

Keel-bellied whip snake attacking flying dragon

Subjects: Keel-bellied whip snake, *Dryophiops rubescens* (Reptilia: Squamata: Serpentes: Colubridae);
Sumatran flying dragon, *Draco sumatranus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Sauria: Agamidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Pulau Ubin, along road from Ubin town to Chek Jawa; 4 June 2017; around 1000 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest.

Observers: Contributor, with Yong Yik Shih & Anandaraman Sivakumar.

Observation: A keel-bellied whip snake of about 90 cm total length was encountered with an apparently young flying dragon (about 10 cm total length) in its mouth (see accompanying picture). With only its front limbs held within the snake's jaws, the flying dragon was very much alive and struggling. Perhaps frightened by the observers, the snake dropped the lizard which then crept into leaf litter at the side of the road. To prevent the snake from being run over by cyclists, the observers moved the snake away from the road. It then slithered up a tree.

Remarks: *Dryophiops rubescens* is diurnally active and in Singapore, inhabits forests in the Bukit Timah and Central Catchment Nature Reserves, as well as on Pulau Ubin and Pulau Tekong (Baker & Lim, 2012: 102). In 2013, an example of this snake was recorded from the edge of the Western Catchment Area (Chua, 2014). *Dryophiops rubescens* is known to feed on lizards (Baker & Lim, 2012: 102), and this observation shows that *Draco sumatranus* is included in its diet.

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.
- Chua W. M., 2014. Keel-bellied whip snake at NTU Jurong Campus. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2014: 60.



Dryophiops rubescens (lateral view) biting the forelimbs of the *Draco* (dorsal view). Note that the *Draco* is clutching the snake's neck with its hindlimbs. Photograph by Yong Ding Li

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