

Blue Malayan coral snake biting barred kukri snake

Subjects: Blue Malayan coral snake, *Calliophis bivirgatus* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Elapidae).
Barred kukri snake, *Oligodon signatus* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae).

Subjects identified by: David Bickford.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, ChestnutTrackt west of Upper Peirce Reservoir; 22 September 2009; 1604 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest.

Observers: Contributors & Alex Yee.

Observation: A blue Malayan coral snake of about 1 m total length was found in the middle of a forest trail with its jaws clamped onto the neck of a barred kukri snake of around 60 cm in total length (Fig. 1). The observers do not recall having seen any struggling between the snakes, which were apparently quite motionless (Fig. 2). The observers left the scene after a few minutes.

Remarks: The blue Malayan coral snake is known to be ophiophagus (snake-eating) (Baker & Lim, 2012: 115) and the present observation seems to emphasize the fact, although we do not know if the victim was eventually eaten. It was likely that the coral snake was waiting for its venom to at least incapacitate the kukri snake before commencing to swallow it. It was also possible that the coral snake was disturbed by the observers and thus did not proceed to swallow its prey. The barred kukri snake is not known to be venomous. There were so few local records of this species that it is regarded as 'critically endangered' in Singapore (Lim et al., 2008: 164).

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.

Lim, K. K. P., N. Baker, R. Teo & T. M. Leong. Reptiles. In: Davison, G. W. H., Ng, P. K. L. & H. C. Ho (Eds.). *The Singapore Red Data Book. Threatened Plants & Animals of Singapore*. Second Edition. The Nature Society (Singapore). pp. 160-176.



Fig. 1

Photograph by Xu Weiting



Fig. 2

Photograph by Teo Yea Tian

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