ZOOLOGICAL NOTES FROM PORT DICKSON, I

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

by

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During the time that I was stationed at Port Dickson (State of Negri Sembilan) on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, a small zoological collection was made. The specimens were brought to me by the personnel of different units of the Royal Netherlands Forces, while I am also indebted to Major C. Rae, RASC, for some interesting specimens. Nearly all specimens belong to common species. However, this area has not been studied so very extensively and therefore, it seems worth while to place these species on record. Unless otherwise stated the specimens are from the strip of country along the coast road to the south of Port Dickson to about ten miles from the township. Where no unit is mentioned, the specimens have been collected by personnel of my own unit (NICA-NRX Detachment). The collection has been presented to the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden.

Bufo melanostictus Schn.

1 specimen, Major L. D. Brongersma, Herp. reg. no. 8488.

Bufo parvus Blgr.

1 ♂ halfgrown, Herp. reg. no. 8486.

1 juv., among dry leaves in a rubber plantation, March 1946, Sergt. Everaarts, Herp. reg. no. 8487.

I am indebted to Mr. H. W. Parker, London, for his advise that both these specimens should be referred to *Bufo parvus* Blgr.

In the male (length from snout to vent 33 mm), the cranial ridges are distinct. The supraorbital ridges are slightly divergent behind, while the short parietal ridges converge posteriorly; thus the whole of the ridge is some-

what curved. In a fullgrown Sumatran specimen these ridges are straight. The supratympanic ridge has strongly developed. In the juvenile (snout to vent 24.5 mm) the parietal ridges are only faintly indicated, while there is hardly a trace of supraorbital ridges; the supratympanic ridge is well marked, however. As Mr. Parker informs me the supratympanic ridge is absent in a 20 mm specimen from Peninsular Siam, while the other ridges are indicated by the merest trace (less than in the juvenile from Port Dickson); in a 26 mm specimen from Pahang all ridges are present, though not as well developed as in larger specimens. Apparently the ridges start to develop in specimens of over 20 mm in length.

On the whole the specimens agree well with the description of the species as given by Van Kampen (1923, p. 88).

The nostril is very much closer to the tip of the snout than to the eye. The tympanum is rather distinct, its diameter about $^2/_3$ that of the eye. The first finger is distinctly longer than the second, which is slightly shorter than the fourth. The third toe is slightly longer than the fifth. The subarticular tubercles are single; they are best preserved under the fingers of the juvenile; here the tubercles have strongly developed, they are conical and very prominent. Under the toes of the juvenile and in the male they have shrunken somewhat, due to the strength of the alcohol used for the preservation of the specimens. The heel reaches the posterior half of the eye, the tarso-metatarsal articulation reaches just beyond the tip of the snout. The parotoids are small and roundish, but very prominent. The upper parts are rougher in the male than in the juvenile, the former having more conical tubercles. The terminal three phalanges of the fourth toe and the terminal phalanx of the third and fifth toes are free of web. Tibia slightly less than half the length from snout to vent.

The juvenile is very much lighter in colour than the male, the back yellowish brown in life, with a few small black spots. These spots generally surround the base of a tubercle, the tip of which is reddish.

In the juvenile the terminal phalanx of the fifth toe on the right side is bifurcated.

Rana limnocharis Boie

1 juv., among dry leaves in a rubber plantation, March 1946, Sergt. Everaarts, Herp. reg. no. 8485.

Kaloula pulchra pulchra Gray

1 ♂, December 1945, Sergt. A. J. H. Baron van Lijnden, Herp. reg. no. 8305.

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Cuora amboinensis (Daud.)

1 specimen was taken by Sergt. A. J. H. Baron van Lijnden.

Hemidactylus frenatus Dum. & Bibr.

1 specimen, Lieut. Dr. H. H. Merkelijn, Herp. reg. no. 8313.

2 specimens, Major L. D. Brongersma, Herp. reg. no. 8313.

