

## Biodiversity Record: Swarming of the cicada, *Platypleura fulviger*, in Tampines

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**Subjects:** Orange-winged cicada, *Platypleura fulviger* (Insecta: Hemiptera: Cicadidae).

**Subjects identified by:** Lee Young June (cicada specialist based in Korea) and Foo Maosheng.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Tampines Street 33; 7 May 2025, around 1130 hrs.

**Habitat:** Urban residential estate. In a highrise concrete building with trees in its surroundings.

**Observers:** Foo Maosheng and Yeo Wen Xin Clarice.

**Observations:** Loud cicada calls were recorded, and a total of 18 dead cicadas were collected for identification from apartment block 321. All individuals were observed and collected from publicly accessible areas such as corridors, lift lobbies and staircases, across every floor, beginning from the 11th floor. Most specimens were located in drain gutters, adjacent to potted plants, and in less frequently accessed corners of each floor as per Figs. 1 & 2.



Fig. 1. A cicada dead on the floor near potted plants. Fig. 2. Another dead cicada in a corner of a corridor with little human traffic. (Photographs by: Foo Maosheng).

Several dead cicadas were partially disintegrated or missing body parts such as legs or heads, and numerous shed wings were scattered across the floors. Fewer than five individuals were observed to be alive or actively moving. The cicada calls were loudest on the 10th and 11th floors, where residential units were closest to the tree canopies. From the corridors, the distance to the surrounding foliage was approximately five metres.

Examples of dead cicadas and their body parts are illustrated on Figs. 3–6.



Fig. 3: Ventral views of two adult cicadas with the male on the left, and the female on the right. (Photograph by: Foo Maosheng).



Fig. 4. Forewing. Fig. 5. Hindwing. Fig. 6. Dorsal view of head and pronotum. (Photographs by: Hou Yun Han).

**Remarks:** The cicada swarm herein featured was reported in the news on television. Residents had indicated that cicadas had been swarming around apartment block 321 since March 2025. This was particularly evident at night, when cicadas congregated around lights along the corridors. Some of the insects entered residential units through open windows and doors. According to residents, cicada brood emergences occur annually (Tan, 2025). Similar noteworthy cicada emergences were recorded in 2022 and 2021 (Ministry of National Development, 2022).

Residents of block 321 have complained about the cicadas causing significant disturbance to their daily activities. The presence of large numbers of these insects also caused fear and unease among residents, particularly children, who were reportedly reluctant to leave their homes for school, as well as among the elderly. Several residents subsequently wrote to Tampines-Changkat Single Member Constituency's Member of Parliament, Mr. Desmond Choo, to raise their concerns and request mitigation measures (Tan, 2025). On 13 May 2025, the Tampines Town Council posted on Instagram detailing measures taken to "tackle the issue", including grass cutting and soil loosening, tree pruning and removal, and the laying of coco mats (Tampines Town Council, 2025).

Identification of cicadas in Singapore is challenging due to existing gaps in knowledge on the diversity and taxonomy of local species. Studies on urban cicada populations in Japan have shown that soil compaction, moisture content, and soil temperature influence species presence and distribution (Moriyama & Numata, 2011; Moriyama & Numata, 2015; Akiyama et al., 2024). Long-term, localised research is therefore necessary to better understand the ecological requirements and emergence patterns of Singapore's cicada species, which would enable the development of more targeted and effective mitigation measures.

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