

ANNANDALE'S SEASNAKE, *KOLPOPHIS ANNANDALEI*
(LAIDLAW, 1901): A NEW RECORD FOR BORNEO
(REPTILIA: SERPENTES: HYDROPHIIDAE)

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ABSTRACT. - A specimen of Annandale's seasnake, *Kolpophis annandalei*, collected from Tungku Beach, Brunei Darussalam, constitutes the first record of the species from the island of Borneo. The snake was previously known from the waters off peninsular Thailand and Malaysia, Kampuchea, Vietnam and probably Sumatra.

On June 6, 1993, a juvenile hydrophiid was obtained from Tungku Beach (ca. 4° 59' N 114° 51' E), Brunei-Muara District, Brunei Darussalam. It was identified as *Kolpophis annandalei* (Laidlaw, 1901), Annandale's seasnake (Fig. 1). The snake was reportedly caught by hook-and-line baited with fish. The specimen was preserved and deposited in the herpetological collection of the Department of Biology, Universiti Brunei Darussalam (Reg. No. ID/NBD 655).

Measurements. - Snout-vent length 277 mm; total body length 315 mm; head width (at jaws) 9.1 mm; head length 11.8 mm; width at midbody 10.5 mm; rostral length 3.5 mm; rostral depth 2.0 mm.

Pholidosis. - Body scales 64 (neck), 97 (midbody); ventrals 363; subcaudals 65; postoccipitals 2; supralabials 11 (4th touching eye); infralabials 16; anterior temporal 1.

Other diagnostic characters. - dorsally-oriented nostrils, relatively stout body, small head (head length/snout-vent length ratio 0.04), a small interparietal (1.4 by 1.4 mm), 46 dark body bands, an exposed triangular mental, a W-shaped rostral which is longer than deep (rostral depth/rostral length ratio 0.57), a large scale separating supralabials 5 and 6 from the eye and small but distinct ventrals. The large number of midbody scale rows - 70-90 according to Lim (1991) and 89-100 (De Rooij, 1917) distinguish the present species from the closely-related *Thalassophis anomalus* (Schmidt, 1852), which has 31-35 rows at midbody (Lim, 1991).

Interestingly, the diagnostic features of the present material and the descriptions of the species contained in the aforementioned works differ markedly from that given by Tweedie (1983), who give scale counts for midbody as 74-93 (as opposed to 97 in the present specimen), 5-6 supralabials, of which the 3rd and 4th touch the eyes (11 in the Brunei material, the 4th touching

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the eyes). Since Tweedie did not appear to have examined specimens from peninsular Malaysia or Singapore (his area of activity), the basis of his description is unknown. Laidlaw's (1901) counts of the midbody scale rows and supralabial rows were 89-90 and 10-11 respectively, while those of Smith (1943) were 74-93 and 9-11 respectively. Both are close to the counts taken from the present specimen. The identification of the present Bornean specimen thus follows the descriptions provided by Laidlaw (1901), De Rooj (1917) and Smith (1943).

Stuebing's (1991) checklist of the Bornean snakes includes 19 hydrophiids, but does not list *Kolpophis annandalei*. The present species is thus an addition to the snake fauna of Borneo. The species is known from the waters off the east coast of peninsular Thailand (Songkhla, formerly known as Singgora and Pattani) and Kampuchea and Vietnam (Phan-thiet and Cape St. Jacques), according to Smith (1943) and Cox (1991), and the mouth of the Mengala river in Java, Indonesia (De Rooij, 1917) (site not located in the *Times Atlas of the World*, Seventh Edition, or earlier maps consulted). However, a town called Menggala exists on the Tulangbawang River, Sumatra. The species is reportedly uncommon in the seas off peninsular Malaysia (Lim, 1991), but no precise localities have been given and little of its ecology is on record.

Voris & Voris (1983) found a fish of the family Clupeidae in the stomach of one *Kolpophis annandalei* from Indo-China (Voris, 1974) and the species has been taken from a freshwater situation in the Pattani region (Boulenger, 1912). Although this record appears to be a significant range extension for the present species, being based on a single specimen, it may be a stray and possibly not a member of an established breeding population off the north coast of Borneo.

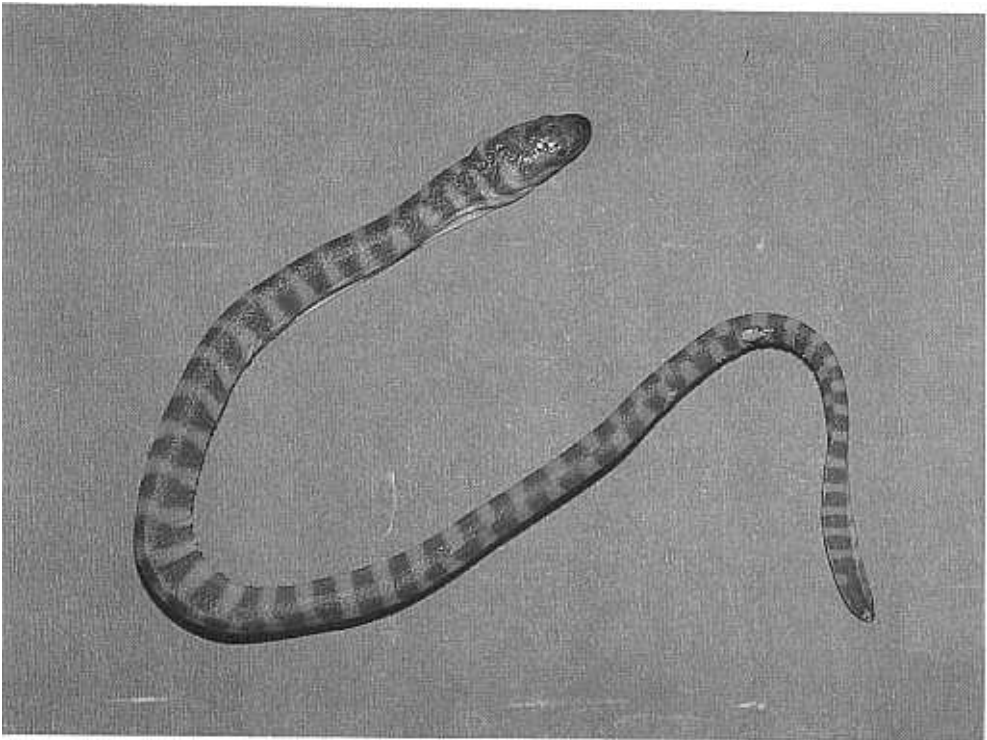


Fig. Dorsal view of *Kolpophis annandalei* (ID/NBD 655).

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