

Freshwater crab *Irmengardia johnsoni* eating caterpillar

Subjects: Freshwater crab, *Irmengardia johnsoni* (Crustacea: Brachyura: Parathelphusidae).
Unidentified caterpillar (Insecta: Lepidoptera).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, Jungle Fall Valley; 19 February 2005; after sunset.

Habitat: Small, shallow rocky stream in rainforest.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: Two *Irmengardia johnsoni*, each with carapace width of about 2 cm, were observed out of the water and in a tug-of-war over a dead caterpillar. The slightly larger crab had the carcass in its mouthparts, while its rival with distinctly smaller pincers (to the right on the photograph) was trying to tear chunks of flesh off the other end of the unidentified caterpillar.

Remarks: *Irmengardia johnsoni* is endemic to Singapore, and is found mainly in the shallow forest streams of the Central Nature Reserves. It hides among leaf-litter, and is omnivorous, feeding on vegetable matter and the occasional worm. Although it is said to have a generally peaceful temperament (Ng, 1990), the present observation shows that it can be quarrelsome when food has to be shared.

References: Ng, P. K. L., 1990. Freshwater crabs and prawns of Singapore. p. 189-204. In: Chou L. M. & P. K. L. Ng (eds.). *Essays in Zoology*. Department of Zoology, National University of Singapore.



Photograph by Kelvin K. P. Lim

Contributor: Kelvin K. P. **Lim**

Contact address: dbslimkp@nus.edu.sg