

Biodiversity Record: Sightings of the leaf catfish, *Silurichthys hasseltii*

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Subjects: Hasselt's leaf catfish, *Silurichthys hasseltii* (Teleostei: Siluriformes: Siluridae).

Subjects identified by: Ong Junxiang Lumin.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, north-eastern edge; 9 September 2023 at around 2023 hrs and 12 September 2023 at around 2306 hrs.

Habitat: Freshwater stream at the edge of secondary forest.

Observers: Ong Junxiang Lumin and Choo Ruirong.

Observation: On the evening of 9 September 2023, an example of about 8 cm in total length was spotted swimming against a gentle current near the surface of the water before resting on the substrate and upon contact with the observers' lights (Fig. 1). Moments later, it swam into a tangle of roots and other debris at the edge of the stream. Upon return to the same site on 12 September 2023, a conspecific of similar size and appearance was observed swimming downstream (Fig. 2) and then darted out of the observers' sight upon direct contact with the torch beam that was shone on it.



Fig. 1. Dorso-lateral view of the subject resting on the substrate on 9 September 2023. Fig. 2 Dorso-lateral view of possibly the same individual swimming against the current on 12 September 2023 (Photographs by: Ong Junxiang Lumin).

Remarks: From the similarity in size and general appearance (see Figs. 1 & 2), it is possible that the catfish seen on two occasions four days apart are of the same individual. This could suggest that individual fish confine their movements to certain areas of the stream. Whether these areas translate as territories for individual fish remains to be studied. In Singapore, *Silurichthys hasseltii* appears to be restricted to the freshwater streams and swamps of the Central Catchment Nature Reserve, particularly the Nee Soon swamp forest where it is believed to be uncommon, and thus regarded as 'critically endangered' in the country (Ho et al., 2016). It hides among roots and leaf litter during the day, and emerges at night to forage along the water surface for prey such as fallen insects (Baker, 2023). The sightings herein reported are also interesting in that the location is at the edge of the fish's natural habitat.

References:

- Baker N (2023) Hasselt's Leaf Catfish. Ecology Asia. <https://www.ecologyasia.com/verts/fishes/hasselts-leaf-catfish.htm> (Accessed 10 December 2023)
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