

Malayan water monitor walking with raised tail

Subject: Malayan water monitor, *Varanus salvator* (Reptilia: Sauria: Varanidae).

Subject identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Pulau Tekong, at north-eastern end; 2 August 2012; 1145 hrs.

Habitat: Exposed dirt track through *Elaeis guineensis* monoculture.

Observer: Contributor, by camera trap.

Observation: An individual of about 1.6 m total length was photographed walking with its tail raised at an angle of about 50 degrees off the ground. See pictures attached.

Remarks: The purpose of the lizard adopting this unusual posture as it was walking away from the camera is not known. The tail may be raised to land a sideways whip to a perceived threat, since the appendage has an important use as a weapon of defence (Bennett, 1998: 33). However, there are no subsequent photographs to support this suggestion.

Reference: Bennett, D., 1998. *Monitor Lizards. Natural History, Biology and Husbandry*. Edition Chimaira, Frankfurt am Main. 352 pp.



Camera trap photographs by Marcus A. H. Chua

Note: This observation was made during a study of the ecology of leopard cats in Singapore funded by the Wildlife Reserve Singapore Conservation Grant. The contributor would like to acknowledge the Ministry of Defence and the National Parks Board (permit no. NP/RP10-086) for permission to conduct field surveys on Pulau Tekong.

Contributor: Marcus A. H. Chua

Contact address: marcuschua@nus.edu.sg