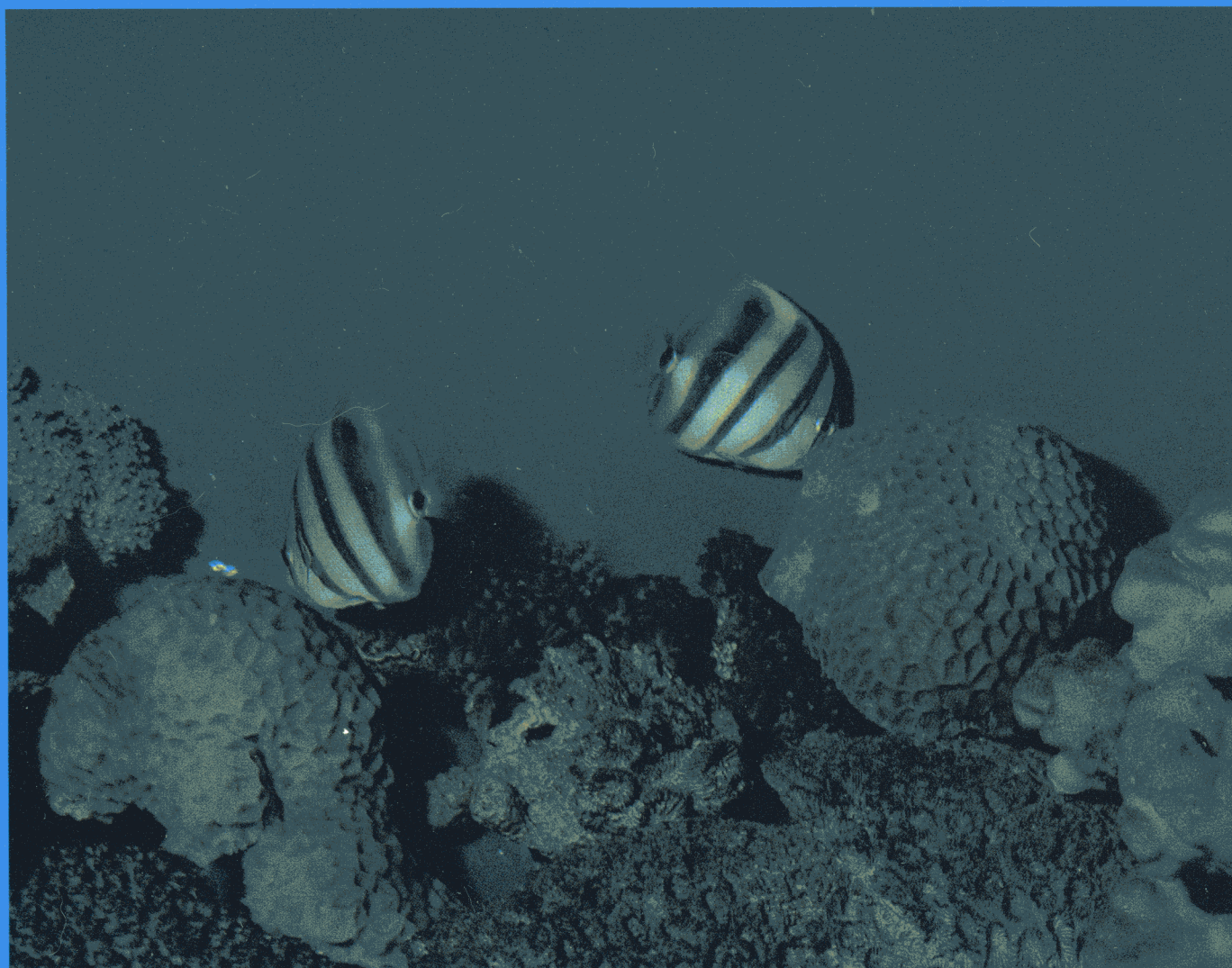


THE BUTTERFLYFISHES OF S'PORE

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*The commonly occurring eight-banded butterflyfish, *Chaetodon octofasciatus*, displays a dark blotch on its body at night.*

Butterflyfishes are well-known for their grace and beauty, with striking colours and patterns. Their bodies are deep, oval and very compressed, and they have small mouths, with very fine, bristle-like teeth, usually situated at the end of a pointed snout. They are found mostly in tropical coral reefs, in depths of less than 20m, but a few are found at depths of 200m. Active and colourful during the day, they become drab and shelter close to the reef at night. Many species have a "home range", in which they forage extensively for food,

which consists mainly of coral polyps, small invertebrates and algae.

