

## New record of King Cobra *Ophiophagus hannah* on Samal Island, Philippines

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**Observer:** Betty Mae L. Pancho.  
**Photograph by:** Betty Mae L. Pancho.  
**Subject identified by:** Emerson Y. Sy.

**Location:** Samal Island, Barangay Anonang, Samal City, Davao del Norte Province, Philippines.  
**Elevation:** ca. 250 metres ASL.  
**Habitat:** Paved highway in mixed agricultural area.  
**Date and time:** 11 July 2021, 12:53 hrs.

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

### Description of record:

A large snake (Fig. 1), approximately 244 cm in total length, was observed dead on the roadside. An eyewitness revealed that the snake was crossing the highway when a passing motorbike intentionally ran it over. A resident subsequently decapitated the snake.

### Remarks:

The snake was identified as *Ophiophagus hannah* based on (i) loreal scale is absent, (ii) large parietal and occipital scales, (iii) one preocular, (iv) three postoculars, and (v) colour of dorsal head and body is uniform greyish olive (Taylor, 1920).

Samal Island (area = 301 km<sup>2</sup>) is situated east of Davao City, Mindanao Island. The King Cobra has been documented on Mindanao in the following provinces: Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Sarangani, South Cotabato, Surigao del Norte and Zamboanga del Norte (Sy, 2016; Rule & Sy, 2021). This note provides the first record of the species on Samal Island.



Figure 1.

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### References:

- Rule, M.G.Q. and Sy, E.Y. (2021). First record of King Cobra *Ophiophagus hannah* in Surigao del Norte, Mindanao Island, Philippines. Southeast Asia Vertebrate Records 2021: 5-6.
- Sy, E.Y. (2016). Geographic distribution: *Ophiophagus hannah* (King Cobra): Philippines, Mindanao Island, Zamboanga del Norte Province. Herpetological Review 47(2): 264.
- 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.