

## Two species of snappers off Lazarus and Seringat Islands

**Subjects:** Bigeye snapper, *Lutjanus lutjanus* (Teleostei: Lutjanidae);  
Russell's snapper, *Lutjanus russelli* (Teleostei: Lutjanidae).

**Subjects identified by:** Contributor & Kelvin K. P. Lim.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Strait, off north-western part of Lazarus Island; 20 May 2016; 1256 hrs;  
and the eastern part of Seringat Island; 7 June 2017; 1443 hrs.

**Habitat:** Marine. Subtidal zone of seawalls of large granite boulders, extending to 3-4 m depth, followed by sandy substrates.

**Observer:** Contributor.

**Observations:** Two separate observations -



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

Photographs by Daisuke Taira

1) One example of bigeye snapper (*Lutjanus lutjanus*) of about 10 cm total length was observed swimming along the seawall at the north-western part of Lazarus Island at a depth of about 2 m on 20 May 2016 at 1256 hrs (Fig. 1 & 2).



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

Photographs by Daisuke Taira

2) A Russell's snapper (*Lutjanus russelli*) around 15 cm in total length was seen along the eastern part of Seringat Island at around 4 m depth on 7 June 2017 at 1443 hrs (Fig. 3 & 4).

**Remarks:** Both *Lutjanus lutjanus* and *Lutjanus russelli* are known from Singapore waters (Fowler, 1938: 146; Lim & Low, 2008: 108 as *Lutjanus madras*, 109).

*Lutjanus lutjanus* is distinguished from the similar looking and sympatric *Lutjanus madras* (Indian snapper) chiefly by its larger eyes and the width of the space between the lower eye margin and the mouth. In *Lutjanus lutjanus*, this space is much narrower than the eye diameter. In *Lutjanus madras*, this space is about equal to the eye diameter. The yellow stripe at the level of its eye is twice as wide as the other stripes parallel to it. In *Lutjanus madras*, the yellow stripe at eye level is only slightly wider than the other stripes. Another species with similar markings, *Lutjanus vitta* (brownstripe snapper) has a brown mid-lateral stripe and relatively smaller eyes. Both the Indian and brownstripe snappers occur sympatrically with the bigeye snapper (Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 451, 456; Anderson & Allen, 2001: 2882-2883, 2896). The fish illustrated in Lim & Low (2002: 108) as *Lutjanus madras* seems to be a *Lutjanus lutjanus*.

With a distinct black blotch below the soft dorsal fin, the Russell's snapper may be mistaken for *Lutjanus johnii* (John's snapper), which also occurs in Singapore waters. They can be distinguished by the orientation of the rows of scales on the back above the lateral line. In the John's snapper, the scale rows on the back run parallel to the lateral line. In the Russell's snapper, the row rows on the back rise obliquely above the lateral line (Anderson & Allen, 2001: 2878, 2891; Allen & Erdmann, 2012: 454; Lim & Low, 2002: 109).

**References:**

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- Anderson, W. D. Jr. & G. R. Allen, 2001. Lutjanidae. Snappers (jobfishes). In: Carpenter, K. E. & V. H. Niem (eds.). *FAO Species Identification Guide for Fishery Purposes. The Living Marine Resources of the Western Central Pacific. Volume 5. Bony Fishes part 3 (Menidae to Pomacentridae)*. FAO, Rome. pp. 2840-2918, pls. V-X.
- Fowler, H. W., 1938. A list of the fishes known from Malaya. *Fisheries Bulletin, Singapore*. 1: 1-268.
- Lim, K. K. P. & J. K. Y. Low, 2002. *A Guide to Common Marine Fishes of Singapore*. Singapore Science Centre. Revised edition. 163 pp.

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