

Sharksucker on tilapia host

Subjects: Sharksucker, *Echeneis naucrates* (Teleostei: Echeneidae).
Nile tilapia, *Oreochromis niloticus* (Teleostei: Cichlidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, mouth of Sungei Buloh Besar by sluice gate 1; 8 July 2011; 1000-1030 hrs.

Habitat: Saltwater, mangrove-lined estuary with mud substrate.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: A sharksucker of about 15 cm total length was photographed clinging onto the head and opercular region of a Nile tilapia. The host fish, about 30 cm in total length, did not seem to be disturbed by the sharksucker. Although there were many other fish in the immediate vicinity, the sharksucker did not approach any of them throughout the duration of the observation. The other fishes include separate individuals of *Oreochromis niloticus*, green chromides (*Etroplus suratensis*), Mayan cichlids (*Cichlasoma urophthalmum*) and a mono-angelfish (*Monodactylus argenteus*).

Remarks: Except for the sharksucker and the mono-angelfish, all the other fish species are not native to Singapore. Sharksuckers usually cling onto larger hosts such as sharks, marine turtles and even sea-going vessels (Lim & Low, 1998).

Reference: Lim, K. K. P. & J. K. Y. Low, 2002. *A Guide to Common Marine Fishes of Singapore*. Revised edition. Singapore Science Centre. 163 pp.



Photographs by Tan Heok Hui.

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