

Biodiversity Record: Rediscovery of the glass perchlet, *Ambassis macracanthus*, in Singapore

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Subjects: Largespine glass perchlet, *Ambassis macracanthus* (Teleostei; Mugiliformes; Ambassidae).

Subjects identified by: Aidan Raphael Keh, Daiki Hiura, and Jiayuan Lin.

Location, date and time: Two locations —

- 1) Pulau Ubin, Sungei Jelutong; 20 June 2025; around 1150 hrs.
- 2) Singapore Island, Sungei Bedok; 9 July 2026; around 1614 and 1710 hrs.

Habitat: Estuarine. 1) Mangrove estuary with a muddy bottom and rocky rubble. 2) Concretised waterway with a silty bottom.

Observers: 1) Daiki Hiura and 2) Aidan Raphael Keh.

Observations: Two observations at two locations —

1) An example of approximately 65 mm SL (standard length — measured from snout tip to caudal fin base) was caught on a sabiki rig at Sungei Jelutong from Jelutong Bridge (Fig 1). This specimen was released after documentation.

2) Two specimens of 58.9 and 73.6 mm SL (Figs. 2 & 3) were caught at Sungei Bedok Jetty almost one hour apart. Both were hooked with a sabiki rig baited with whiteleg shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*) meat below a school of the glassfish, *Ambassis vachelli*. They have been donated to the Zoological Reference Collection of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore for preservation as reference material under the catalogue number ZRC 70386.



Fig 1. Ex-situ lateral view of live specimen of about 65 mm SL from Pulau Ubin. (Photograph by: Daiki Hiura).

Remarks: *Ambassis macracanthus* was first recorded in Singapore by Bleeker (1861, also as its synonym *Ambassis batjanensis*; 1876–77, as *Ambassis Commersoni*) and later from the Serangoon and Changi Rivers by Károli (1882, also as its synonym *Ambassis Batjanensis*). It has not been reported from Singapore since then, and was not listed in the Singapore Red Data Book (Jaafar et al., 2024). The featured records represent a rediscovery of the species in Singapore after more than 140 years. However, due to morphological similarities with some of its congeners it is likely that sightings prior to this record have been overlooked.

Ambassis macracanthus is characterized by having a single supraorbital spine, nasal spine present, cheek with two transverse scale rows, lateral line continuous from upper edge of gill opening to base of caudal fin, pectoral fin with 14–15 rays, dorsal spine strong and stiff, 17–22 predorsal scales, 12–13 horizontal scale rows from anal fin origin to dorsal fin origin, body depth, up to 44.7 % in standard length (Allen, 1999; Ghazali et al., 2023).



Fig 2. Ex-situ lateral view of 58.9 mm SL example from Sungei Bedok in life. Fig 3. Ex-situ lateral view of 73.6 mm SL individual from Sungei Bedok in life. (Photographs by: Aidan Raphael Keh).

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