

## **African sharp-toothed walking catfish at Upper Seletar**

**Subjects:** African sharp-toothed walking catfish, *Clarias gariepinus* (Teleostei: Clariidae).

**Subject identified by:** Kelvin K. P. Lim.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Upper Seletar Reservoir Park; 2 February 2009; 1622 hrs.

**Habitat:** Small, shallow stream at the edge of freshwater swamp forest.

**Observer:** Nick Baker.

**Observation:** At least six examples of around 25 cm total length were observed in a shaded forest pool with *Rasbora einthovenii*. They appeared emaciated and were sluggish in movements.

**Remarks:** These alien catfish were seen at the very same forest pool inhabited by two native congeners (*Clarias leiacanthus* and *Clarias nieuhofii*) that are regarded as locally endangered (Lim, 2013). The stream where the pool was located flows into the Nee Soon swamp-forest, an area where most of Singapore's native freshwater fishes occur. The alien catfish were most likely unused bait released by anglers, or they could also have been deliberately liberated for religious reasons. Their presence in a forest stream with rare native fishes was quite disconcerting, for they have the potential to compete with their native counterparts, or infect them with exotic diseases. It is hoped that they have failed to adapt to this environment.

**Reference:** Lim, K. K. P., 2013. Two syntopic walking catfishes at Upper Seletar. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2013: 92-93.



Photograph by Nick Baker

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