THREATENED FISHES OF THE WORLD: *Anabas testudineus* (Bloch, 1792)  
(Perciformes: Anabantidae)

Md. Yeamin Hossain¹*, Md. Alomgir Hossen¹, Md. Nasir Uddin Pramanik¹, Zoarder Faruque Ahmed², Khairun Yahya³, Md. Mosaddeqr Rahman⁴, Jun Ohtomi⁴

¹Department of Fisheries, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi 6205, Bangladesh  
²Department of Fisheries Management, Faculty of Fisheries, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh 2202, Bangladesh  
³School of Biological Sciences & Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang 11800, Malaysia  
⁴Faculty of Fisheries, Kagoshima University, Shimoarata 4-50-20, Kagoshima 890-0056, Japan

*Corresponding Author, E-mail: yeamin.fish@ru.ac.bd*

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**ABSTRACT**

Climbing perch *Anabas testudineus* is commercially important fish in Asian countries, mostly in Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Also, it is used as valuable food fish in different countries of the world. Nevertheless, its natural populations are seriously declining due to heavy harvest, habitat destruction and other ecological changes to its habitat. This paper recommends actions for the conservation of the long-lasting isolated populations of *A. testudineus* in Asian countries.

**How to Cite**


**COMMON NAME**

*A. testudineus* (Fig. 1) is commonly known as Koi in Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2012), Trey kranh in Comobdia (Davidson, 1975), Kabai, Kawayan in India (Daniels, 2002), Climbing perch in Sri Lanka, Pla mor in Thailand (Froese and Pauly, 2014) and Climbing perch in USA (Robins et al., 1991).

**CONSERVATION STATUS**

Vulnerable in lower Brahmaputra basin of Assam (CAMP, 1998) and in Western Ghats, India (Shaji and Easa, 1998); threatened in Indian waters (Dehodrai et al., 1992); declared endangered by NBFG, ICAR, India in 1998 (Bhattacharyya

*Fig 1. Anabas testudineus*. Photo was taken by the author (Md. Yeamin Hossain) of a specimen from the Ganges River (known as Padma in Bangladesh) on 3 February 2015.
and Homechaudhuri, 2009); and data deficient (IUCN, 2014).

**IMPORTANCE**

This fish is an important food fish and has a high market value. In addition, this species is considered as a valuable item of diet for sick and convalescents (Saha et al., 2009). Climbing perch is rich in iron and copper which is essential for haemoglobin synthesis (Sarma et al., 2010) and also contains an easily digestible poly-unsaturated fats and essential amino acids (Kohinoor et al., 1991). It provides 19.50% of protein and 2.27% of lipid (Ahmed et al., 2012). This is a very hardy fish and plays a significant role in fisheries and aquaculture practices (Froese and Pauly, 2014).

**IDENTIFICATION**

Body is laterally compressed. Mouth is anterior and lower jaw slightly longer. Body color is dark to pale greenish. Pectoral and caudal fins are rounded. Dorsal, pelvic and anal fin rays are modified to spine. Scales are ctenoid, lateral line interrupted (Telwar and Jhingran, 1991; Yadav, 1997). Fin formula: D. XVII-XVIII/8-9; P.: 15-17; P.: 1/5; A. X-XI/ 9-10 (Rahman, 2005) and D. 27 (XVI-XVII/10-11); P.: 15-16 (3-4/12); P.: 6 (1/5); A. 20 (IX-X/10-11); C. 18-20 (2-4/16-18) (Hossain, M. Y., Unpublished data).

**DISTRIBUTION**

The species is widely distributed in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam (Telwar and Jhingran, 1991; Froese and Pauly, 2014).

**ABUNDANCE**

Formerly *A. testudineus* was abundant in rivers, streams, marshes, ponds, lakes, canals and estuaries (Telwar and Jhingran, 1991; Menon, 1999). However, natural populations of *A. testudineus* are seriously declining in their natural habitat (Khatune-Jannat et al., 2012; Rahman et al., 2012).

**HABITAT AND ECOLOGY**

Mainly inhabits fresh- and brackish-water including rivers, streams, swamps, ponds, lakes, canals, ditches, floodplains, *haora*, *boors* and estuaries (Telwar and Jhingran, 1991; Riede, 2004). It mostly feeds on diatoms, green algae, blue green algae, cladocerans (Nargis and Hossain, 1987), shrimps, prawns, debris, insects (Froese and Pauly, 2014).

**REPRODUCTION**

Spawning season varies from April to July (Rahman, 2005). Size at first sexual maturity is 12.25±1.20 cm in total length (40.20±5.32 g in body weight) for female *A. testudineus* (Patowary and Dutta, 2012). 688-624 (Ramaseshiaiah, 1985) and 3841-42564 (Chanchal et al., 1979).

**THREATS**

Indiscriminate harvesting of fry and fingerlings, habitat modification, reduced water flow, growing human interventions on wetlands are the main threats to this species (Hossain and Ohtomi, 2008; Rahman et al., 2012; Kalita and Deka, 2013; Hossain et al., 2009a; 2015a).

**CONSERVATION ACTION**

Numerous studies on morphology, length-weight relationships, ecology, threats, aquaculture practice have been conducted (Herre, 1924; Satrawaha and Plasamorn, 2009; Khatune-Jannat et al., 2012; Rahman et al., 2012).

**CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to know the condition of the wild stocks, population surveys are urgently needed (Hossain, 2014; Hossen et al., 2015a). Suitable sanctuaries should be established in selected areas of rivers, streams, canals and reservoirs (Hossain et al., 2009b; 2015b; Hossain and Alam, 2015). Fishing in spawning season (April to July) should be closed (Hossain et al., 2015c; d). Reckless fishing and use of illegal fishing gears must be banned (Hossain et al., 2012). Further studies on reproductive biology, life-history traits, providing sound ecology and restoration are highly recommended to provide sustainable conservation of *A. testudineus* in their habitat.

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**Sažetak**

**UGROŽENE VRSTE RIBA U SVIJETU: Anabas testudineus** (Bloch, 1792) (Perciformes: Anabantidae)

izlova, uništavanja staništa i drugih ekoloških promjena. U članku se preporučuju akcije za očuvanje dugotrajnih izoliranih populacija A. testudineus u azijskim zemljama.

**Ključne riječi:** Anabas testudineus, grgeč penjač, osjetljiva vrsta, ugrožena vrsta, Azija

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