First record of the dotted grouper
Epinephelus epistictus (Temminck & Schlegel, 1843) (Perciformes, Serranidae) in Malaysia

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Abstract
Five specimens of Epinephelus epistictus (Temminck & Schlegel, 1843) were collected from a major landing site located on the west coast of Peninsula Malaysia during a fish faunal survey on 23 August 2017. The present study extends the distribution range of E. epistictus southwards from Andaman Sea to the Strait of Malacca. Species identification was confirmed by colour pattern and DNA barcoding (567 bp of cytochrome C oxidase I) of all E. epistictus specimens and nine closely related Epinephelus species. The interspecies genetic distance ranged from 0.002–0.245. This study also presents, for the first time for Malaysia, data on length-weight relationships and otolith measurements. It contributes to a better understanding of taxonomy, and phylogenetic and genetic diversity of E. epistictus.

Keywords
DNA barcoding, new record, otolith aspect ratio, phylogenetic and genetic diversity, taxonomy