

Malayan Krait *Bungarus candidus* preying on skink on Pulau Langkawi, Peninsular Malaysia

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Photographs by: Holly Siow.

Fauna identified by: Alex Figueroa, Holly Siow.

Location: Gunung Raya, Pulau Langkawi, Peninsular Malaysia.

Habitat: Shallow drain, adjacent to metalled road, passing through secondary forest.

Date and time: 11 February 2016, 21:30 hrs.

Identity of subjects:

- 1) Malayan Krait, *Bungarus candidus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Elapidae).
- 2) Unidentified skink (Reptilia: Sauria: Scincidae).

Description of observations: An adult *Bungarus candidus*, with an estimated total length of 150 cm, was encountered in a shallow drain alongside a metalled road, with its head inside a small culvert at the side of the drain. Its neck was distended, as it was in the process of consuming a prey item (Fig. 1.). As the snake's head emerged from the culvert it was apparent that it was still consuming a skink (Fig. 2.).



Fig. 1.

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Remarks : The triangular cross-section and dark banding (with each dark band being wider dorsally than ventrally, and dark bands on the anterior part of the body being considerably longer than those on the posterior part) identify the snake as being a *Bungarus candidus*. The skink has a yellowish-green dorsum, brown flanks, and narrow bands on the flank which are comprised of small, alternating dark and pale blotches : it cannot confidently be identified to species level.

Bungarus candidus, one of the most venomous snakes in Peninsular Malaysia, is listed as extant on the island of Langkawi by Grismer et al (2006).

Kraits are typically shy snakes with a secretive nature; however this individual continued consuming its prey unperturbed, whilst photographs were taken. Kraits are known to prey on snakes, as well as lizards and frogs (Das, 2010) : it is presumed that the snake was foraging in the drain and detected the skink, which may have been sleeping in the culvert which connects to the drain.



Fig. 2.

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References:

Das, I. (2010). *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-east Asia*. New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd. 376 pp.

Grismer, L. L., Youmans, T. M., Wood, P. L., Ponce, A., Wright, S. B., Jones, B. S., Johnson, R., Sanders, K. L., Gower, D. J., Yaakob, N. S., & Lim, K. K. P. (2006). Checklist of the herpetofauna of Pulau Langkawi, Malaysia, with comments on taxonomy. *Hamadryad*, 30(1/2), 61-74