1 specimen, Kuala Lumpur (State of Selangor), in Malaya Command H.Q., March 1946, Major L. D. Brongersma, Herp. reg. no. 8306.

This species was abundant in all bungalows and barracks, where its call was heard both at day and at night. These "tjitjaks" are very fond of sugar, and after dark were often found in the sugar bowl. The male before mating makes some kind of display, putting up a high back like a cat. While mating their foothold seems not to be too sure; on several occasions mating specimens tumbled .down, and sometimes became entangled in cobwebs They are often attracted by the curling movements of the tail tip of their companions, making a dash for it, and biting in it, without disastrous effects for the owner of the tail, however.

The tokkèh (*Gekko gecko* (L.)), which is very common elsewhere (e.g., Java) was not seen, neither was its call heard.

Draco volans L.

1 ♂, January 1946, Sergt. E. Hooijer, 1st Bat., Regt. Shocktroops, Herp. reg. no. 8309.

2 ♂♂, March 1946, Sergt. J. J. Parmentier, Herp. reg. no. 8314.

The species was rather common in the cocos palms in front of our bungalow.

Calotes cristatellus (Kuhl)

1 specimen, Sergt. Major Van Eck, Herp. reg. no. 8312.

85 scales round the middle of the body.

Varanus (Indovaranus) bengalensis nebulosus (Gray)

1 specimen was bought from a native by Lieut. Dr. H. H. Merkelijn, Herp. reg. no. 8319.

The stomach contents consisted of the remains of snails, molecrickets, spiders, centipedes, and of two specimens of *Pseudorhabdion longiceps* (Cant.).

Varanus (Varanus) salvator salvator (Laur.)

1 specimen, Sergt. J. J. Parmentier, Herp. reg. no. 8317.

The skin of this specimen, as well as that of the *nebulosus* specimen were preserved in spirit. The bodies were referred to the kitchen, and supplied us with an excellent dinner.

Mabuya multifasciata (Kuhl)

1 specimen, Herp. reg. no. 8326.

This species was fairly abundant on the rocks on the shore.

Dasia olivacea Gray

2 specimens, one of which was taken by Sergt. A. J. H. Baron van Lijnden, Herp. reg. no. 8325.

Typhlops braminus (Daud.)

1 specimen, Herp. reg. no. 8311.

Python reticulatus (Schn.)

A specimen was offered for sale by a native.

Python curtus brongersmai Stull

Python curtus brongersmai Stull, Occ. Papers Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., vol. 8, 1938; p. 297; Brongersma, Proc. Kon. Ned. Akad. Wetensch., vol. 50, 1947, p. 667.

Python curtus, Tirant, Rept. Cochinchine & Cambodge III, Serpents, Excursions et Reconnaissances, no. 20, 1885, p. 406 (non vidi); Zenneck, Tübinger Zool. Arb., vol. 3, no. 1 (Zeitschr. Wiss. Zool., vol. 64), 1898, pp. 3 (part.), 46-49 (part.), 141, 143, 224 note 3 (part.), 225, 226, 237 note 5, 247 note 4 (part.), 248, 250, 301 note 5 (part.), 304, 324 (part.), 326 (part.), 330 (part.), 331, 343 (part.), 345 (part.), textfig. 9 (diagram), textfig. 27b, pl. II figs. 43-44, pl. VII fig. 188; Boulenger, Fasc. Malay., Zool., pt. 1, 1903, p. 175; Volz, Zool. Jahrb., Syst., vol. 20, 1904, p. 506 (part.); Mocquard, Rept. Indo-Chine, Revue Colon., 1907, reprint p. 42; Barbour, Mem. Mus. Comp. Zoöl., vol. 44, no. 1, 1912, p. 191 (part.); Wall, Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc., vol. 21, 1912, p. 447 (part.); Holtzinger, Arch. Naturg., vol. 85 (1919), Sect. A, pt. 11, 1920, p. 83; Bourret, Invent. Gén. Indochine, vol. 3, Faune, Vertébrés, 1927, p. 231; Werner, Zool. Jahrb., Syst., vol. 57, 1929, p. 179; Bourret, Comment déterminer Serp. Indochine, 1935, p. 25; Bourret, Serpents Indochine, 1936, vol. 1, pp. 13, 14, 100, 103, 113, 135, and vol. 2, pp. 16, 20 (part.), fig. 10; Rensch, Geschichte des Sundabogens, 1936, p. 41 (part.).

