

First record of King Cobra *Ophiophagus hannah* in Calamian island group, Philippines

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Observer: Travis Weaver.
Photograph by: Travis Weaver.
Subject identified by: Emerson Y. Sy.

Location: Barangay Sagrada, Municipality of Busuanga, Palawan Province, Busuanga Island, Philippines.
Elevation: 97 metres ASL.
Habitat: Paved road adjacent to farmland.
Date and time: 09 January 2019, 08:08 hrs.

Identity of subject: King Cobra, *Ophiophagus hannah* (Reptilia: Squamata: Elapidae).

Description of record: A juvenile snake measuring approximately 100 cm in total length was observed dead on a paved road (Fig. 1). The damage on the jaw may be due to being hit with a blunt object.



Fig. 1.

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Remarks:

The snake was identified as *Ophiophagus hannah* based on (i) dorsal body colour is olive brown, (ii) ventral colour is pale yellow, (iii) large parietal and occipital scales with black edges, (iv) loreal scale is absent, (v) one preocular scale, (vi) three postocular scales, and (vii) 15 scale row at mid-body (Taylor, 1922).

Busuanga is situated north of Palawan Island and is the largest island in the Calamian island group. The King Cobra has a widespread distribution in the Philippines and has been recorded previously in the Palawan faunal region on the islands of Balabac, Minoloc, North Guntao, and Palawan (Sy and Ong, 2019; Sy and Tabayag, 2018; Taylor, 1922). This note provides the first record of the species on Calamian island group (Gaulke, 1999).

References:

Gaulke, M. 1999. Die Herpetofauna von Calauit Island (Calaamianes-Inseln, Provinz Palawan, Philippinen) (Amphibia et Reptilia). Faunistische Abhandlungen 21: 273-282.

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