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FISH ASSEMBLAGES IN NANGA MERIT AREA, KAPIT, SARAWAK

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to provide baseline data of freshwater fish in Nanga Merit area. Fish samplings were carried out in nine selected stations along Sungai Rajang, Sungai Merit and their tributaries using cast net and gill net with stretch mesh size of 1.5 cm. A total of 106 individuals were caught during the six days sampling period (17-23 June 2009), comprises 15 species belonging to 11 genera and five families. Family Cyprinidae dominated the freshwater fish in this area and among the most common fish species found were *Rasbora argyrotaemia*, *Cyclocheilichthys heteronema* and *Barbodes collingwoodi*. Low number of individuals was obtained during this study, probably due to the effects of poisoning (commercial pesticides and tuba fishing) and the low water level in the rivers as samplings were carried out during dry season.

Keywords: Freshwater fish, Cyprinidae, Sarawak, poison

INTRODUCTION

Freshwater fish is one of the main sources of protein for Malaysians, especially for those living in the rural and inland areas. Sarawak possesses many river systems which support a large fish fauna. Studies on diversity, ecology and distribution of freshwater fish had been carried out and documented by Bali *et al.* (2010); Khairul Adha *et al.* (2009); Jefferine *et al.* (2009); Sipin (2004); Atack (2006) and Nyanti *et al.* (1995, 1999). Although many surveys related to freshwater fish had been carried out in Sarawak, none of these was carried out in Nanga Merit area. More studies are required to provide baseline data in terms of diversity, distribution and abundance of freshwater fish.



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