

## The Malayan Blue Coral Snake (*Calliophis bivirgatus flaviceps*) on Palawan Island, Philippines

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**Observer:** Mark Luigi Rosario.

**Photograph by:** Mark Luigi Rosario.

**Subject identified by:** Emerson Y. Sy, Kelvin Lim Kok Peng.

**Location:** Barangay Villa Libertad, Municipality of El Nido, Palawan Province, Palawan Island, Philippines.

**Elevation:** 7 metres ASL.

**Habitat:** Residential area adjacent to farmland.

**Date and time:** 13 August 2019, 18:00 hrs.

**Identity of subject:** Malayan Blue Coral Snake, *Calliophis bivirgatus flaviceps* (Reptilia: Squamata: Elapidae).

**Description of records:** A snake measuring approximately 64 cm in total length was observed slithering on unpaved ground after the rain (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1.

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**Remarks:**

The snake was identified as *Calliophis bivirgatus flaviceps* based on (I) head and tail are bright reddish-orange, (II) small head which is as wide as the neck, (III) slender body and (IV) dorsal body colour is black with a pair of light dorso-lateral blue stripes (two-scales wide) along the entire length of its body (Stuebing et al., 2014; Li, 2019).

The Malayan Blue Coral Snake is a highly venomous species which occurs in Brunei, Indonesia (Sumatra, Borneo, Bangka, Lingga Archipelago, Nias, Mentawai Archipelago, Riau Archipelago), Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand (Teo and Rajathurai, 1997, Wallach et al., 2014). Four *Calliophis* species (*C. bilineata*, *C. philippina*, *C. salitan*, and *C. suluensis*) are known to occur in the Philippines, but *Calliophis bivirgatus* has not been recorded previously (Brown et al., 2018; Leviton, 1963; Taylor, 1922). The snake might have been introduced to Palawan Island as a contaminant of imported planting materials.

**References:**

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