

## First record of *Boiga angulata* (Peters, 1861) (Colubridae) in Romblon Island Group, Central Philippines

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**Photograph by:** Ace Kevin S. Amarga .

**Subject identified by:** Emerson Y. Sy.

**Location:** Tablas Island, Calatrava-San Andres-San Agustin (CALSANAG) Watershed Forest Reserve, Barangay Marigondon Norte, Municipality of San Andres, Romblon Province, Philippines .

**Elevation:** 200 metres ASL.

**Habitat:** Admixture of secondary lowland forest and agroforest.

**Date and time:** 20 September 2018, 10:00 hrs.

**Identity of subject:** Philippine Blunt-headed Tree Snake, *Boiga angulata* (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae).

**Description of record:** A juvenile *Boiga angulata* (Fig. 1) coiled on a twig was encountered along an old logging road. The snake adopted a defensive posture in the presence of observers, but remained in place whilst being photographed.



Fig. 1.

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**Remarks:** The snake was identified as *Boiga angulata* based on (i) head is short, blunt, brown in colour with minute dark spots, and distinct from neck, (ii) eyes are very large with vertical pupil, (iii) body is very thin and laterally compressed, (iv) dorsal body colour is light yellowish brown with a series of transverse dark brown blotches, (v) ventral body colour is light brown with a series of white edges (Taylor, 1922; Gaulke 2011).

*Boiga angulata*, known as Philippine Blunt-headed Cat Snake or Leyte Cat Snake, was first described under the genus *Dipsas* based on a male specimen collected on Leyte Island by the German naturalist Andreas Fedor Jagor (Peters, 1861), but was later transferred to the genus *Boiga* (Bauer et al., 1995). The snake is commonly found in lowland and montane tropical moist forest and has been reported to occur in disturbed habitats. Due to its widespread distribution, postulated large population, and ability to tolerate habitat disturbance, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) assessed this species as Least Concern (Brown et al., 2009).

This endemic species has been reported on several islands in the Philippines (Oliveros et al. 2011) such as Barit (Babuyan island group), Bohol, Catanduanes, Leyte, Luzon, Mindanao, Negros, Panay, and Polillo (Peters, 1861; Boettger, 1892; Ferner et al., 2000; Oliveros et al., 2011; Devan-Song and Brown, 2012; Brown et al., 2012, 2013). However, some reports may have misidentified the species (Leviton et al., 2018).

This report presents the first documentation of *Boiga angulata* on Tablas Island and in Romblon Island Group (Siler et al., 2012) and is part of the Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring System (BAMS) conducted in CALSANAG Watershed Forest Reserve through the Monitoring and Detection of Ecosystems Changes for Enhancing Resilience and Adaptation in the Philippines (MODECERA) Research Program with the Romblon State University–Odiongan Campus and the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

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