

Black snakeheads at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve

Subjects: Black snakehead, *Channa melasoma* (Teleostei: Channidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, Catchment Pond; 27 May 2009; 1536 hrs.

Habitat: Freshwater. Swampy pond bordered by primary forest, with clay substrates, leaf litter and submerged wood.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: Two adult fish, each of about 25 cm total length, and believed to be a pair, were seen near the edge of the pond. The accompanying photograph shows the dorso-lateral view of one of the fish. The head of the other individual can be seen at the left edge of the picture.

Remarks: *Channa melasoma* is one of the four species of snakeheads that are native to Singapore. It lives in shaded forest streams, and although not attractively marked, is one of the rarer species (Baker & Lim, 2012: 49). The present sighting appears to be the first record of this fish outside the Central Catchment Nature Reserve.

References: Baker, N. & K. K. P. Lim, 2012. *Wild Animals of Singapore. A Photographic Guide to Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fishes*. Updated edition. Draco Publishing and Distribution Pte. Ltd. and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.



Photograph by Nick Baker

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