

## Four examples of Gold-ringed Cat Snake *Boiga dendrophila* from Pulau Bintan, Riau Islands, Indonesia

Nick BAKER  
[nbaker@ecologyasia.com](mailto:nbaker@ecologyasia.com)

**Observers:** Nick Baker, Chan Kwok Wai, Kelvin Lim, Eve Lum, Shawn Lum.

**Photographs by:** Nick Baker.

**Subjects identified by:** Nick Baker.

**Location:** Sungei Sebung, Pulau Bintan, Riau Islands, Indonesia. (Lat 1° 08.09'N Long 104° 20.20'E).

**Habitat:** Mangrove inlets.

**Date and time:** 4 November 2007, 16:30 to 17:15 hrs.

**Identity of subjects:** Gold-ringed Cat Snake, *Boiga dendrophila* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae)

**Description of records:** Four examples of *Boiga dendrophila* were viewed and photographed late afternoon from a boat whilst navigating the tidal mangrove inlet of Sungei Sebung : the location of each snake was known by a local boatman. The specimens exhibited a variable degree of yellow barring on the dorsum.



Fig. 1.

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Fig. 2.

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Fig. 3.

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Fig. 4.

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**Remarks:** *Boiga dendrophila* is known to inhabit wetlands such as freshwater swamp forest and mangrove: its presence in the mangrove system of Sungei Sebung accords with the known habits and geographic range of the species.

A number of subspecies of this snake are recognised, based partly on the extent of barring. The subspecies to be expected in the Riau Islands is *Boiga dendrophila melanota*. The subspecies identification key (Brongersma, 1934: 205) states : "Belly with lateral spots, but without the midventral spots; the bars never quite extending across the back, often reduced to triangular or roundish yellow spots (E. Sumatra, Malay Peninsula and neighbouring islands) ... *B. d. melanota*".

Close inspection of these four examples reveal three with 'typical' barring at mid-body (Figs, 1, 2 and 3), which commences at the edge of the ventral scales or lowermost dorsal scale row and extends to the upper part of the flanks. The other example (Fig. 4.), however, exhibits greatly reduced barring, such that the yellow 'bars' at mid-body are often no more than yellow blotches. All four specimens are thereby in accord with Brongersma's identification key.

Another specimen with reduced barring was documented from Pulau Sugi, Riau Islands, Indonesia in 2007 (Baker, 2016).

#### References:

Baker, N. (2016). Three snakes from coastal habitats at Pulau Sugi, Riau Islands, Indonesia. Southeast Asia Vertebrate Records. 2016: 77-81.

Brongersma, L. D. (1934). Contributions to Indo-Australian herpetology. Zool. Med. 17: 161-251.