

Biodiversity Record: Blue-rumped parrots feeding on fruits of *Magnolia champaca*

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Subjects: Blue-rumped parrot, *Psittinus cyanurus* (Aves: Psittaciformes: Psittaculidae);
Champak, *Magnolia champaca* (Tracheophyta: Angiospermae: Magnoliaceae).

Subjects identified by: Koh Jun Wang.

Locations, dates and times: Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens —

1) Healing Garden; 17 March 2022; around 1353 hrs.

2) Fragrant Garden; 13 April 2022; around 0949 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland.

Observer: Koh Jun Wang.

Observations: Two separate observations were made on two different days involving mature male parrots, each about 19 cm in total length —

1) On 17 March 2022, two male parrots were observed feeding on the fruits of a cultivated *Magnolia champaca* tree beside the footpath along a grassy slope in the Healing Garden (Fig 1).

2) On 13 April 2022, three male parrots were observed feeding on the fruits of a cultivated *Magnolia champaca* tree in the planting area at the junction of footpaths in the Fragrant Garden (Fig 2).

Remarks: The blue-rumped parrot is distributed over the Thai-Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and Borneo. In Singapore, it is an uncommon resident of primary and secondary forest in the Bukit Timah and Central Catchment Nature Reserves, and is regarded as ‘nationally endangered’ in the country (Yong et al., 2017). It is unclear if the observed individuals are residing within the Botanic Gardens, or simply foraging there. It is also interesting to note that only adult males were observed on both featured occasions.

Magnolia champaca is an exotic evergreen tree that is naturally distributed from India, south-western China, Indochina, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java and the Lesser Sunda Islands. It is widely planted throughout Singapore for its strongly fragrant flowers, which have been recorded to be pollinated by beetles. Around 6 to 40 fruits are borne on a spiral cluster, each splitting open when ripe to reveal red or pink flesh. Its seeds are dispersed by mammals and birds that eat the fruits (NParks, 2022), such as the blue-rumped parrot featured here.

In a similar observation, a flock of two male and three female blue-rumped parrots has been documented feeding on the seeds of starfruit, an introduced cultivated species, at the edge of the Central Catchment Nature Reserve (Yeo, 2016).

Literature cited:

Yong DL, Lim KC & Lee TK (2017) A Naturalist’s Guide to the Birds of Singapore. 3rd edition. John Beaufoy Publishing, United Kingdom, 176 pp.

NParks (2022) *Magnolia champaca*. <https://www.nparks.gov.sg/florafaunaweb/flora/3/0/3025> (Accessed on 14 April 2022)

Yeo RKH (2016) Blue-rumped parrots feeding on starfruit. Singapore Biodiversity Records, 2016: 35–36.



Fig. 1. One of two parrots feeding on a bunch of *Magnolia champaca* fruits in the Healing Garden. (Photograph by: Koh Jun Wang)



Fig. 2. One of the three parrots feeding on *Magnolia champaca* fruits in the Fragrant Garden. (Photograph by: Koh Jun Wang)