

First record of the Southern Philippine Cobra *Naja samarensis* on Siquijor Island, Philippines

Emerson Y. SY & Abner A. BUCOL
emersonsy@gmail.com (Sy)

Observer: Frank Wronsky.
Photograph by: Frank Wronsky.
Subject identified by: Emerson Y. Sy.

Location: Siquijor Island, Barangay Tambisan, Municipality of San Juan, Siquijor Province, Philippines.
Elevation: 10 metres ASL.
Habitat: Near the coast and adjacent to farmland.
Date and time: 31 July 2015, 14:50 hrs.

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

Description of record: A snake, approximately 60 cm in total length, was observed struggling to escape from entanglement in discarded nylon fishing net on the ground (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1.

© Frank Wronsky

Remarks: The snake, locally known as *Ugahipon* in Cebuano language, and also known as Peters' Cobra or Samar Cobra, was identified as *Naja samarensis* based on (i) loreal scale is absent, (ii) one preocular, (iii) three postoculars, (iv) seven upper labials, 3rd and 4th in contact with eye, (v) neck colour is yellow, (vi) dorsal body colour is dark grey, and (vii) skin between dorsal scales is yellow (Taylor, 1922). This endemic species is known to occur in Mindanao faunal region on the following islands:

Basilan, Bohol, Camiguin Sur, Dinagat, Leyte, Mindanao, and Samar (Sy and Mangkabong, 2018). A more recent observation of the species on Siquijor was in Barangay Cangasagan, Municipality of San Juan (O. Lalim, pers. comm. to EYS on 4 May 2020).

Siquijor is surrounded by four major islands belonging to two faunal regions – Negros and Cebu (Western Visayas faunal region) and Bohol and Mindanao (Mindanao faunal region). The Mindanao Spotted Water Snake *Tropidonophis dendrophiops* was the first snake with affinity to Mindanao faunal region to be reported on Siquijor (Beukema, 2011). This note provides the second known snake with affinity to Mindanao faunal region and the first record of the Southern Philippine Cobra on Siquijor Island.

Acknowledgements:

We thank F. Wronsky for providing photos and information and O. Lalim for sharing a recent sighting on Siquijor.

References:

Beukema, W. (2011). First record of the genus *Tropidonophis* (Serpentes: Colubridae) and rediscovery of *Parias flavomaculatus* (Serpentes: Viperidae) on Siquijor Island, Philippines. *Herpetology Notes* 4: 177-179.

Sy, E.Y. and Mangkabong, S.G. (2018). First record of Southern Philippine Cobra *Naja samarensis* on Basilan Island, Philippines. *Southeast Asia Vertebrate Records* 2018: 78-79.

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.