

Sighting of a blue forest lizard, *Calotes mystaceus*, in Singapore

Law Ingg Thong

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Subject: Blue forest lizard, *Calotes mystaceus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Agamidae).

Subject identified by: Law Ingg Thong, Law Ing Sind and Emelia Low Yan Xuan.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Sungei Tengah, compound of Qian Hu Fish Farm; 28 September 2020, 1430 hrs.

Habitat: Parkland adjacent to farmland and scrub vegetation.

Observer: Emelia Low Yan Xuan.

Observation: A male example of about 25 cm total length was observed clinging to the trunk of a sea almond (*Ternanalia catapaa*) tree, about 3 m off the ground (see accompanying picture). The base of its tail appears to be kinked, which suggests that this individual is deformed.

Remarks: This is the first record of *Calotes mystaceus* in Singapore (see Baker & Lim, 2012). Although morphologically similar to the changeable lizard (*Calotes versicolor*), this species differs in having a distinct white stripe on the upper lip that extends to the neck, and breeding males having a bright blue head. The species is native to north-eastern India and southern China, through Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, down to Peninsular Malaysia (Das, 2015) where it seems restricted to the northern states. The featured example is likely to be an abandoned or escaped pet that was illegally imported, or probably a stowaway that arrived accidentally with horticultural imports.

References:

Baker N & Lim KKP (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.

Das I (2010) A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-east Asia. New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd, London. 376 pp.



Calotes mystaceus with head pointing upwards and clinging to the trunk of a sea almond tree. Note the blue colour on the head and the distinct white lip. Photograph by Emelia Low Yan Xuan