

Biodiversity Record: Rediscovery of the butterfly, *Rapala cowani*, on Singapore Island

Jess Loh, Low Jian Kai & Zick Soh Shun-Hua*

Email: jezebelloh@gmail.com (Loh), rabbit.kai14@gmail.com (Low), ss82zick@gmail.com (*corresponding author)

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Subjects: *Rapala cowani* (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae: Theclinae).

Subjects identified by: Aaron Soh and Seow Tek Lin.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve; 6 August 2022; 1535–1545 hrs.

Habitat: Mangrove.

Observer: Jess Loh.

Observation: One example of about 3 cm wing span was observed (Figs. 1–3) at about 1535 hrs. Five minutes later, a second individual was spotted nearby (Fig. 4). The butterflies were on a tree, mostly resting on the surfaces of leaves. They were not in pristine condition, which suggests that they have been frequenting the area for some time.



Figs. 1–3. Lateral views of the first individual at rest on various leaves. (Photographs by: Jess Loh)



Figs. 4–5. The second individual in rear lateral view (Fig. 4) and dorsal view with wings opened (Fig. 5). (Photographs by: Jess Loh)

Remarks: *Rapala cowani* was originally described from Singapore by Corbet (1939, as *Rapala drasmos cowani*) based on specimens collected from the mangroves of Sungei Jurong in 1938 by Charles Francis Cowan. Elsewhere in Singapore, the species is also known to occur on Pulau Ubin, and over in Malaysia in south-east Johor, as well as on Borneo (Corbet & Pendlebury, 1992). Due to the lack of sightings in Singapore for many years, the species was thought to be nationally extinct (see Jain et al., 2018: 251), and was not illustrated by Khew (2015) in his field guide.

Recently, an image of a *Rapala cowani* photographed at 'Ubin' (= Pulau Ubin) in August 2019 was recorded on inaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/30160904>). The present observation, also uploaded on inaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/130326496>), is regarded as a rediscovery of the species on Singapore Island (mainland Singapore). *Rapala cowani* seems to be locally rare, and all records are from mangroves.

Literature cited:

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- Khew SK (2015) A Field Guide to the Butterflies of Singapore. 2nd edition. Ink on Paper Communications Pte Ltd., Singapore, 375 pp.