

Owlet moth *Cyclodes omma* larvae feeding on fruit of fishtail palm

Subjects: Owlet moth, *Cyclodes omma* (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Noctuidae).

Subjects identified by: Roger Kendrick (Director of C&R Wildlife, Hong Kong).

Location, date and time: Pulau Ubin, along Jalan Ubin; 27 January 2015; 1500 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest.

Observer: Randolph Quek Zheng Bin.

Observation: Larvae of *Cyclodes omma* were observed feeding on the unripe fruits of the clustering fishtail palm, *Caryota mitis* (fig. 1). Up to four larvae were noted on the same infructescence, with fairly developed but unripe fruits. Three larvae (Fig. 2) were collected and reared to adulthood for identification. The pupal stage (Fig. 3) lasted about 3 weeks, and two completed metamorphosis (Figs. 4-6).

Remarks: Palm fruits are an important food resource for many frugivorous animals in tropical rainforests as they are available all through the year (Terborgh, 1986; Eiserhardt et al., 2011). However, the consumption of palm fruits by invertebrates appears to be uncommon (Howard & Giblin-Davis, 2008). The owlet moth, *Cyclodes omma* is not strictly host-specific and has been known to feed on other palms such as rattan (Steiner, 2001). This moth is even regarded as a pest on coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*) as the larvae feed on the young fruits which result in their premature abscission (Lever, 1969). The present observation may be the first record of *Cyclodes omma* larvae feeding on the unripe fruits of *Caryota mitis*.

References:

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Note: This observation was conducted under National Parks research permit: NPRP-108.

Contributors: **Quek Zheng Bin** Randolph & **N. Sivasothi**
Contact address: randolphquek63@gmail.com (Quek)

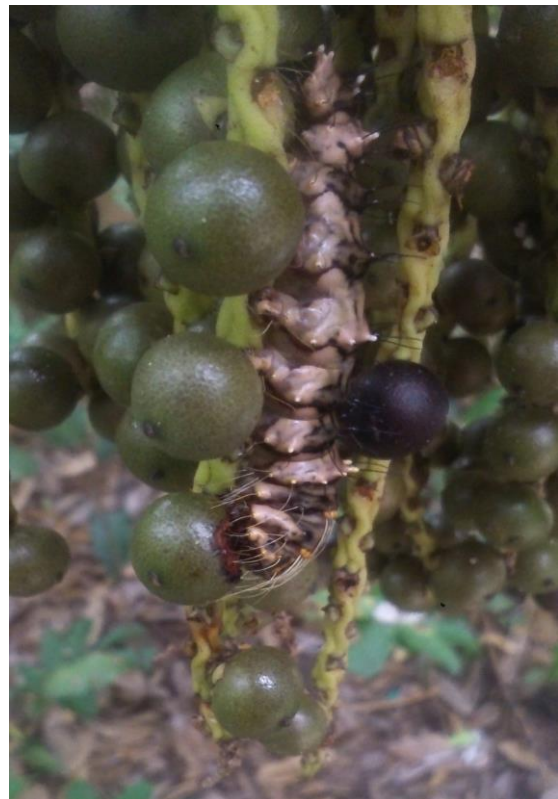


Fig. 1. Lateral view of *Cyclodes omma* caterpillar feeding on fruits of fishtail palm, *Caryota mitis* at Pulau Ubin on 27 January 2015. Photograph by Randolph Z. B. Quek



Fig. 2. Dorsal view of one of the larval *Cyclodes omma*. Fig. 3. Pupal *Cyclodes omma*.



Fig. 4. Freshly emerged live adult *Cyclodes omma*. Fig. 5. Dorsal aspect of pinned adult *Cyclodes omma*.

Photographs by Randolph Z. B. Quek



Fig. 6. Dorsal view of pinned adult *Cyclodes omma* against white background.
Photograph by Chui Shao Xiong