

First record of King Cobra on Alabat Island Quezon Province, Philippines

Rolly C. URRIZA & Emerson Y. SY
rollyurriza@gmail.com (Urriza), emersonsy@gmail.com

Observers: Rolly C. Urriza, Andres Andalis.

Photograph by: Rolly C. Urriza.

Subject identified by: Arvin C. Diesmos.

Location: Sitio Buong, Barangay Bacong, Municipality of Alabat, Quezon Province, Alabat Island, Philippines (14.132788°N, 122.017149°E; WGS 84).

Elevation: 58 metres.

Habitat: Dry riverbed within a limestone karst forest, adjacent to a coconut plantation.

Date and time: 08 July 2011, 10:00 hrs.

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

Description of record: A subadult specimen, with an estimated total length of 139 cm, was found dead on a dry river bed with apparently minor injuries, but evidence of fresh blood.



Fig. 1.

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Remarks: The King Cobra was identified as such based on (i) large parietal and occipital scales, (ii) loreal scale is absent, (iii) one preocular, (iv) three postoculars, (v) seven upper labials with third and fourth in contact with the eye (Taylor, 1922).

Alabat Island is an elongated island measuring 37 km by 5 km: it lies off the eastern coast of Luzon Island, and is separated from the latter by a 1 km wide strait. The King Cobra is long documented from Luzon Island (Taylor, 1922).

In the Philippines, the King Cobra and other snakes are persecuted indiscriminately. The specimen was apparently killed by locals who probably encountered it along the trail. The specimen was retrieved and deposited in the National Museum of the Philippines (Specimen No. PNM 10035).

References:

Taylor, E.H. (1922). *The Snakes Of The Philippine Islands*. Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Bureau of Science, Manila. 312 pp. + 37 plates.