

## SNAKES FROM BANGKA AND BILLITON

by

Ir J. H. WESTERMANN

(Gantoeng, Billiton).

### BANGKA.

During the years 1930 - 1936 a collection of snakes was made in the island of Bangka.

Up till now 34 species were reported by DE ROOY (1917)<sup>1)</sup>; L. D. BRONGERSMA (1933)<sup>2)</sup> added *Bungarus flaviceps* (REINH.).

The following species are not yet recorded from this island.

#### **Sibynophis geminatus** (BOIE).

District Djeboes, Poepoet Bawah. 1933<sup>3)</sup>.

1 ex. Total length 50 cm, tail 18 cm. Ventrals 148. Subcaudals 87.

#### **Dendrophis formosus** BOIE.

Djeboes, A. Penganak, in kongsi mine no. 15. 24.vi.1933.

1 ex. Total length 114 cm, tail 39 cm. Ventrals 177. Subcaudals 151.

#### **Dendrelaphis caudolineatus** (GRAY).

Blinjoe, Blinjoe. 1930.

1 ex. Total length 80 cm, tail 4 cm. Ventrals 175. Subcaudals 11. The tail is very short, obviously damaged.

#### **Natrix maculata** (EDELING).

Djeboes, near Kpg. Klabat Darat. 22.viii.1933.

1 ex. ♂ Total length 72 cm, tail 26 cm. Ventrals 142, Subcaudals 110.

#### **Dipsadoides decipiens** ANNANDALE.

VAN HEURN, De Tropische Natuur, 21, 1932, p. 14. — Bangka.

Djeboes, Poepoet Bawah, caught indoors of the central telephone-station of the Bangka-tinwinning at Parit 3.

1 ex. ♂. Total length 64.8 cm, tail 16.7 cm.

Not aggressive snake.

Maxillary teeth 6, followed by a pair of moderate teeth.

Eye large, pupil vertical elliptic (observed on living animal with center-flashlight).

<sup>1)</sup> N. DE ROOY. The Reptiles of the Indo-Australian Archipelago. II Ophidia, 1917.

<sup>2)</sup> L. D. BRONGERSMA. Herpetological Notes I - IX. Zool. Meded. Leiden, XVI, 1933.

<sup>3)</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all specimens are in the Buitenzorg Museum.

Nostril large, directed backwards. Rostral more broad than deep. Internasals larger than prae-frontals. Frontal more long than broad, shorter than parietals. 1 Prae-ocular, 2 postoculars. Loreal more deep than long. Temporals 2 + 2. 8 Uppers-labials, 3rd - 5th entering the eye. 5 Lower-labials in contact with anterior chin-shields. A second pair large chin-shields, separated from each other.

Scales: 21 rows, 19 at 26 cm behind the head, decreasing to 13 posteriorly. Dorsal row enlarged. Ventrals 262, keeled on each side. Anal entire. Subcaudals 159 in two rows.

Head distinct from neck, light brown, marbled with dark brown spots which are bordered with white. Body compressed, pale brown above, spotted and marbled with dark brown, white and yellow, with irregular, alternating yellow and dark brown lateral bars. Lower surface dull yellow, posteriorly marbled with pale and dark brown, just like the subcaudals. Chin dull yellow with dark brown spots (fig. 1).

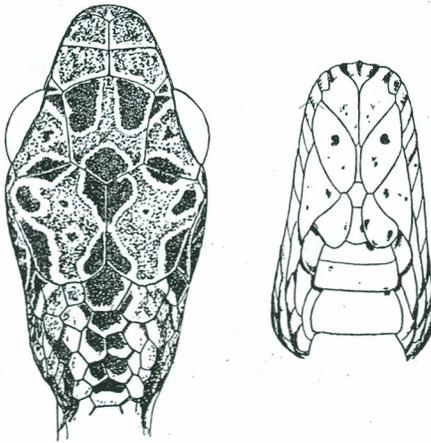


Fig. 1. *Dipsadoides decipiens* ANNANDALE. Dorsal view of head and chin-shields ( $\times 3$ ). Bangka specimen.

