

Scissors-tail rasbora at Bukit Timah

Subjects: Scissors-tail rasbora, *Rasbora trilineata* (Teleostei: Cyprinidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributors.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, Catchment Pond; 23 April 2014; morning.

Habitat: Semi-natural pool of freshwater fed by natural streams and surrounded by primary lowland dipterocarp forest, with sand and mud bottom.

Observers: Contributors.

Observation: Three examples were obtained from the pool during a biodiversity survey. Many more were seen in the water. The three specimens were preserved and deposited at the Zoological Reference Collection of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore.

Remarks: A population of the scissors-tail rasbora was first discovered in Singapore in August 2009 at Catchment Pond (Lim & Tan, 2011: 378). The present examples are evidence that this population has persisted at the same location for the past five years. Although *Rasbora trilineata* is found in freshwater drainages of the surrounding land masses (Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Borneo and Sumatra), it is believed to be an introduced species in Singapore. However, the cause of its appearance there is unknown (Lim & Tan, 2011: 379).

When the present specimens are placed side-by-side to an example obtained in 2009 (Fig. 1), a morphological anomaly becomes apparent. The size and length of the caudal fin is distinctly smaller in the recent fish (Fig. 2). The contributors have noted that conspecifics of equivalent sizes (to the present examples) obtained in Peninsular Malaysia have comparatively larger tail fins. It is tempting to speculate that a possible cause of this reduced tail size is due to inbreeding with the population's isolation, or even environmental factors. However, this cannot be ascertained from just three individuals, and it is not known if this condition affects the entire population.

Reference: Lim, K. K. P. & H. H. Tan, 2011. Addition of three cyprinid fishes to the alien fauna of Singapore. *Nature in Singapore*. 4: 377-382.

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Fig. 1. Lateral view of 27.5 mm SL example from 2011 (ZRC 52131).



Fig. 2. Lateral views of three specimens of *Rasbora trilineata* from 2014 (top: 29.5 mm SL, middle: 33.0 mm SL, bottom: 48.7 mm SL) showing reduced size of the caudal fin.

Photographs by Tan Heok Hui