

## First record of Southern Philippine Cobra *Naja samarensis* on Basilan Island, Philippines

Emerson Y. SY & Shameer G. Mangkabong  
[emersonsy@gmail.com](mailto:emersonsy@gmail.com)

---

**Observer:** Al-shidrie M. Ramos.

**Photograph by:** Al-shidrie M. Ramos.

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

**Location:** Barangay Cabobo, Lamitan City, Basilan Province, Basilan Island, Philippines.

**Elevation:** 51 metres.

**Habitat:** Coconut plantation.

**Date and time:** 28 September 2018, 08:00hrs.

**Identity of subject:** Southern Philippine Cobra, *Naja samarensis* (Reptilia: Squamata: Elapidae).

**Description of record:** : An adult Southern Philippine Cobra (also known as Peters' Cobra), with an estimated total length of one metre, was observed resting on the ground near a house, but was subsequently killed by locals (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1.

© Al-shidrie M. Ramos

**Remarks:** The snake locally known as Deppu, in the indigenous Yakan dialect, was identified as *Naja samarensis* based on (i) loreal scale is absent (ii) uniform black dorsal colour, (iii) dorsal scales are smooth and (iv) interstitial skin is yellow (Taylor, 1922). *Naja samarensis* is endemic to the Philippines and has been recorded previously on the following islands: Bohol, Camiguin Sur, Dinagat, Leyte, Mindanao and Samar.

Basilan Island lies 15 km to the southwest of Mindanao, and has a land area exceeding 1200 square kilometres. The last comprehensive herpetological surveys on the island were conducted nearly 100 years ago in 1920-1921 (Taylor 1922b, 1923); the lack of recent studies on the island is due to security concerns.

This is the first properly documented record of *Naja samarensis* on Basilan Island; its presence here is not surprising since the island is part of the Greater Mindanao Faunal Region.

**References:**

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

Taylor, E.H. (1922b). Additions to the herpetological fauna of the Philippine Islands, I. *Philippine Journal of Science*. 21(2): 161-206.

Taylor, E.H. (1923). Additions to the herpetological fauna of the Philippine Islands, III. *Philippine Journal of Science*. 22(5): 515-557.