

Banded krait entering mud lobster mound at Chek Jawa

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Subject: Banded Krait, *Bungarus fasciatus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Elapidae).

Subject identified by: Lim Hong Yao.

Location, date and time: Pulau Ubin, Chek Jawa Wetlands; 4 August 2019, 0847 hrs.

Habitat: Mangrove.

Observers: Lim Hong Yao & Liu Xinlu.

Observation: One individual of about 1.7 m total length was observed in the mangroves, swimming between the pencil roots of mangrove trees. It subsequently slithered in an unhurried manner into one of the holes at the base of a mud lobster mound (Fig. 1). After about a minute, when only half the snake was inside the burrow, the observers left the scene. Close-up views of the snake's head and anterior body are shown in Fig. 2 & 3.

Remarks: In Singapore, the banded krait seems to inhabit mangrove and other seashore habitats, and it has been encountered at Pulau Ubin (Chua, 2000: 118; Tan, 2013: 2), Pulau Tekong, Lim Chu Kang, Sungei Buloh and Khatib Bongsu (Baker & Lim, 2012: 115).

The banded krait eats other snakes (Das, 2010: 313), and mudlobster mounds are good places to hunt for aquatic snakes that inhabit mangroves. These include the dog-faced water snake, *Cerberus schneiderii* (formerly as *Cerberus rynchops*); the crab-eating water snake, *Fordonia leucobalia*; and the yellow-lipped water snake, *Gerarda prevostiana* (see Karns et al., 2002: 496; Baker & Lim, 2012: 109-110).

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. & Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.
- Chua E. K., 2000. *Pulau Ubin. Ours to Treasure*. Simply Green, Singapore. 139 pp.
- Das, I., 2010. *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-east Asia*. New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd. 376 pp.
- Karns, D. R., H. K. Voris & T. G. Goodwin, 2002. Ecology of Oriental-Australian rear-fanged water snakes (Colubridae: Homalopsinae) in the Pasir Ris Park mangrove forest, Singapore. *The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*. 50 (2): 487-498.
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Fig. 1. Dorsal view of the banded krait entering a hole on the mudlobster mound. Photograph by Lim Hong Yao



Fig. 2. Dorso-lateral view of the head and anterior body of the banded krait as it swam among the pencil roots of mangrove trees. Note the flickering tongue.

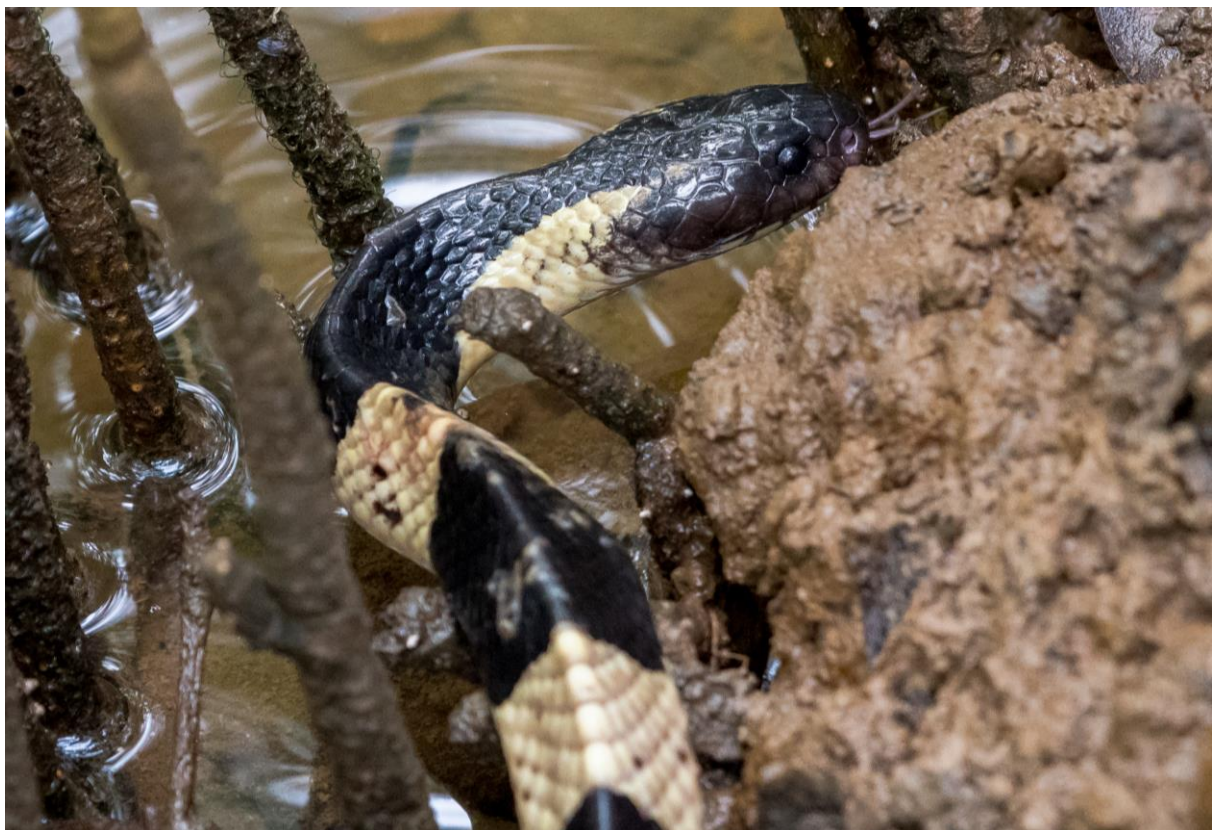


Fig. 3. Dorso-lateral view of the head of the banded krait as it slithered out of the water.

Photographs by Lim Hong Yao