

First record of snooty wrasse, *Cheilinus oxycephalus* Bleeker, 1853 (Labridae) from South Andaman, India

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Snooty wrasse

The snooty wrasse, *Cheilinus oxycephalus* (Labridae) are known associates of coral reefs (Smith and Heemstra 1986) and they are known for their striking colour and remarkable wary and secretive behaviour. Snooty wrasses are hermaphroditic (Froese and Pauly 2014). This species is suitable for aquarium and feeds on zooplankton, crustaceans like krill, *Mysis*, shrimp, crabs and other invertebrates. This species is categorized as Least Concern (To *et al.*, 2010).

Exploration

Ichthyofaunal explorations have been carried out using SUCBA around Twins Islands (11°23.946'N, 092°35.095'E) in Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park, Wandoor, South Andaman during January 2014, revealed the presence of snooty wrasse on the reef slope at 8-10 meter depth (Fig. 1). Underwater photography was taken by Sony Cyber Shot (DSC-T 900) with housing facility. It was identified using standard systematic taxonomic keys (Smith and Heemstra 1986). This species was recorded on the reef slope at 8-10 meter depth.

Diagnostic characters

This species has a greenish brown to red body colour with scattered small whitish blotches and spots (Fig. 1 A&B). A black red spot on first two membrane of dorsal fin; three or four dark spots mid laterally on body, the last on caudal fin base; dorsal profile of head from upper lip to above eye slightly concave, thus giving the snout as upturned appearance; caudal fin rounded; pelvic fins usually reaching anus. This species is found in East Africa to Marquesas, Society Island in French Polynesia, Taiwan to Great Barrier Reef.

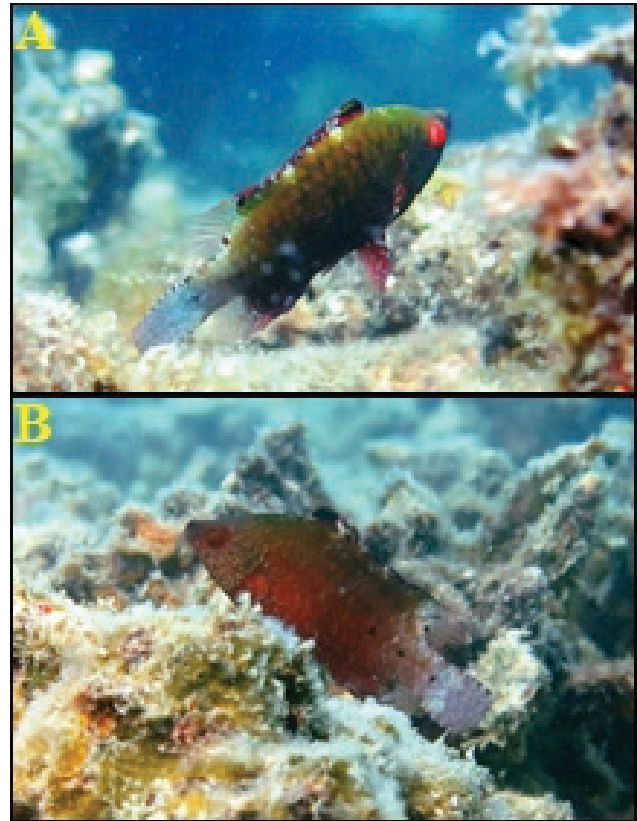


Fig.1 Snooty wrasse *Cheilinus oxycephalus* Bleeker, 1853

A. Colour variance in Snooty wrasse: Greenish brown to red body surface and whitish blotches on the dorsal fin

B. *Cheilinus oxycephalus* on reef slope at depth of 8-10m from Twins Islands

Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to the director, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, and officer-in-charge, Zoological survey of India, Port Blair for providing necessary facilities and encouragement to carry out this work.

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