

Blue-necked keelback at Upper Seletar

Subject: Blue-necked keelback, *Macropisthodon rhodomelas* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Natricidae).

Subject identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, Upper Seletar Reservoir Park; 15 June 2008; around 0010 hrs.

Habitat: Edge of secondary forest.

Observers: Contributor, with Lee King Li and others.

Observation: About 40 cm total length. At edge of the forest. On a leaf of a shrub about 60 cm off the ground. Coiled motionless on the surface of a broad leaf, apparently sleeping (see accompanying picture).

Remarks: In Singapore, this snake appears to inhabit forest, and recorded mainly from the Bukit Timah and Central Catchment Nature Reserves (Baker & Lim, 2012: 113). Although known to be terrestrial and semi-aquatic (see e.g. David & Vogel, 1996: 124), the featured sighting shows that it can be partially arboreal. This species is now known to be venomous. Subaraj (2008) gives an account of the effects suffered from its bite.

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.
- David, P. & G. Vogel, 1996. *The Snakes of Sumatra. An annotated checklist and key with natural history notes*. Edition Chimaira, Frankfurt am Main. 260 pp.
- Subaraj, R., 2008. A personal account of envenomation by a blue-necked keelback, *Macropisthodon rhodomelas* (Boie) (Reptilia: Squamata: Natricidae). *Nature in Singapore*. 1: 109-111.



Photograph by Kelvin K. P. Lim

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