

Second recent record of a white-spotted cat snake in Singapore

Subject: White-spotted cat snake, *Boiga drapiezii* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae).

Subject identified by: Contributors.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, Upper Seletar; 17 July 2015; 1935 hrs.

Habitat: Freshwater swamp forest, in water-logged area.

Observers: Contributors.

Observation: An example was found slowly ascending a palm frond at about 3 m above the forest floor along the banks of a forest stream. It was temporarily relocated for photographic documentation and measurements (Fig. 1). The snake has a broad head and very large eyes (Fig 2). Its slender and laterally compressed body is marked with dark red and brown patterns and small white spots (Fig 3). It measured 90.7 cm in snout-vent length and 119 cm in total length, weighed 29 g, and was determined to be a male.

When returned to the spot where it was found, the snake exhibited strong muscle control among the foliage, extending about half its body length vertically to grasp onto a higher branch, and then made its way along it.

Remarks: This is the second record of *Boiga drapiezii* in Singapore in over a hundred years. The species was rediscovered in Singapore in 2009 by Leong et al. (2009) in the Nee Soon swamp forest, the same general forest stream system where the present example was found.

In Singapore, the white spotted cat snake appears to be restricted to swamp forest. It is largely arboreal and nocturnal in habits, much like its relative, the Jasper cat snake (*Boiga jaspidea*). A roadkill of the locally rare latter species was found nearby in March 2014. (Thomas, 2014).

Owing to its apparent rarity and highly restricted range in Singapore, we would like to recommend that *Boiga drapiezii* be included in the next edition of The Singapore Red Data Book (Davison et al., 2008), and be placed in the 'critically endangered' category.

References:

- Davison, G. W. H., P. K. L. Ng & H. C. Ho (eds.), 2008. *The Singapore Red Data Book. Threatened Plants & Animals of Singapore*. Second Edition. Nature Society (Singapore). viii + 285 pp.
- Leong T. M, K. K. P. Lim & N. Baker, 2009. Rediscovery of the white-spotted cat snake, *Boiga drapiezii* in Singapore (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae). *Nature in Singapore*. 2: 487–493.
- Thomas, N., 2014. Jasper cat snake roadkill at Upper Seletar. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2014: 68-69.

Contributors: Noel **Thomas**, **Serin** Subaraj & **Law** Ing Sind

Contact address: noelthomas82@gmail.com (Thomas)



Fig. 1. Lateral view of the white spotted cat snake from Upper Seletar. Photograph by Serin Subaraj



Fig. 2. Fronto-lateral view of the head.



Fig. 3. Lateral view of the mid-section of the body.

Photographs by Noel Thomas