

New snake records for 2016-2017 from Panti Forest, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia

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SIGHTING RECORD : 1

Identity of subject: White-spotted Cat Snake, *Boiga drapiezii* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae).

Observers: Serin Subaraj, Law Ingg Thong, Law Ing Sind, Nick Baker.

Photograph by: Nick Baker.

Subject identified by: Serin Subaraj.

Location: Panti Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.

Elevation: 20 metres

Habitat: Lowland, freshwater swamp forest.

Date and time: 23 December 2016, 19:22 hrs.

Description of record: An adult *Boiga drapiezii* (red morph) with an estimated total length of 100 cm, was found active on some fern fronds at the edge of an area of freshwater swamp forest. (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1.

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SIGHTING RECORD : 2

Identity of subject: Puff-faced Water Snake, *Homalopsis buccata* (Reptilia: Squamata: Homalopsidae).

Observers: Serin Subaraj, Law Ing Sind.

Photographs by: Serin Subaraj, Law Ing Sind.

Subject identified by: Serin Subaraj.

Location: Panti Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.

Elevation: 20 metres

Habitat: Lowland, freshwater swamp forest.

Date and time: 25 December 2017, 22:31 hrs.

Description of record: An adult *Homalopsis buccata*, with an estimated total length of 55 cm, was observed crossing an unsealed road after a period of heavy rain, which had caused some streams to overflow onto sections of the road (Fig. 2 and inset).



Fig. 2 and inset.

© Serin Subaraj and Law Ing Sind (inset)

SIGHTING RECORD : 3

Identity of subject: Barred Kukri Snake, *Oligodon signatus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae).

Observers: Law Ing Sind, Noel Thomas, Vilma D’Rozario, Law Ingg Thong, Serin Subaraj, Nick Baker.

Photograph by: Law Ing Sind.

Subject identified by: Law Ing Sind.

Location: Panti Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.

Elevation: 25 metres

Habitat: Lowland, freshwater swamp forest.

Date and time: 14 January 2017, 20:00 hrs.

Description of record: A fresh roadkill *Oligodon signatus*, with a measured total length of 30 cm, was found at the edge of an unsealed road through an area of mixed lowland forest and freshwater swamp forest (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3.

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Fig. 4 and inset.

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SIGHTING RECORD : 4

Identity of subject: Haas's Bronzeback, *Dendrelaphis haasi* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae).

Observers: Law Ing Sind, Noel Thomas, Vilma D'Rozario, Law Ingg Thong, Serin Subaraj, Nick Baker.

Photographs by: Nick Baker.

Subject identified by: Law Ing Sind, Noel Thomas, Law Ingg Thong, Serin Subaraj.

Location: Panti Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.

Elevation: 20 metres

Habitat: Lowland, freshwater swamp forest.

Date and time: 14 January 2017, 20:40 hrs.

Description of record: A neonate *Dendrelaphis haasi*, with an estimated total length of 26 cm, was found sleeping 1.2 metres above the ground in secondary growth near freshwater swamp forest (Fig. 4 and inset).

GENERAL REMARKS

These snake records derive from three visits (of around 5 hours each) to an unsealed road which bisects the Panti Forest Reserve. The months of December and January, during which these sightings were made, fall within the rainy season of the northeast monsoon: frog activity at this time of the year is intense, and streams and temporary forest pools attract large numbers of frogs of a great diversity of species. Herpetofaunal surveys have highlighted the impressive diversity of anurans to be found in freshwater swamp forest habitat in this forest reserve, but much less is known of the snake fauna. For example, Chan *et al* (2010) inventoried 37 species of frog, 1 turtle and 27 lizards, but only 11 species of snake.

Boiga drapiezii, *Homalopsis buccata*, *Oligodon signatus* and *Dendrelaphis haasi* are not listed in the herpetofaunal summary for the area compiled by Chan *et al* (2010). *Oligodon signatus* is included in a vertebrate list compiled by Yong (2006), however no details, such as a specimen or photograph, is referenced in that list.

The images included here for *Boiga drapiezii*, *Homalopsis buccata* and *Oligodon signatus* show sufficient diagnostic features to allow unambiguous identification.

The neonate of *Dendrelaphis haasi* was identified by (i) a thin postocular stripe that ends to the rear of the jaw (a thick postocular stripe being a feature of *Dendrelaphis cyanochloris*, *Dendrelaphis formosus*, *Dendrelaphis pictus* and *Dendrelaphis striatus*, and the absence of a postocular stripe being a feature of *Dendrelaphis caudolineatus*), (ii) absence of reddish-orange in the neck region (the presence of which is a feature of *Dendrelaphis kopsteini*) and (iii) the presence of oblique black bars on the side of the neck (and posterior part of the body) (Van Rooijen *et al*, 2008).

References:

Chan K. O., Grismer, L.L., Matsui, M., Nishikawa, K., Wood Jr., P.L., Grismer, J.L., Belabut, D. & Norhayati, A. (2010). Herpetofauna of Gunung Panti Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia. *Tropical Life Sciences Research*. 21 (1): 71-82.

Van Rooijen, J. & Vogel, G. (2008). Contributions to a review of the *Dendrelaphis pictus* complex (Serpentes: Colubridae) –1. Description of a sympatric species. *Amphibia-Reptilia*, 29(1), 101-115.

Yong, D. L. (2006). Preliminary list of larger vertebrates of Panti Forest Reserve, South Johore (2002–2006). *Singapore Avifauna*, 20(1), 26-35.