

## Biodiversity Record: Striped kukri snake diving into water from a palm frond

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**Subject:** Striped kukri snake, *Oligodon octolineatus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae).

**Subject identified by:** Emmanuel Goh.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Upper Seletar Reservoir Park; 27 September 2021; around 2300 hrs.

**Habitat:** Edge of freshwater swamp forest, by a stream along a road.

**Observers:** Emmanuel Goh and Law Ingg Thong.

**Observation:** An example of about 30 cm was spotted coiled on a frond of a fan palm, about 1.5 m above a stream (Fig. 1). As the observers were photographing the snake, it suddenly uncoiled and dove directly into the water below. The snake could not be located in the stream thereafter.



Fig. 1. Striped kukri snake coiled on a palm frond, just before it dove about 1.5 m into the stream below. (Photograph by: Emmanuel Goh).

**Remarks:** Striped kukri snakes are generally associated with terrestrial and semi-fossorial habits (Das, 2010: 219; Baker & Lim, 2012: 106). Although arboreal behaviour in this species has been recorded in Singapore (e.g., Will, 2018), the featured encounter is interesting not because kukri snakes are rarely observed on vegetation, but due to the subject's unexpected and efficient escape into the water. Such behaviour, often observed in some lizards, is apparently not known among kukri snakes. A Singapore bent-toed gecko (*Cyrtodactylus majulah*) was recorded in the same general area, fully submerged in a shallow stream for at least two minutes, probably to escape predation (Groenewoud, 2015).

### Literature cited:

- 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., Singapore, 180 pp.
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