This genus may be confused with *Boiga*, and it is interesting to note that ANNANDALE (J. Asiat. Soc. Bengal (N.S.) I (8), 1905, p. 213 - 214) also compared *Dipsadoides* with *Boiga* (= *Dipsadomorphus*). *Dipsadoides*, however, differs from *Boiga* in having 6 instead of 10 - 14 maxillary teeth.

The pupil certainly is vertical elliptic, which does not agree with ANNANDALE's observation, who remarks that the pupil is circular. This may be explained by the pupil of the alcohol specimen in the Indian Museum being unnaturally expanded.

Through the kindness of the collector, Mr J. D. PASTEUR, I have been able also to examine a specimen of this snake from Sumatra, collected by this gentleman near Pendopo, South Sumatra, on Nov. 29th, 1938. <sup>1)</sup>

I have made the following notes on it:

Total length 102, tail 27 cm. Pupil vertical elliptic. Scales 21 rows behind head, decreasing to 15 posteriorly. Ventrals 250. Subcaudals 147 in two rows. Anal entire. Two postoculars (corresponding with the Bangka specimen).

The extraordinary design of the chin-shields is shown in fig. 1 (Bangka specimen).

***Naja hannah* (SCHLEGEL).**

Pangkalpinang, in the garden of the hospital. 24.v.1934.

Head and tail.

<sup>1)</sup> This specimen was first mentioned in Mr PASTEUR's paper in *De Trop. Natuur*, 30, 1941, p. 87.

1 ex. Total length 248 cm, tail 58 cm. Scales in 15 rows, 19 round the neck. Ventrals 249. Subcaudals 118, 20 anterior single.

The following specimens were measured:

***Python curtus* SCHLEGEL.**

Djebces, Poepoet Bawah. 26.vii.1933. Specimen lost.

1 ex. Total length 154 cm, tail 13 cm. Scales in 57 rows.

Soengailiat, Soengailiat. 25.iv.1934. Specimen lost.

1 ex. ♀ Total length 120 cm, tail 9.5 cm. Scales in 53 rows. Ventrals 174. Two anterior upper labials very deeply pitted.

This snake has a very bad name with the Chinese inhabitants of Bangka. In the first place they believe that touching the animal must cause leprosy and in a later stage a man who has touched this "oelar bakes" (mal.) becomes a frog. In Soengailiat I kept a specimen in a cage for several weeks. The Chinese who had called for me when he found the snake, after two weeks came to my house to have a look at my hands for the first symptoms of leprosy. The man was most painfully disappointed in failing to see any beginning of the dreadful disease! "But", he said "you may rest assured that you 'll become a frog after a few years!" This was in 1934 and it may be unnecessary to say, that up till now I have never felt the slightest inclination even to practise the art of croaking.

In the second place the Chinese consider the appearance of *Python curtus* a bad omen. When a specimen was killed in the neighbourhood of a tinmine (May 1934), the "kepala-parit" had to give many sacrifices to the domestic altar of the kongsi to remove the bad influences of the snake.

#### BILLITON.

When we have a look at DE ROOY's list of snakes (*loc. cit.* p. 296) from Billiton and the additions by BRONGERSMA (*loc. cit.* p. 22/3), it is evident that only scanty collections of Ophidia were made on this island. DE ROOY mentions:

*Psammodynastes pictus* GTHR.

*Lachesis sumatranus* (RAFFLES) (= *Trimeresurus sumatranus*).

*Lachesis wagleri* (BOIE) (= *Trimeresurus wagleri*).

BRONGERSMA determined a collection made by A. G. VORDERMAN (year of collection?) and found 6 species new to the island:

*Xenopeltis unicolor* REINW.

*Dendrophis pictus pictus* (GMÉL.).

*Dendrelaphis caudolineatus* (GRAY).

*Tropidonotus maculatus* EDELING (= *Natrix maculata*).

