

Biodiversity Record: Black-headed collared snake at Mandai Lake Road

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Subject: Black-headed collared snake, *Sibynophis melanocephalus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae).

Subject identified by: Abdul Razak Jaffar.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Mandai Lake Road, compound of the Night Safari; 7 September 2023; around 1158 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest / parkland with concrete buildings.

Observers: Abdul Razak Jaffar and Jeff Choo.

Observation: An example of approximately 40 to 50 cm total length was found on the floor at the back of a building housing and exhibiting brush-tailed possums. When startled by the observers, the snake tried to escape by laterally undulating its body in a series of exaggerated S-shaped movements but with its head held high off the ground. It eventually disappeared into a drain nearby.



Fig. 1. Dorso-lateral view of the subject, in-situ, on the concrete floor of a building. (Photograph by: Jeff Choo)

Remarks: In Singapore, *Sibynophis melanocephalus* is a widespread but uncommon snake that is regarded as locally 'vulnerable'. The species is not restricted to forests, and has also been found in parkland and freshwater marshes, as well as on islands such as Pulau Ubin and Pulau Tekong. There are previous records from Mandai Lake Road and the Singapore Zoo (Figueroa et al., 2023). This being a terrestrial and diurnal reptile (see Baker & Lim, 2012) is well supported by the present observation. The exaggerated movement of the featured snake while beating a hasty retreat, was probably due to it having difficulty maintaining proper purchase of its body on the relatively smooth concrete floor.

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.

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