

Blue Malayan coral snake biting orange-bellied ringneck

Subjects: Blue Malayan coral snake, *Calliophis bivirgatus* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Elapidae).
Orange-bellied ringneck, *Gongylosoma baliodeirum* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor & Mary-Ruth Low.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, forest along the north shore of MacRitchie Reservoir; 13 August 2013; 1521 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest.

Observers: Contributor & Anuj Jain.

Observation: A blue Malayan coral snake of about 75 cm total length was seen with its jaws latched onto the base of the tail of an orange-bellied ringneck of about 30 cm total length. The coral snake was straining to pull the ringneck away, but the latter snake had its mid-section looped over a twig and could not be dislodged. The ringneck did not struggle or bite back, probably weakened by the coral snake's venom. It is assumed that the coral snake had subsequently swallowed the ringneck, but the observers left the scene after taking the photograph shown here.

Remarks: The blue Malayan coral snake feeds on other snakes which it subdues with its potent venom. The present observation and a previous encounter by Xu & Teo (2013) appear to suggest that the predator does not let go of its victim once it has bitten. It probably waits for the prey to die before commencing to swallow it.

Reference: Xu W. & Y. T. Teo, 2013. Blue Malayan coral snake biting barred kukri snake. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2013: 82-83.



Photograph by Manuel Mejia

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