

Rainbow water snake in saltwater at Sungei Buloh

Serin Subaraj & Subaraj Rajathurai

serinsubaraj@yahoo.com (Serin)

Subject: Rainbow water snake, *Enhydris enhydris* (Reptilia: Squamata: Homalopsidae).

Subject identified by: Serin Subaraj & Subaraj Rajathurai.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve; 3 January 2018; 0930 hrs.

Habitat: Estuarine. Stream under boardwalk in mangrove forest.

Observers: Serin Subaraj & Subaraj Rajathurai.

Observation: An adult individual of about 60 cm total length was observed among the roots of a large *Rhizophora* to which it was clinging (Fig. 1), apparently to prevent itself from being swept away by the rising tide. The snake was also seen in body contact with a half-submerged sesarmine crab (Fig. 2). During the encounter, the crab remained in its position, and the snake did not show any interest in attacking the crab.

Remarks: *Enhydris enhydris* largely inhabits freshwater such as rice paddy, canals and ditches, to lakes and rivers (Murphy, 2007: 118), but has sometimes been found in brackish water habitats (Das, 2010: 326). The tide on the day of the observation was 3.2 m, so it is possible that the snake was flushed out of an adjacent freshwater pond. The authors have observed this species on more than one occasion at Pulau Tioman, Malaysia, in a mangrove waterway below a freshwater stream. Although the rainbow water snake is tolerant of saltwater, it is not known if it is able to thrive in this medium.

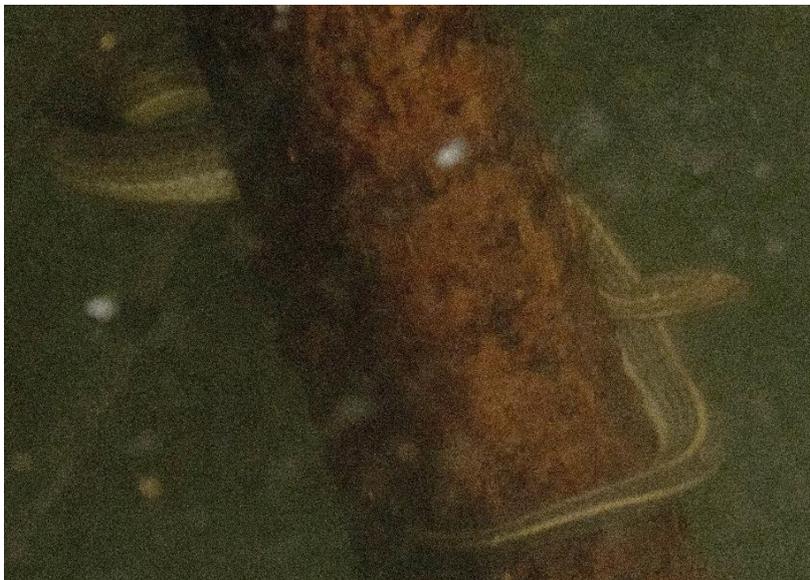


Fig. 1.

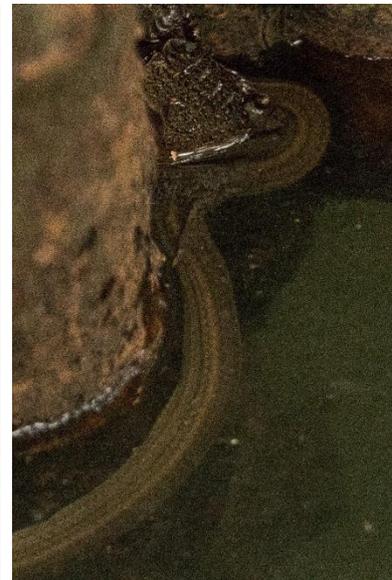


Fig. 2.

Photographs by Serin Subaraj

References:

- Das, I., 2010. *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-east Asia*. New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd. 376 pp.
Murphy, J. C., 2007. *Homalopsid Snakes. Evolution in the Mud*. Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar, Florida, USA. viii + 249.