

Smooth-coated otters and green chromide at West Coast Park

Subjects: Smooth-coated otter, *Lutrogale perspicillata* (Mammalia: Carnivora: Mustelidae);
Green chromide, *Etroplus suratensis* (Teleostei: Cichlidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, West Coast Park, coastline at western end near the marsh pond and a dockyard; 1 November 2016; 1844-1852 hrs.

Habitat: Seashore with mud and silt substrates by urban parkland on reclaimed land.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: A pack of eight smooth-coated otters, consisting an adult pair, four young adults and two small juveniles, was sighted in the sea. One of the young adults caught a green chromide of around 30 cm total length (Fig. 1), and proceeded to eat the fish's head (Fig. 2). The other otters tried to snatch the fish away, and one of them succeeded in doing so. The pack then clambered onto the exposed muddy shore (Fig. 3), ran over a rock wall, onto an exposed grass verge and disappeared into the surrounding dense vegetation around the marsh pond.

Remarks: The featured observation shows that the smooth-coated otter has taken up residence in the south-western coast of Singapore which has busy shipping and industrial activities. Previously in this area, a young male of this species was found dead at West Coast Park in 2011 (Sivasothi, 2011).

The present observation records the green chromide (*Etroplus suratensis*) for the first time in the West Coast Park area (see Tan, 2014, 2015). It again demonstrates that non-native fish species are prey for the smooth-coated otter in Singapore (Theng et al., 2016; Tan & Soo, 2016).

Recently, Moretti et al. (2017), having analysed genetic material of smooth-coated otters from throughout their range, reported that the Singapore population consists of hybrids of the Asian small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinereus*).

References:

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Fig. 1. Young adult otter catching a large *Etroplus suratensis*. Fig. 2. Consuming the head of the fish.



Fig. 3. Eight smooth-coated otters foraging in the intertidal area exposed by low tide.

Photographs by Tan Heok Hui