

Variable reed snake swallows earthworm

Subjects: Variable reed snake, *Calamaria lumbricoidea* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae).
Earthworm, *Pheretima darnleiensis* (Annelida: Oligochaeta: Megascolecidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor (snake) & Darren C. J. Yeo (earthworm).

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, Upper Seletar Reservoir Park;
4 January 2014; 1646 hrs.

Habitat: On road fringed on both sides by mature secondary forest.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: A variable reed snake of about 25 cm total length was observed in the act of swallowing an earthworm of similar length. When first seen, about a third of the worm had already been swallowed (Fig. 1). The prey was completely swallowed in the next 5 minutes (Fig. 2 & 3). The snake was gently moved to the forest at the side of the road where it quickly disappeared into the leaf litter (Fig. 4).

Remarks: The present observation shows that the variable reed snake is fully capable of swallowing an earthworm of similar size. This is in contrast to a previous encounter in September 2013 where a smaller (15 cm) example was unsuccessful in doing the same (Tan & Yeo, 2013).

Reference: Tan H. H. & D. C. J. Yeo, 2013. Variable reed snake attempting to swallow earthworm. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2013: 10.



Fig. 1

Photograph by Nick Baker

Contributor: Nick **Baker**

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Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4. A view of the underside of the snake as it disappears into the leaf litter.

Photographs by Nick Baker