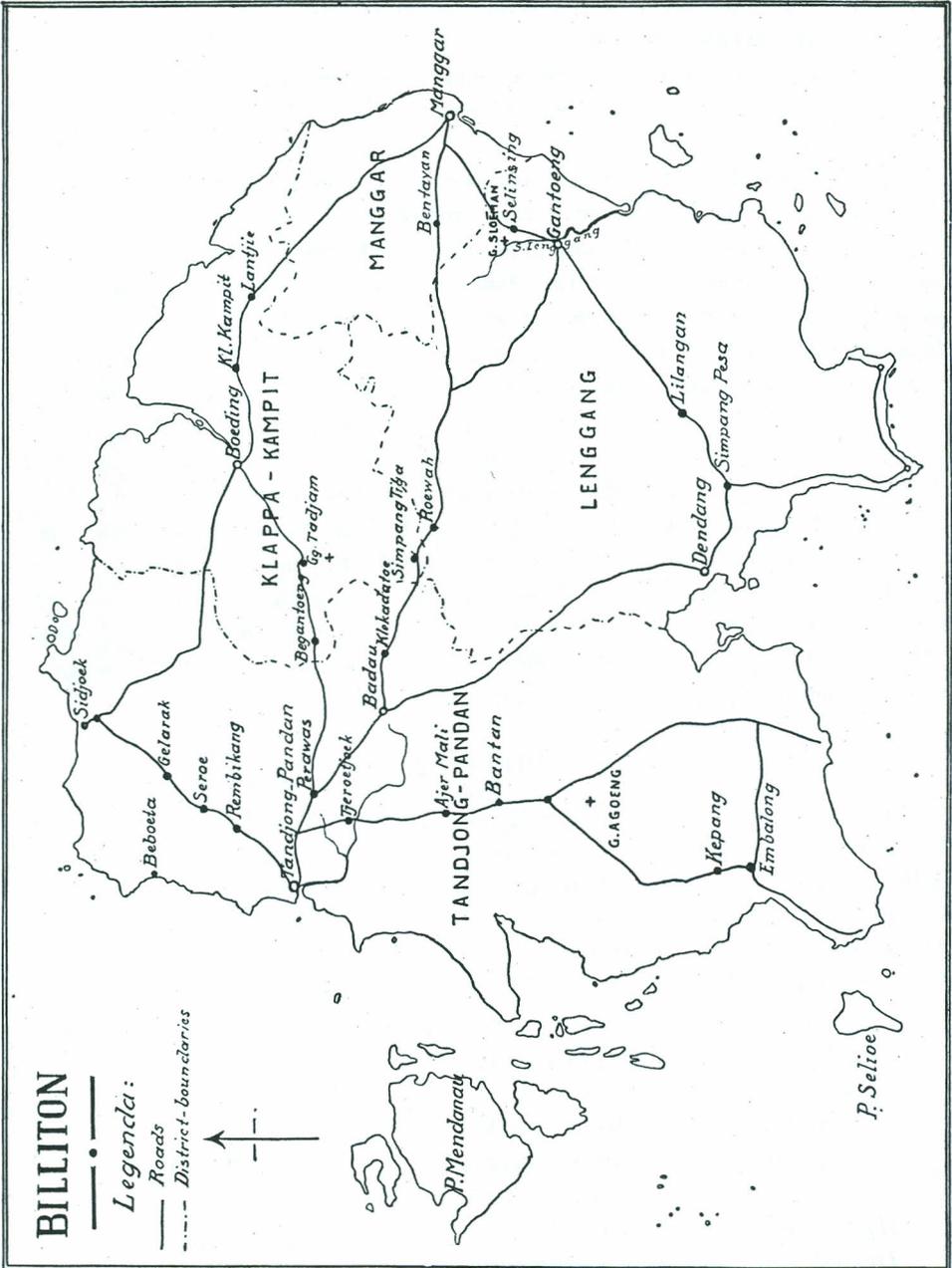
*Hypsirhina alternans* (REUSS).

*Dryophis prasinus* BOIE (= *Passerita prasina*).

So till now only 9 species were known from Billiton, a very small number indeed considering the extensive list of snakes known from the neighbouring island of Bangka. From 1937 - 1941 I made a collection in Billiton, during which time all known species but *Trimeresurus sumatranus* (RAFFLES) and *Natrix*

*maculata* (EDELING) were obtained while 22 more species were found which are new to the island.

