

## Short-nosed Fruit Bat feeding on fruits of *Terminalia catappa* and *Syzygium grande* at Pulau Pinang, Peninsular Malaysia

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**Photographs by:** Graeme Guy, Nick Baker.

**Subjects identified by:** Nick Baker (fauna), S. K. Y. Lum (flora).

**Location:** Straits Quay, Pulau Pinang, Penang, Peninsular Malaysia.

**Elevation:** Near sea-level.

**Habitat:** Ornamental garden in suburban housing development on reclaimed land (300 metres from coast).

**Date and time:** 05 December 2016, 22:30 hrs.

### Identity of subjects:

(i) Short-nosed Fruit Bat, *Cynopterus* sp. (Mammalia: Chiroptera: Pteropodidae)

(ii) Sea Almond, *Terminalia catappa* (Myrtales: Combretaceae)

(iii) Sea Apple ('Jambu Laut'), *Syzygium grande* / *Eugenia grandis* (Myrtales: Myrtaceae)

**Description of records:** A *Cynopterus* fruit bat was observed in a private garden hanging from a slender branch of an exotic fir tree, whilst cradling and consuming the pulp of a fruit of the Sea Almond *Terminalia catappa* (Fig. 1). A total of 12 seeds of *Terminalia catappa* and 12 of *Syzygium grande* were found beneath the same tree : these were collected and photographed (Fig. 2). During the subsequent two weeks, what appeared to be the same bat was seen hanging from the same branch on most evenings at around the same time, each time consuming a fruit. The general area was illuminated by artificial lighting, but the feeding area of the bat was in shadow.



Fig. 1. *Cynopterus* bat cradling a partly consumed *Terminalia catappa* fruit

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Fig. 2. *Terminalia catappa* seeds (upper group) and *Syzygium grande* seeds (lower group).

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**Remarks:** The bat is identified as a *Cynopterus* fruit bat based on (i) a short, stout muzzle, (ii) brown fur with orange-brown collar, (iii) pale wing bones and (iv) pale edge to ears (Francis, 2008). It is not generally possible to identify *Cynopterus* bats to species level based on photographs alone, due to their similarity in external appearance, however *Cynopterus brachyotis* is recognised as the most adaptable of the genus to highly altered habitats in Peninsular Malaysia, including suburban settings with gardens and roadside trees.

The seeds of *Terminalia catappa* are identified here based on their size (these examples are up to 6 cm long and 3 cm wide), flattened oblong shape and coarse, fibrous rind; the seeds of *Syzygium grande* are identified here based on their size (these examples are up to 2.5 cm in diameter), spherical shape, and thin seed coat (Tee & Wee, 2001). Both trees occur in coastal habitats such as back mangrove, and sandy and rocky coasts, however in many parts of Peninsular Malaysia (and Singapore) and other territories of Southeast Asia, they are also planted in parks, gardens and along roadsides. In Singapore, *Cynopterus brachyotis* is documented as feeding on fruits of these two trees: feeding roosts are usually located within 100 metres of the fruiting tree (Phua & Corlett, 1989).

#### References:

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- Tee, S. P. & Wee, M. L. (2001). *Trees of Our Garden City: A Guide to the Common Trees of Singapore*. National Parks Board, Singapore. 202 pp. .