



Checklist of the coral fish fauna of Xisha Islands, China

Shuting Qiu[‡], Bin Chen^{‡,§}, Jianguo Du^{‡,§}, Kar-Hoe Loh[‡], Jianji Liao[‡], Xinming Liu[¶], Wen Yang[‡]

[‡] Third Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources, Xiamen, China

[§] Fujian Provincial Key Laboratory of Marine Ecological Conservation and Restoration, Xiamen, China

[¶] Institute of Ocean and Earth Sciences, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

[¶] Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine, Guangxi, China

Corresponding author: Jianguo Du (dujianguo@tio.org.cn)

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Abstract

Background

The Xisha Islands are composed of the Yongle Islands and the Xuande Islands in Hainan Province, China. It has one of the highest species diversity in the world and is also a typical oceanic distribution area of coral reefs globally. The ichthyofauna of the Xisha Islands were recorded by underwater visual census in May 2019 and July 2020. The survey data were combined with previous records of species into the checklist of the Xisha Islands presented herein. A total of 691 species, belonging to 24 orders and 97 families, was recorded. The major families were Labridae, Pomacentridae, Serranidae, Chaetodontidae, Hexanchidae, Lutjanidae, Scaridae, Gobiidae, Scorpaenidae and Carangidae. In this study, the Coral Fish Diversity Index (CFDI) of six families (Chaetodontidae, Pomacanthidae, Pomacentridae, Labridae, Scaridae and Acanthuridae) was 229, indicating 756 coral fishes. In terms of the IUCN Red List, one species is Critically Endangered (*Glyphis gangeticus*), six species are Endangered (*Stegostoma fasciatum*, *Aetomylaeus maculatus*, *Aetomylaeus vespertilio*, *Epinephelus akaara*, *Cheilinusundulatus* sp. and *Xiphias gladius*), 16 species are Vulnerable, and 13 species are Near Threatened in the Xisha Archipelago, so conservation should be strengthened in this area in the future.