

Biodiversity Record: Pig-nosed turtle attacking a red-eared slider

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Subjects: Pig-nosed turtle, *Carettochelys insculpta* (Reptilia: Testudines: Carettochelyidae); Red eared slider, *Trachemys scripta elegans* (Reptilia: Testudines: Emydidae).

Subjects identified by: Tan Jian Qing.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Jurong Lakeside Gardens, biodiversity pond; 13 April 2024; around 1636 hrs.

Habitat: Freshwater pond in urban parkland.

Observer: Tan Jian Qing.

Observation: A pig-nosed turtle of about 40 cm carapace length was observed swimming about at the water's surface and showing no sign of aggression towards the few red eared sliders around it. It did seem to get in the way of one of the sliders by swimming into its path and causing the slider to hesitate (Fig. 1). Suddenly, it became interested in another red-eared slider of about 20 cm carapace length, and began to stalk it (Fig. 2). It then bit the left side of the slider's carapace (Fig. 3), and pulled the slider deeper into the water with the latter frantically flailing its limbs trying to escape. After a few seconds, the pig-nosed turtle surfaced to take a breath (Fig. 4), and resumed swimming about in a calm manner (Fig. 5). The red eared slider also surfaced shortly after, without any noticeable injuries, and swam quickly away from the pig-nosed turtle, which seemed to pay it no further attention.



Fig. 1. Dorsal view of pig-nosed turtle gliding calmly into the swim path of a red eared slider (right) and causing it to hesitate. Fig. 2. Pig-nosed turtle stalking another red eared slider (top right) which it attacked seconds later (Photographs by: Tan Jian Qing).

Remarks: The pig-nosed turtle and the red eared slider are not native to Singapore. The presence of both in the wild there is attributed to the irresponsible abandonment of unwanted pets. While red eared sliders are commonly found across Singapore (Ng & Lim, 2010), sightings of the fully aquatic pig-nosed turtles are far less frequent. Presence of the latter has been noted in the Botanic Gardens (Muhammad Assiddiq, 2015), Tampines Quarry (Kwan, 2015), MacRitchie Reservoir (Ng & Lim, 2010; Baker, 2017), Marina Barrage (Foo, 2020), Bukit Timah Nature Reserve and Pandan Reservoir (Figueroa et al., 2023). This seems to be the first record of the pig-nosed turtle at the Jurong Lakeside Gardens.

In captivity, some pig-nosed turtles are known to behave aggressively to conspecifics as well as to other turtles (see Matiaska & Thomson, 2005). This is illustrated here by the boisterous behaviour of the featured example, shoving its way past one slider and deliberately biting and pulling another deeper into the water. The purpose of the apparently antagonistic behaviour is unclear.



Fig. 3. Dorso-lateral view of pig-nosed turtle (indicated by arrow) biting the left side of the red eared slider's shell, before dragging it deeper into the water for a few seconds. Note slider closing its eyes in response to the bite. Fig. 4. Dorso-frontal view of the head of the pig-nosed turtle as it surfaced for breath (Photographs by: Tan Jian Qing).



Fig. 5. Dorsal view of the pig-nosed turtle as it swam calmly in the pond (Photograph by: Tan Jian Qing).

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