

Mangrove pit-vipers at Pasir Ris and Sungei Buloh

Subjects: Mangrove pit-viper, *Cryptelytrops purpureomaculatus* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Viperidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributors.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island -

1) Pasir Ris Park mangrove; 31 December 2015; 2145 hrs (Fig. 1).

2a) Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, northern part of Migratory Bird Trail; 31 December 2015; 1000 hrs (Fig. 2).

2b) Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, northern part of Migratory Bird Trail; 26 January 2016; 1112 - 1201 hrs (Figs. 3-5).

Habitat: Mangrove vegetation.

Observers: Contributors and others. 1) Jeremy W. L. Yeo with Kelvin K. P. Lim, Toh Chay Hoon, Heng Pei Yan, Foo Maosheng, Lim Jiayi, Sofina Ng, Tammy Lim & Marina Chaw. 2a) Tan Heok Hui. 2b) Jeremy W. L. Yeo & Loy Xingwen.

Observations:

1) One brownish individual of about 90 cm total length was observed on the ground, crawling over a mud-lobster mound, at the back mangrove (Fig. 1). It was apparently hunting. At one point, it sensed a crab of the genus *Episesarma* in front of it, but the snake did not strike at the crustacean.

2a) A blackish young example of about 25 cm total length was observed motionless and suspended on a tree branch (Fig. 2).

2b) Three examples were observed in trees along a walking trail. The largest, of about 80 cm total length, was encountered at 1112 hrs (Fig. 3). The other two, both around 60 cm total length, were seen at 1150 hrs (Fig. 4) and 1201 hrs (Fig. 5).



Fig. 1. Head and fore part of body of the mangrove pit-viper at Pasir Ris. Photograph by Jeremy W. L. Yeo



Fig. 2. Photograph by Tan Heok Hui



Fig. 3. Photograph by Jeremy W. L. Yeo



Fig. 4. Photograph by Jeremy W. L. Yeo



Fig. 5. Photograph by Jeremy W. L. Yeo

Remarks: The mangrove pit-viper has been recorded from both Sungei Buloh and Pasir Ris (Baker & Lim, 2012: 119). The records here confirm their continued presence at these two sites. Although largely arboreal, the record from Pasir Ris (Fig. 1) shows that it can be active on the ground. This snake inhabits mangrove and coastal forests, and is regarded as an ‘endangered’ species in Singapore (Lim, 2008: 265).

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 & Distribution Pte. Ltd. and Nature Society (Singapore).
- Lim, K. K. P., 2008. Checklists of threatened species. Fishes, amphibians and reptiles. In: Davison, G. W. H., P. K. L. Ng & H. C. Ho (eds.). *The Singapore Red Data Book. Threatened Plants & Animals of Singapore*. Second edition. pp. 263-266.

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