

# Inhabitants of the sea



**Riau brotula**  
*Ungururculus riauensis*  
This elusive species is rarely encountered and lives in the crevices of shallow coral reefs. Unlike most other fish species, females give birth to live young.

The Singapore Marine Fishes Expedition, carried out in August, was part of the larger CodeFish-SG project that seeks to build a comprehensive DNA database of fishes in Singapore. Here are some of the fish specimens collected by the researchers.



**Quoy's halfbeak**  
*Hyporhamphus quoyi*  
The stick-like body shape of the halfbeak helps it escape the radar of predators, which often mistake it for flotsam.

## Sites where the survey was conducted



## By the numbers

**12 days**

Expedition duration

**>300**

Number of species collected during the expedition

**5**

Number of species discovered that were not previously reported in Singapore



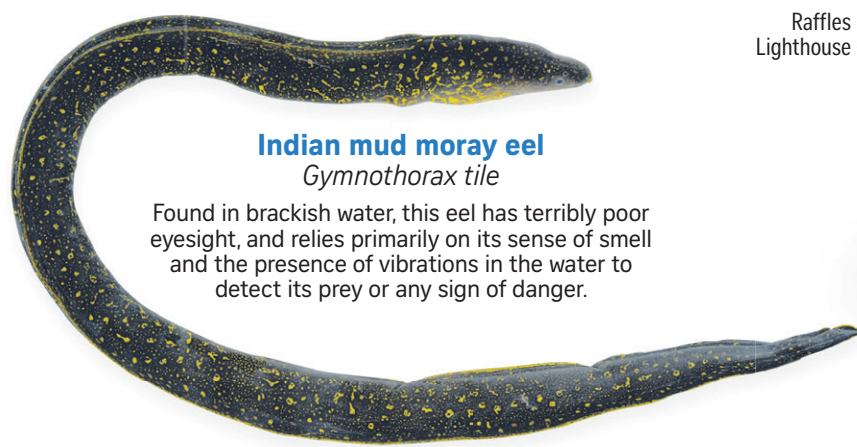
**Peacock sole**  
*Pardachirus pavoninus*

The peacock sole has glands along the base of its dorsal and anal fins which produce mucus that might be toxic to small fish.



**Blue-spotted pufferfish**  
*Arothron caeruleopunctatus*

The brown body of the blue-spotted pufferfish is dotted with numerous tiny electric blue spots, with lines of the same colour around its eyes.



**Indian mud moray eel**  
*Gymnothorax tile*

Found in brackish water, this eel has terribly poor eyesight, and relies primarily on its sense of smell and the presence of vibrations in the water to detect its prey or any sign of danger.



**Tiny cardinalfish**  
*Ostorhinchus nanus*

This small and shy species was discovered to exist in the reefs in Singapore only through this project.



**Tiger tail seahorse**  
*Hippocampus comes*

The mouth of the tiger tail seahorse resembles a long tube that feeds on prey through suction feeding.



**Fourlined terapon**  
*Pelates quadrilineatus*

Also known as the fourlined striped grunter, this fish croaks when it is taken out of water. For the fourlined terapon, it is the male that takes on the primary caregiver role for the eggs, guarding them and fanning them to keep them well-oxygenated.



**Longnosed stargazer**  
*Ichthyoscopus lebeck*

The longnosed stargazer is so called because its eyes are on top of its head, seemingly looking up at the stars. This sneaky predator often waits buried in the sand with only its head showing, ambushing unwitting prey as they swim past.



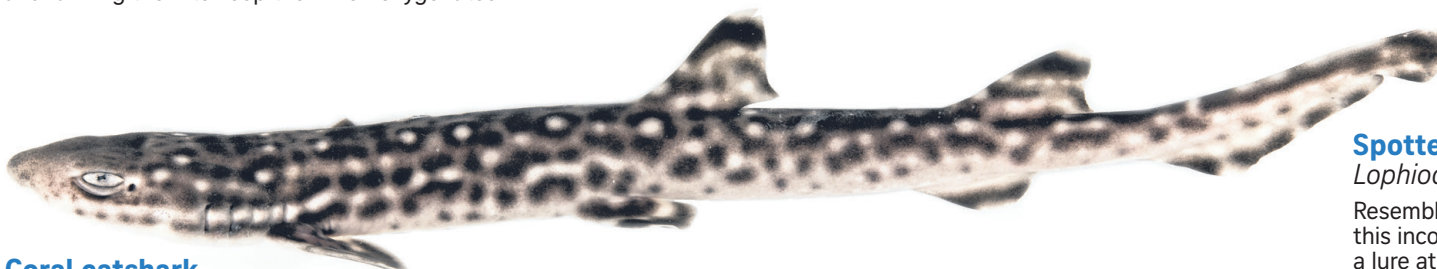
**Starry triggerfish**  
*Abalistes stellatus*

The starry triggerfish can be recognised from the white blotches against its blackish back and yellowish spots on a white background over the rest of the body.



**Milkfish**  
*Chanos chanos*

This sought-after fish is not native to Singapore but many have escaped into its marine areas from fish farms.



**Coral catshark**  
*Atelomycterus marmoratus*

This small, tropical shark with cat-like eyes and white spots is often found in the nooks and crannies of a reef.

**Spotted-tail frogfish**  
*Lophiocharon trisignatus*

Resembling an algae-covered stone, this inconspicuous-looking fish has a lure at the top of the head to attract prey such as small fish within striking distance. It then opens its huge mouth to suck the prey into its mouth, in the blink of an eye.



**Whitecheek monocle bream**  
*Scolopsis vosmeri*

This medium-sized fish lives near coral reefs. Although not favoured by anglers due to its small size, the flesh is sometimes used to make fishballs.



**Papillose flathead**  
*Sunagocia carbunculus*

The body pattern of the papillose flathead camouflages well with the seabed. The fish lies still and waits for passing prey. It feeds on a variety of small fish, crustaceans and molluscs.



**Butterfly whiptail**  
*Pentapodus setosus*

The butterfly whiptail forms small groups and lives near coral reefs. This species is relatively common in near-shore habitats of Singapore.



**Masked shrimpgoby**  
*Amblyeleotris gymnocephala*

This species likes to burrow in sand, coral pieces, shells and small pieces of broken-up shells.