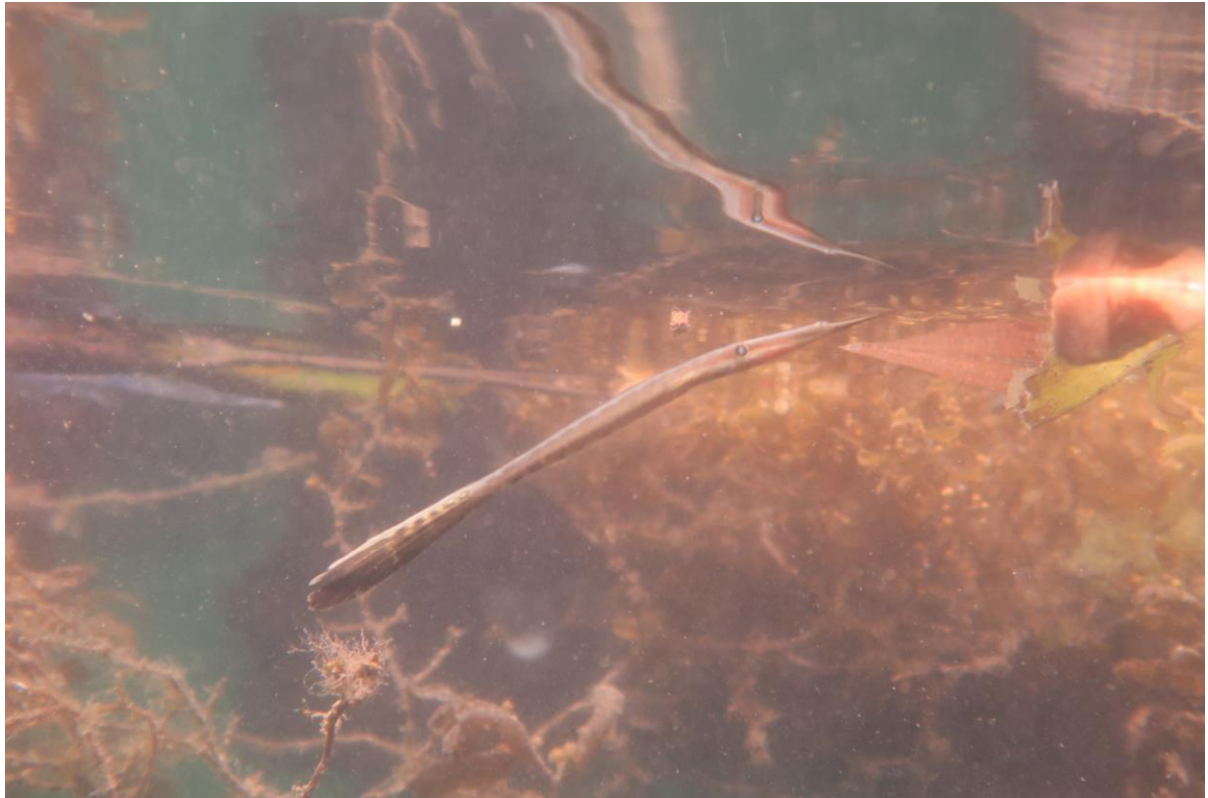


Fig. 1. Bearded leatherjacket near the water surface with head pointing upwards.



Fig. 2. The same fish further down the water column with head directing downwards.

Photographs by Sam Shu Qin