

## Melanistic dog-toothed cat snake at Mandai

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**Subject(s):** Dog-toothed cat snake, *Boiga cynodon* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae).

**Subject(s) identified by:** James Chua & Mary-Ruth Low.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Mandai Lake Road, compound of Singapore Zoo; 7 and 10 February 2017; 2200 and 2345 hrs respectively.

**Habitat:** Suburban parkland and secondary forest.

**Observers:** James Chua, Lim Meng Hwee, Vera Yang and Constance Lee.

### Observations:

1) A melanistic individual of approximately 2 m total length was seen climbing up a *Khaya* tree on 7 February 2017 at 2200 hrs near the Primate Kingdom (Fig. 1).

2) Another (or perhaps the same?) individual, approximately 2 m in total length, and also melanistic, was seen draped atop curtain blinds on 10 February 2017 at 2345 hrs at the Pavilion by the Lake (Fig. 2).

**Remarks:** The dog-toothed cat snake inhabits the Central Catchment Nature Reserve, and was previously recorded in the grounds of the Singapore Zoo (Teo & Rajathurai, 1997: 377, 379). This is the first recent record by biodiversity surveys conducted bi-annually at the grounds of the Singapore Zoo since 2014.

It is possible that the two featured sightings are of the same individual due to their similar size as well as their melanistic colouration. The two locations were also in close proximity, about 200 m apart. The sightings were three days apart, both instances after heavy rain.

This arboreal and largely nocturnal species is considered to rare and restricted to mature forests on Singapore Island (Baker and Lim, 2012: 94, 160). However, an adult individual was recently recorded outside the nature reserves in an urban environment at Pasir Ris (Loh, 2017: 130).

### 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.
- Loh, C., 2017. Dog-toothed cat snake at Pasir Ris. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2017: 130.
- Teo, R. C. H. & S. Rajathurai, 1997. Mammals, reptiles and amphibians in the Nature Reserves of Singapore - diversity, abundance and distribution. *The Gardens' Bulletin, Singapore*. 49: 353-425.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

Photographs by James Chua