

A juvenile sunbeam snake

Subject: Sunbeam snake, *Xenopeltis unicolor* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Xenopeltidae).

Subject identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, Nee Soon swamp-forest; 2 April 2014; around 2100 hrs.

Habitat: Lowland freshwater swamp-forest and old secondary forest.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: A juvenile example of around 25 cm snout-vent length was observed among leaf litter along the edge of a forest stream. The rear part of its head was pinkish white (see attached image).

Remarks: The juvenile *Xenopeltis unicolor* wears a characteristic pale cream or white collar which disappears as the snake grows. Adult sunbeam snakes can attain a total length of up to 114 cm. The species is known to be nocturnally active and seems to be semi-fossorial in habit. Its diet consists of rats, birds, lizards, frogs and other snakes (Baker & Lim, 2008: 92; Das, 2010: 353).

References:

Baker, N. & K. K. P. Lim, 2012. *Wild Animals of Singapore. A Photographic Guide to Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fishes*. Updated edition. Draco Publishing and Distribution Pte. Ltd. and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.

Das, I., 2010. *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-east Asia*. New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd, 376 pp.



Photograph by Tan Heok Hui

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