

Dog-faced water snake attacking pufferfish

Subjects: Dog-faced water snake, *Cerberus schneiderii* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Homalopsidae).
Green spotted pufferfish, *Dichotomyctere nigroviridis* (Teleostei: Tetraodontidae).

Subjects identified by: Andrew Tay & Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Pasir Ris Park, mangrove along Sungei Tampines; 26 November 2013; 1956 hrs.

Habitat: Mangrove swamp, on wet muddy substrate at low tide.

Observers: Contributors and others.

Observation: A dog-faced water snake of about 60 cm total length was found on the wet mud with its jaws clamped on the head of a pufferfish (about 5 cm total length) which appeared to be inflated in defence. It is not known if the snake had eventually managed to swallow the entire fish.

Remarks: The dog-faced water snake is common in mangroves and mudflats. It has largely aquatic habits and usually inhabits saltwater. Fishes form the main part of its diet, and these are caught by mouth and subdued with venom which is considered mild to humans (Ng et al., 2008: 164; Baker & Lim, 2012: 109; as *Cerberus rynchops*). The present observation is interesting because the green spotted pufferfish is poisonous (Ng et al., 2008: 139 as *Tetraodon nigroviridis*). If the snake manages to swallow its prey, it is not known if the tetratoxin in the pufferfish will have any adverse effect on the predator.

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). 82 pp.

Ng, P. K. L., L. K. Wang & K. K. P. Lim (eds.), 2008. *Private Lives. An Exposé of Singapore's Mangroves*. Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore. 249 pp.



Photograph by Caitlin Wind

Contributors: Andrew **Tay** & Caitlin **Wind**

Contact address: andrewtay.sg@gmail.com (Tay)