Seventy-seven species occur in the Indo-Pacific region, of which five are found in Singapore, two of which are the most common. The copper-banded butterflyfish, *Chelmon rostratus*, has 4 distinct copper-coloured bands, the first running through the eye, and a black spot (or "false eye") on the dorsal fin. Growing to 20.5 cm, they are usually seen in pairs on the reef. Their highly compressed and

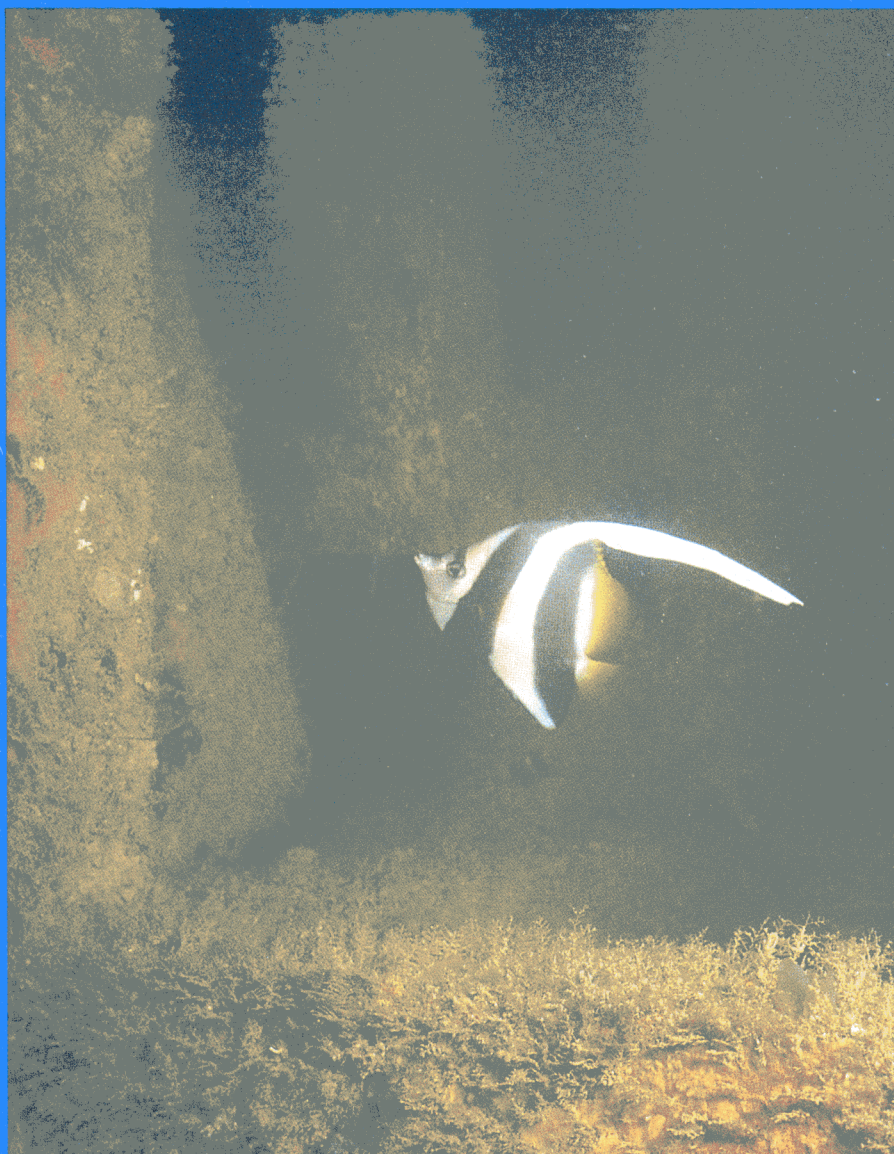
deeply-keeled bodies make them inconspicuous when viewed head-on. Small invertebrates form their main diet, which they pick off with their elongated snout. The other common butterflyfish is the eight-banded butterflyfish, *Chaetodon octofasciatus*. It is also wide-spread throughout the Indo-Pacific, growing to a length of 12.5 cm. They are usually seen in pairs or in small groups among the coral heads. This species feeds exclusively on coral polyps.



The orange-banded coralfish, *Coradion chrysozonus*, is rare on our reefs.



The other three species are rare in Singapore waters, and have been sighted only on offshore islands where no development has occurred. The orange-banded coralfish, *Coradion chrysozonus*, usually occurs in areas of sparse coral growth, and lives on a diet of plankton. They reach a length of 13 cm. The ocellate coralfish, *Parachaetodon ocellatus*, can be found in muddy areas of the coast-line. The juveniles have a body shape similar to other butterflyfish, but the shape becomes triangular as it matures. It can attain a length of 18 cm. The long-finned bannerfish, *Heniochus acuminatus*, has been sighted only recently, and grows to a length of 20.5 cm. They may occur alone, or in pairs and small aggregations.



Heniochus acuminatus, the long-finned bannerfish, was sighted only recently in our waters.