

## Biodiversity Record: A spotted keelback at Dairy Farm Nature Park

Leroy Rocky Alphonso\* & Bryan Lim

Email: [leroy\\_rocky\\_alphonso@nparks.gov.sg](mailto:leroy_rocky_alphonso@nparks.gov.sg) (\*corresponding author), [bryan\\_lim@nparks.gov.sg](mailto:bryan_lim@nparks.gov.sg)

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**Subject:** Spotted keelback, *Xenochrophis maculatus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae: Natricinae).

**Subject identified by:** Kelvin K. P. Lim.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Bukit Timah, Dairy Farm Nature Park; 27 June 2024; around 1747 hrs.

**Habitat:** Secondary forest.

**Observer:** Leroy Rocky Alphonso.

**Observations:** One example, estimated to be 50 cm in total length, was spotted lying motionless in the middle of a tarmac road. When approached to within 2 m, the snake moved swiftly away from the observer towards a drain in exaggerated S-shaped movements (Fig. 1). Upon reaching the leaf litter beside the drain, it paused and raised its head momentarily (Fig. 2) before slithering into the drain.



Fig. 1. Dorso-lateral view of the snake moving with exaggerated s-shaped movements on the tarmac. Fig. 2. The snake pausing on the leaf litter at the side of the drain (Photographs by: Leroy Rocky Alphonso).

**Remarks:** The spotted keelback is an uncommonly seen snake that seems to be locally restricted to the forests of the Bukit Timah and Central Catchment Nature Reserves (Baker & Lim, 2012). The status of this species in Singapore is presently regarded as ‘Vulnerable’ (Thomas et al., 2024). The exaggerated movements of the featured snake on the tarmac were likely due to it trying to make a quick escape when it caught sight of the observer, but finding difficulty in maintaining traction on the relatively smooth surface.

**Literature cited:**

- Baker N & Lim KKP (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.
- Thomas N, Law IS & Lim KKP (2024) Checklist of reptile species with their category of threat status for Singapore. In: Davison GWH, Gan JWM, Huang D, Hwang WS, Lum SKY & Yeo DCJ (eds.) The Singapore Red Data Book. Red Lists of Singapore Biodiversity. Third edition. National Parks Board, Singapore, pp. 672–674.