

Biodiversity Record: A sea snake, *Hydrophis hardwickii*, at Changi South

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Subject: Hardwicke's spine-bellied sea snake, *Hydrophis hardwickii* (Reptilia: Squamata: Elapidae).

Subject identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Strait at Changi South; 18 June 2023; around 0510 hrs.

Habitat: Marine. Along the sea shore on soft sand substrate.

Observer: Jiayuan Lin.

Observation: One example (Fig. 1) of about 60 cm total length was observed in shallow water during low (near lowest) tide. It appeared to be searching for food. However, after around one minute of being illuminated by the observer's headlamp, it ceased hunting behavior and swam away into deeper water.



Fig. 1. Dorsal view of fore part and dorso-lateral view of hind part of *Hydrophis hardwickii*, in-situ (Photograph by: Lin Jiayuan).

Remarks: *Hydrophis hardwickii* is regarded as rare and endangered in Singapore. This marine snake was last recorded in the country at Sentosa Island in August 2006. It has also previously been reported from the Johor Strait at Changi North and Lim Chu Kang, as well as in the Singapore Strait at Siglap and Katong (Figueroa et al., 2023). The featured observation is evidence of its present occurrence along the shores of Singapore Island.

Literature cited:

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