

Biodiversity Record: Puff-faced water snake at Lower Seletar

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Subject: Puff-faced water snake, *Homalopsis buccata* (Reptilia: Squamata: Homalopsidae).

Subject identified by: Marcus F. C. Ng.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Lower Seletar Reservoir Park; 24 June 2023; 1733 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland.

Observer: Marcus F.C. Ng.

Observation: A small example of around 30 to 40 cm total length, with juvenile markings, was encountered on the ground, on disturbed earth at the edge of a lawn, next to a pavement (Fig. 1). The nearest water body (Lower Seletar Reservoir) was about 30 m away, with a 3 m wide path and a substantial stretch of low grass in between.



Fig. 1. In-situ dorso-frontal view of puff-faced water snake. (Photograph by: Marcus F. C. Ng).

Remarks: The puff-faced water snake occurs in freshwater and in Singapore, is apparently common in inland water bodies in rural areas and forest (Baker & Lim, 2012). This may be the first record of the species from Lower Seletar Reservoir, although it has been reported upstream at Upper Seletar Reservoir and the Nee Soon Swamp Forest (Figueroa et al., 2023). It seems unusual for this largely aquatic species to be found some distance away from water.

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. And Nature Society (Singapore), 180 pp.

Figueroa A, Low MEY & Lim KKP (2023) Singapore's herpetofauna: updated and annotated checklist, history, conservation, and distribution. Zootaxa, 5287: 1–378.