

Müller's Asian Wolf Snake (*Lycodon muelleri*) on Batan Island, Albay Province, Philippines

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Photographs by: Jake Wilson B. Binaday.

Subject identified by: Jake Wilson B. Binaday.

Location: Brgy. Lagundi, Municipality of Rapu-rapu, Batan Island, Albay Province, Philippines
(13.2220°N, 124.00608°E; WGS 84).

Elevation: 3 metres.

Habitat: Beachfront, residential area.

Date and time: 13April 2016, 20:30 hrs.

Identity of subject: Müller's Asian Wolf Snake, *Lycodon muelleri* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae).

Description of record: An adult *Lycodon muelleri* was observed sleeping on the branch of a Tropical-almond tree (*Terminalia catappa*) alongside the beach, surrounded by residential houses. To avoid the snake being killed or otherwise persecuted it was removed from the tree, photographed the following morning *ex situ* (Fig. 1) and released back into the wild away from residential areas.



Fig. 1. *Lycodon muelleri* photographed *ex situ*.

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Remarks: The snake was identified as *Lycodon muelleri* based on (i) divided nasals, (ii) anal not divided, (iii) dorsal transverse light bands evident throughout body and tail, (iv) more than 50 transverse light bands on body and more than 29 on tail, (v) ventral surface of body with dark dots and/or spots and (vi) lower preocular smaller than upper preocular (Ota & Ross, 1994).

Lycodon muelleri is known to be widespread throughout the islands of Itbayat in Batanes (also called Batan Island), Catanduanes, Luzon, Marinduque, Polillo, and Mindoro (Leviton et al. 2018). It is widespread throughout the Luzon Faunal Region, where Batan Island is located. However, there has been no record yet of its existence on Batan Island in Albay Province.

This individual of *Lycodon muelleri* is the first record for Batan Island within Albay Province.

Photographic vouchers were submitted to the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore (Zoological Reference Collection – ZRC[IMG] 2.389a–c).

References:

Leviton, A. E., Siler, C. D., Weinell, J. L. & Brown, R. M. (2018). Synopsis of the snakes of the Philippines: a synthesis of data from biodiversity repositories, field studies, and the literature. *Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences* 64(14): 399-568.

Ota, H & Ross, C. (1994). Four new species of *Lycodon* (Serpentes: Colubridae) from the Northern Philippines. *Copeia* 1994(1): 159-174.