

Giant snakeheads and their brood

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Subjects: Giant snakehead or Toman, *Channa micropeltes* (Teleostei: Anabantiformes: Channidae).

Subjects identified by: Tan Swee Hee.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Marina Catchment, Singapore River below Zion Road; 30 December 2018; 1545 hrs.

Habitat: Urban. In freshwater canal with concrete sides.

Observer: Tan Swee Hee.

Observations: Two adult examples of the giant snakehead, each around 60 cm in total length, were seen swimming at the surface of the water. They were always in close proximity to each other, and also to a mass of several hundred small fish that are presumed to be their offspring (see accompanying pictures).

Remarks: After hatching, the fry of the giant snakehead stay together in a shoal. Both their parents participate in caring for them and during this time, the parent fish are known to behave aggressively to intruders (Ng & Lim, 1990). While brood care in the giant snakehead may be well-known, pictures of parent fish together with their brood are apparently not often featured in publications. *Channa micropeltes* is an introduced species in Singapore that seems to have adapted well to living in artificial inland water bodies (Ng & Tan, 2010).

References:

- Ng, P. K. L. & K. K. P. Lim, 1990. Snakeheads (Pisces: Channidae): natural history, biology and economic importance. In: Chou L. M. & P. K. L. Ng (eds.). *Essays in Zoology*. Department of Zoology, National University of Singapore. pp. 127-152.
- Ng H. H. & H. H. Tan, 2010. An annotated checklist of the non-native freshwater fish species in the reservoirs of Singapore. *COSMOS*. 6 (1): 95-116.



Dorsal views of a pair of giant snakeheads tending to a shoal of fry (upper right corner of pictures).

Photographs by Tan Swee Hee