

Biodiversity Record: Diurnal encounter with a Gerard's water snake

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Subject: Gerard's water snake or yellow-lipped water snake, *Gerarda prevostiana* (Reptilia: Squamata: Homalopsidae).

Subject identified by: Ong JunXiang Lumin.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve; 25 February 2024; around 1418 hrs.

Habitat: Mangrove forest, during receding tide.

Observer: Ong JunXiang Lumin.

Observation: An example, not more than 40 cm long, was observed resting in several centimetres of water with the top of its head exposed to the air (Figs. 1 & 2). It appeared to show interest in the gobies (such as *Hemigobius hoevenii* and *Brachygobius kabiliensis*) that swam close to its head. The snake soon left the water and slithered into a hole on a slope.



Fig. 1. Dorsal view of the head and anterior body of the subject. Fig. 2. The snake approaching the water's edge and about to crawl onto land (Photographs by: Ong JunXiang Lumin).

Remarks: In Singapore, the mangrove dwelling *Gerarda prevostiana* is rarely seen and regarded as a locally endangered species (Figuroa et al., 2023). It apparently specializes in feeding on newly-moulted soft-shelled crabs, and is believed to be nocturnal (Baker & Lim, 2012). However, one was observed preying on a sesarmid crab in the morning (Chen, 2010), and another was recorded in the afternoon being attacked and preyed on by a water monitor (Koh, 2023). The latter could have been extracted from its daytime refuge and may not have been active in the open. Regardless, the present observation is further evidence that the species is not strictly nocturnal in habits.

References:

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