

Native fishes at the West Coast Park marsh pond

Subjects: Silver moonfish, *Monodactylus argenteus* (Teleostei: Monodactylidae); Fig. 1.
Spotted scat, *Scatophagus argus* (Teleostei: Scatophagidae); Fig. 2.
Ten pounder, *Elops hawaiiensis* (Teleostei: Elopidae); Fig. 3.
Grey mullet, unidentified genus and species (Teleostei: Mugilidae); Fig. 4 & 5.
Crescent perch, *Terapon jarbua* (Teleostei: Terapontidae); Fig. 6.

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, West Coast Park, marsh pond near mouth of Pandan Canal, off Pandan Crescent; 2 June 2014; from 0930 to 1000 hrs.

Habitat: Semi-natural, shallow estuarine water body surrounded by mangrove vegetation, with clay and mud substrates, and brackish water influenced by tides. The period of observation coincided with low tide and the water was fairly clear with visibility of 1 to 1.5 m.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: All the subjects were viewed and photographed from an observatory deck that was extended over the pond. There were up to five silver moonfish (Fig. 1), four spotted scat (Fig. 2), three ten pounder (Fig. 3), numerous grey mullet of unidentified genus and species (Fig. 4 & 5), and two crescent perch (Fig. 6). These species are native to Singapore's coastal waters.

Although not illustrated here, the following species of non-native fishes were also observed: zebra tilapia, *Tilapia buttikoferi* (Cichlidae); Mozambique tilapia, *Oreochromis mossambicus* (Cichlidae); Mayan cichlid, *Cichlasoma urophthalmum* (Cichlidae); three-spot cichlid, *Cichlasoma trimaculatum* (Cichlidae); African sharp-tooth walking catfish, *Clarias gariepinus* (Clariidae) and the molly, *Poecilia sphenops* (Poeciliidae).

Remarks: Further to records of non-native fishes in the West Coast Park marsh pond by Tan (2014), the present set of observations is of native fish species. The fauna featured here consists of taxa that are easily observed in that they are diurnally active and swim in the open near the surface. It does not include benthic examples such as gobies.

As the West Coast Park marsh pond gets regular inundation of seawater during high tides, it is a brackish water habitat. This is reflected by the community of native fishes present (see Figs. 1-6) and existing vegetation. The presence of the zebra tilapia, three-spot cichlid and African sharp-toothed walking catfish in the pond demonstrates that these non-native species that usually occur in freshwater, are able to adapt to living in brackish water.

Reference: Tan, H. H., 2014. Non-native fishes observed in marsh pond at West Coast Park. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2014: 6-7.

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Fig. 1. Silver moonfish, *Monodactylus argenteus* of about 10 cm total length.



Fig. 2. Spotted scat, *Scatophagus argus*. The larger individual is about 10 cm in total length.



Fig. 3. Ten pounder, *Elops hawaiiensis* of about 30 cm total length.

Photographs by Tan Heok Hui



Fig. 4. Unidentified grey mullet of about 18 cm total length, with ten pounder in the background.



Fig. 5. A group of unidentified grey mullet, each about 6 cm total length, grazing on the substrate.



Fig. 6. Crescent perch, *Terapon jarbua*. Each one about 10 cm in total length.

Photographs by Tan Heok Hui