

## Biodiversity Record: The glass perchlet, *Ambassis octava*, in Singapore

Kelvin K. P. Lim

Email: [nhmlimkp@nus.edu.sg](mailto:nhmlimkp@nus.edu.sg)

**Recommended citation.** Lim KKP (2023) Biodiversity Record: The glass perchlet, *Ambassis octava*, in Singapore. Nature in Singapore, 16: e2023065. DOI: 10.26107/NIS-2023-0065

---

**Subjects:** Eighth Malaysian glass perchlet, *Ambassis octava* (Teleostei: Cichliformes: Ambassidae).

**Subjects identified by:** Kelvin K. P. Lim.

**Location and date:** Johor Strait, Pulau Ubin, Tanjung Chek Jawa; 23–24 July 2001.

**Habitats:** Estuarine. Intertidal shore with sand-silt substrate and seagrass.

**Observers:** Collected by N. Sivasothi and company.

**Observation:** A series of six individuals from 41.0 to 85.5 mm standard length (Fig. 1) was preserved and deposited under the catalogue number ZRC 46488 in the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, at the National University of Singapore.

**Remarks:** The present feature confirms the occurrence in Singapore of the glass-perchlet, *Ambassis octava*. This species was recently described by Siti Zafirah Ghazali et al. (2023) from specimens collected at the estuary of the Tenggara River along the South China Sea coast of Johor, Malaysia; as well as from the Malacca Strait coast at Lumut, Perak, and Teluk Bahang, Penang. It is similar in appearance to the scalloped glass-perchlet, *Ambassis nalua*, which shares the following diagnostic characters — body twice as long as deep, lateral line continuous, absence of nasal spine, cheek with two scale rows. The series featured here has previously been recognised as *Ambassis nalua* by Ng et al. (2015). *Ambassis octava* is distinguished from *Ambassis nalua* as follows — Second anal spine shorter than third anal spine (versus second anal spine equals to or longer than third anal spine); predorsal scales 13–14 (versus 11–12); lower margin of interopercle and preorbital ridge smooth (versus serrated); gill rakers on lower limb of first branchial arch 15–17 (versus 19–21) (Siti Zafirah Ghazali et al., 2023).

The scalloped glass-perchlet, *Ambassis nalua*, has been recorded from Singapore since the previous century by Bleeker (1861), and more recently by Kimura et al. (2015) from the western Johor Strait, Ng et al. (2015) from the eastern Johor Strait and Tan et al. (2010) from the Marina Channel. In the description of *Ambassis octava*, specimens identified as *Ambassis nalua* from Peninsular Malaysia were collected only from the Merbok River at Kedah (Siti Zafirah Ghazali et al., 2023). Both *Ambassis nalua* and *Ambassis octava* occur together at the north-eastern coast of the Malacca Strait. However, it remains to be seen if these two species are sympatric elsewhere. Until future studies prove that *Ambassis nalua* does not occur beyond the eastern Indian Ocean, we retain this species in Singapore's ichthyofaunal inventory with an indeterminate status.

### Literature cited:

- Bleeker P (1861) Mededeeling omtrent vischsoorten, nieuw voor de kennis der fauna van Singapoera. Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Letterkunde, en Schoone Kunsten te Amsterdam, 12: 28–63.
- Kimura S, Aziz Arshad, Imamura H & Mazlan Abd Ghaffar (eds.) (2015) Fishes of the Northwestern Johor Strait, Peninsular Malaysia. Universiti Putra Malaysia Press and Mie University, Japan, viii + 108 pp.
- Ng HH, Tan HH, Lim KKP, Ludt WB & Chakrabarty P (2015) Fishes of the eastern Johor Strait. Raffles Bulletin of Zoology, Supplement 31: 303–337.
- Siti Zafirah Ghazali, Lavoué S, Siti Azizah Mohd Nor, Muhammad-Rasul AH & Tan MP (2023) *Ambassis octava*, a new glass-perchlet species (Teleostei: Ovalentaria: Ambassidae) from Peninsular Malaysia. Ichthyological Research, doi.org/10.1007/s10228-023-00913-5
- Tan HH, Low MEY & Lim KKP (2010) Fishes of the Marina Basin, Singapore, before the erection of the Marina Barrage. The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology, 58: 137–144.



Fig. 1. Lateral views of two of six examples of *Ambassis octava* in ZRC 46488 from Chek Jawa. Top: largest specimen of 85.5 mm standard length in the series (top). Bottom: smallest specimen of 41.0 mm standard length. (Photographs by: Kelvin K. P. Lim).