

Food and Feeding Habits of *Helostoma temmincki* (Family: Anabantidae) in a Freshwater Swamp in the Western Province of Sri Lanka

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The kissing gouramy, *Helostoma temmincki* Cuvier & Valenciennes which was introduced to Sri Lanka in 1951 from Thailand as a food fish, has established self-propagating populations in isolated freshwater habitats in Sri Lanka. Food and feeding habits of *H. temmincki* caught from Iriyawetiya swamp in the Gampaha District (6°59' N; 79°55'E) were investigated in the present study.

In the stomach contents of *H. temmincki*, 14 genera of diatoms, 7 genera of desmids, 5 genera of green algae, 3 genera of blue green algae, unidentified plant particles and detritus were present. Diatoms and desmids were the two major components of stomach contents. In large specimens, plant particles were also an important food item. A negative curvilinear relationship exists between body length and gastrosomatic index which perhaps indicates that the feeding efficiency of small fish is greater than that of large fish at a particular time. There was considerable dietary overlap between small and large specimens of *H. temmincki* (Schoener's overlap index = 0.608). This analysis was carried out using specimens of various sizes collected at the same time. As such these results perhaps suggest that large individuals may not have fed when smaller individuals were feeding.

Keywords: Food and feeding, Dietary overlap, Anabantidae, Introduced species, Wetlands