

## Biodiversity Record: Ghost silverfish, *Ctenolepisma calvum*

Chan Sow-Yan\* & Lau Wing Lup

Email: [chansowyan@gmail.com](mailto:chansowyan@gmail.com) (\*corresponding author), [suiseki1984@yahoo.com.sg](mailto:suiseki1984@yahoo.com.sg)

**Recommended citation.** Chan-SY & Lau WL (2023) Biodiversity Record: Ghost silverfish, *Ctenolepisma calvum*. Nature in Singapore, 16: e2023037. DOI: 10.26107/NIS-2023-0037

**Subjects:** Ghost silverfish, *Ctenolepisma calvum* (Insecta: Zygentoma: Lepismatidae).

**Subjects identified by:** Chan Sow-Yan and Lau Wing Lup.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Hougang Estate; 28 September 2022, around 2150 hrs.

**Habitat:** Urban. Concrete highrise building, within a residential apartment.

**Observers:** Lau Wing Lup and Chan Sow-Yan.

**Observation:** A freshly dead specimen and a live female example were blown out between the pages of a rain-soaked book while it was being blow-dried with a hairdryer. The live specimen (Fig. 1) has a body length of about 8 mm (excluding antenna, cerci, and terminal filum).



Fig. 1. Dorsal view of the live *Ctenolepisma calvum* with parts of the caudal appendages and antennae damaged. (Photograph by: Lau Wing Lup).

**Remarks:** Silverfishes are common insects in buildings, causing damage to paper, books, photographs, and wallpaper (Querner et al., 2022). *Ctenolepisma calvum* was first described from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) in 1910 and later reported as a common house lepismatid in Guyana and Cuba (Wygodzinsky, 1972). In Europe, it has rapidly spread throughout 18 countries in recent years (Querner et al., 2022). *Ctenolepisma calvum* is among four species of domestic silverfishes recorded in Singapore (Goh et al., 2002 as *Peliolepisma calva*; Woo, 2011). Although an apparently common household pest (Teo, 1990 as *Peliolepisma calva*), this species seems to be seldom photographed in Singapore.

### Literature cited:

- Goh BPL, Sodhi NS, Li D, Ho SH & Ng PKL (2002) A Guide to Urban Creatures. Singapore Science Centre, 160 pp.
- Querner P, Szucsich N, Landsberger B, Erlacher S, Trebicki L, Grabowski M & Brimblecombe P (2022) Identification and spread of the ghost silverfish (*Ctenolepisma calvum*) among museums and homes in Europe. *Insects*, 13: 855.
- Teo LH (1990) Biology of household insects. In: Chou LM & Ng PKL (eds.) *Essays in Zoology*. Department of Zoology, National University of Singapore, pp. 177–187.
- Woo HPM (2011) Silverfish. Order Thysanura. In: Ng PKL, Corlett RT & Tan HTW (eds.) *Singapore Biodiversity. An Encyclopedia of the Natural Environment and Sustainable Development*. Editions Didier Millet & Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore, p. 457.
- Wygodzinsky PW (1972) A review of the silverfish (Lepismatidae, Thysanura) of the United States and the Caribbean area. *American Museum Novitates*, 2481: 1–25.