A new species of *Maticora* GRAY is described from Billiton and Borneo.



During a visit to Buitenzorg a more accurate examination of the collection was made. I wish to express my heartiest thanks to Dr J. K. DE JONG for controlling my determinations, and to Messrs M. A. LIEFTINCK and A. C. V. VAN BEMMEL, of the Buitenzorg Museum, for their help and hospitality.

## TYPHLOPIDAE.

**Typhlops braminus** (DAUDIN).

District Lenggang, Gantoeng. 1939 <sup>1)</sup>.

2 ex. Total length resp. tail 10.5 cm, 2.5 mm; and 8.5 cm, 2 mm.

## BOIDAE.

**Python reticulatus** (SCHNEIDER).

Klappa Kampit, Pring. vii.1938. The head only.

1 ex. Total length 410 cm.

The following specimens were measured:

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 1939. 1 ex. total length 250 cm. Specimen lost.

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 1941. 1 ex. total length 305 cm. Specimen lost.

## ILYSIIDAE.

**Cylindrophis rufus** (LAURENTI).

Tandjong Pandan, Kpg. A. Mali. 26.x.1937.

1 ex. Total length 24.5 cm, tail 7 mm. Scales in 19 rows. Ventrals 200. Subcaudals 7. A young specimen.

## COLUBRIDAE.

## Colubrinae.

**Sibynophis geminatus** (BOIE).

Lenggang, G. Sloemar. 3.vii.1938.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 47 cm, tail 17 cm. Ventrals 153. Subcaudals 96.

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 1940.

1 ex. ♂. Total length 50 cm., tail 19.5 cm. Ventrals 153. Subcaudals 109.

Between the posterior chin-shields 10 ticks were found. These parasites often appear on snakes.

**Dendrophis formosus** BOIE.

Lenggang, Gantoeng. x.1939.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 126 cm, tail 41 cm. Ventrals 185. Subcaudals 150.

**Zaocys fuscus** (GÜNTHER).

Tandjong Pandan, A. Tjangkok near Kpg. A. Mali. 28.x.1937. The head only.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 197 cm, tail 70 cm. Scales in 16 rows. Ventrals 184.

**Natrix trianguligera** (BOIE).

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 30.viii.1939.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 68 cm, tail 22.5 cm. Ventrals 134. Subcaudals 89.

**Xenelaphis hexagonotus** (CANTOR).

Tandjong Pandan, Kpg. Banten, 28.x.1937.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 92 cm, tail 22 cm. Ventrals 195. Subcaudals 82. This number does not correspond with DE ROOY p. 94, who mentions 140 - 179 sub-

<sup>1)</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all specimens are in the Buitenzorg Museum.

caudals. The tail of the examined specimen is not very long, which also is contrary to DE ROOY's description of the genus p. 93. Comparison of an ex. of *Xenelaphis hexagonotus* (CANTOR) in the Zoological Museum, Buitenzorg with the specimen in question proved a complete conformity in scales and design. As the tail of the latter does not give the impression of being damaged, the shortage in subcaudals must be considered an abnormality.

***Elaphe melanura* (SCHLEGEL).**

Manggar, Manggar. 1937.

1 ex. Total length 132 cm, tail 31.2 cm. Ventrals 216. Subcaudals 97.

The following specimen was measured:

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 25.ii.1941. Specimen lost.

1 ex. Total length 155 cm, tail 35 cm. A very common snake in the district of Lenggang.

***Elaphe oxycephala* (BOIE).**

Lenggang, Kpg. Lilangan. 16.viii.1938.

1 ex. Total length 150 cm, tail 39.5 cm. Ventrals 238. Subcaudals 132.

***Simotes octolineatus* (SCHNEIDER).**

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 1939.

1 ex. Total length 55.5 cm, tail 9.4 cm. Ventrals 175. Subcaudals 51.

Homalopsinae.

***Hypsirhina plumbea* (BOIE).**

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 1940.

1 ex. Total length 28 cm, tail 4.7 cm. Scales in 19 rows. Ventrals 122. Subcaudals 42.

Contrary to DE ROOY's statement on p. 81, the loreal is not in contact with the single internasal, exactly like the two specimens in the Zoological Museum, Buitenzorg. The internasal is too short to reach the loreal and as a result of this, the loreal is only in contact with nasal, prae-frontal, and 2nd and 3rd upper labial.

***Hypsirhina punctata* (GRAY).**

Tandjong Pandan, Kpg. A. Mali. 22.x.1937.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 69 cm, tail 6 cm. Ventrals 154. Subcaudals 33.

***Homalopsis buccata* (L.).**

Tandjong Pandan, Kpg. A. Mali. 19.x.1937.

1 ex. ♂. Total length 88 cm, tail 23 cm. Scales in 39 rows. Ventrals 167. Subcaudals 88. Frontal symmetrically broken up into two larger and two small shields. Loreal broken up into two small scales.

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 13.iv.1939.

1 ex. young specimen. Total length 35 cm, tail 8.5 cm. Scales in 39 rows. Ventrals 167. Subcaudals 86. Loreal not divided.

## Boigae.

**Boiga dendrophila** (BOIE).

Tandjong Pandan, Kpg. A. Mali, 26.x.1937. The head only.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 173 cm, tail 36 cm. Scales in 21 rows. Ventrals 216.

## Hydrophiinae.

**Laticauda colubrina** (SCHNEIDER).

Tandjong Pandan, Tandjong Pandan. 2.xi.1937. Skin, the head was damaged.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 148 cm, tail 14 cm.

This snake was caught in the night on the pier of the N.V. Gemeensch. Mijnbouw Mij. "Billiton", at T. Pandan.

## Elapinae.

**Naja naja**, var. **sputatrix** (BOIE).

Tandjong Pandan, Kpg. Banten. 28.x.1937. The head only.

1 ex ♀. Total length 76.5 cm, tail 11.5 cm. Scales in 21 rows, 23 across the neck.

**Naja naja**, var. **miolepis** (BOULENGER).

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 1940.

1 ex. Young specimen. Total length 37.5 cm, tail 5 cm. Ventrals 189. Subcaudals 43. Left side 2, right 3 postoculars. Scales in 19 rows, 21 across the neck. 14 Complete white rings on body and tail, angular white band behind the hood.

**Naja hannah** (SCHLEGEL).

Tandjong Pandan, Kpg. Rembikang. 12.x.1937. The head only.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 196 cm, tail 43 cm.

The following specimens were measured:

Lenggang, Gantoeng (near A. Rassau). 31.i.1941. Specimen lost.

1 ex. ♀. Total length 284 cm, tail 62 cm. Scales in 17 rows. Ventrals 247. Subcaudals 110, 21 anterior single.

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 25.ii.1941. Specimen lost.

1 ex. Total length 249 cm, tail 53 cm. Scales in 15 and 17 rows. Ventrals 245. Subcaudals 111, 18 anterior single.

This ex. was caught quite near the employé-houses of the N.V. Gemeensch. Mijnbouw Mij "Billiton" at Gantoeng. Specimen lost.

**Maticora intermedia** nov. spec.

Klappa Kampit, Klappa Kampit. ii.1941.

1 ex. Total length 47.5 cm, tail 6.2 cm. Scales in 13 rows. Ventrals 206. Anal entire. Subcaudals 48, 33 anterior single, no. 34 divided, nos. 35 and 36 single, the posterior 12 in two rows.

The head is badly damaged, but the large fangs in the maxillar are visible. The heart 11.4 cm from the tip of the snout, shifted far backwards. Head and

tail red, also the posterior part of the body for about 4 cm. Black above. The anterior part of the enlarged vertebral scales of the body and part of the tail with white spots, forming a dotted vertebral line. A white lateral line, about 1 mm broad, between the two outer rows of scales. The lower surface of head and tail red. The posterior part of the belly red over 5 cm from the anal. Over a distance of about 3 cm the red colour fades away, alternating with brown spots. From this place up to the eighth anterior shield each ventral is coloured brown and brownish-white, thus forming narrow transverse bands. The ventral shields are edged with dark-brown.

This description does not fit in with any known species of *Maticora* GRAY, but in the collection of the Zoological Museum, Buitenzorg, I found a specimen named *Doliophis bivirgatus* (BOIE) nov. spec., with exactly the same design as the Billiton specimen. This Museum specimen was collected during the Grens-Expeditie in 1912 to N. Borneo and the data are as follows:

Total length 42.5 cm, tail 5.6 cm.

Pupil round. Rostral more broad than deep, visible from above.

Internasals shorter than the praefrontals. Frontal large, as long as its distance from the tip of the snout, shorter than the parietals. One prae- and two postoculars. Temporals: 1 + 2, on the right side the anterior one is fused with the upper posterior temporal.

Seven upper labials, third and fourth entering the eye, sixth and seventh largest. 7 Lower labials, 4 in contact with the anterior chin-shields, latter almost as long as the posterior.

Scales smooth, in 13 rows, vertebral row enlarged. Ventrals 214.

Anal entire. Subcaudals 54, 21 posterior single, no. 22 double, nos. 23 and 24 single, nos. 25 - 30 double, nos. 31 - 39 single, nos. 40 - 42 double, nos. 43 - 48 single, nos. 49 - 54 double.

The heart far posteriorly, its front 10.5 cm from the tip of the snout.

The vertebral row of scales of both specimens is enlarged. This corresponds with the genus *Bungarus* DAUDIN (see DE ROOY, p. 241) but as the heart of the examined specimens is shifted far backwards on account of the poison glands, the species undoubtedly must be considered as *Maticora* GRAY.

A comparison of the new species with *M. bivirgata* (BOIE) and *M. intestinalis* (LAUR.) gives the following results:

The difference between this new species and the two known species of *Maticora* is in the number of upper labials and the irregularity of the subcaudals. As mentioned above, the subcaudals are single in the anterior part of the tail. The transition however into two rows does not occur at one place, continuing to the end. After a few double scales the single ones appear again, thus forming a succession of alternating series of single and double subcaudals. This irregularity may happen a few times.

Concerning the total number of subcaudals of *M. intermedia*, this corresponds with that of *M. bivirgata*, while the number of ventrals falls in with *M. intestinalis*.

<i>Maticora</i> GRAY	prae-ocul-lars	post-ocul-lars	tem-porals	upper labials	scales (rows)	ventrals	anal	sub-caudals	remarks
<i>M. bivirgata</i> (BOIE)	1	2	1+1 or 1+2	6; 3rd & 4th to eye	13	244 - 295	en-ti-re	34-53 in 2 rows	DE ROOY pp. 251/2
<i>M. intermedia</i> nov. spec.	1	2	1+2	7; 3rd & 4th to eye	13	206 - 214	en-ti-re	48-54 partly single partly in 2 rows	
<i>M. intestinalis</i> (LAUR.)	1	2	1+2	6; 3rd & 4th to eye	13	197 - 273	en-ti-re	15-33 in 2 rows	DE ROOY pp. 251, 253/4

Head and tail are red, just like *M. bivirgata*. The back also is similar but for the red posterior part. The lower surface on the contrary bears resemblance to *M. intestinalis*, but it must be emphasized that the transverse bars are very narrow, each ventral is coloured brown and brownish-white. The posterior part of the lower surface is red, again like *M. bivirgata*.

Of the following species I got only a single specimen. They were in a very bad condition which made any conservation impossible. As they are not yet recorded from Billiton, I have, for the sake of completeness, included them in the present paper.

***Boiga cynodon* (BOIE).**

Lenggang, Kpg. Lilangan. 15.xi.1941.

1 ex. ♂. Total length 173 cm, tail 41 cm. Scales in 23 rows. Ventrals 277. Subcaudals 160 in two rows. Anal entire.

Pupil vertical elliptic.

***Chrysopelea ornata* (SHAW).**

Lenggang, Gantoeng. 4.ix.1939.

1 ex. Total length 96 cm, tail 27 cm. Scales in 17 rows. Ventrals 228, the last divided. Anal divided.

Subcaudals 133.

***Maticora intestinalis* (LAURENTI).**

Klappa Kampit, G. Klappa Kampit. v.1937.

1 ex. in a state of medium putrefaction which prevented an exact examination.