1 ♂, presented by the Sublieutenants of the Royal Netherlands Navy, January 17th, 1946, Herp. reg. no. 8316.

Scale rows: 49 on neck, 56 at mid-body, 35 in front of vent; ventrals 170, anal 1, subcaudals $^{1}/_{1} + 10 + {}^{20}/_{20} + 1$. Two preoculars, upper very large. Two supraoculars, posterior small. Two postoculars. Supralabials 11, the 5th and 6th entering the orbit; 1st and 2nd pitted. Rostral with a pit on each side. Loreals: on each side one large shield with 5 (right) or 6 (left) smaller shields and one or two granules. Lower labials 20, the

2nd to 5th and 13th to 17th pitted. Maxillary teeth 20, mandibular teeth 18. Anal spurs present.

Colour (in alcohol). Head brownish above, the shields powdered with blackish; snout blackish brown. The median suture between the head shields blackish; occiput with a pale median streak with blackish borders; a transverse blackish streak on the upper surface of the head at the level of the corners of the mouth. Sides of head blackish brown, with a cream coloured streak from the corner of the eye, past the corner of the mouth, on to the lateral scales of the throat. Border of supralabials cream coloured. Lower labials powdered with blackish. The dark colour of the sides of the head is continued on the sides of the neck, dissolving into a series of spots. Back with a broad brown dorsal band, anteriorly about twenty scale rows wide. In this band a middorsal series of spots; each spot consists of a cream coloured border and a central patch that is powdered with black; more posteriorly these spots have a dark border around the cream coloured ring. The posterior spots are more elongate, and on the hindmost part of the back they have fused into a light vertebral streak with one narrow interruption. Base of tail blackish brown above, with a cream coloured vertebral streak; on the posterior half of the tail the colour of this streak changes into pale brown. Sides of tail with a cream coloured band. Sides of body pale greyish brown with large spots. Each spot with a light centre and a darker border. At the middle of the body the spots are rather indistinct; posteriorly they become more distinct again. Here the dark border of the spots is surrounded by paler scales powdered with blackish, and around the whole of this a pale lining. These spots do not form complete rings, but generally they are open ventrally. The spots have a tendency to fuse with their anterior and posterior neighbours, thus more or less forming a sinuous band. Ventrals greyish brown with lighter borders; lower surface of tail greyish brown.

In the freshly killed specimen the upper surface had a more reddish tinge, especially distinct on the posterior half of the body.

Length of head and body (measured on the freshly killed specimen) 1460 mm, tail 130 mm (i.e., 8.2 % of the total length).

The skin has been preserved in spirit. Fried python proved to be a very palatable dish.

The colour pattern of *Python curtus* has been discussed by Werner (1894, p. 378) and by Zenneck (1898, pp. 46-49). Werner mentions that differences in colour pattern exist between the type of *Python curtus* (*Python curtus curtus* Schl.) and specimens from Borneo (*Python curtus breitensteini* Steind.). Zenneck based his notes on the type of *P. curtus,*

on two specimens from Borneo (*P. c. breitensteini)* and on a specimen from Singapore (*P. c. brongersmai*). This author distinguishes between two types of colour pattern; of these, pattern A is found in the type of *P. curtus,* while pattern B occurs in a specimen from Singapore (*P.c. brongersmai*). A young specimen from Telang, S.E. Borneo, is described as being intermediate in pattern between A and B (colour pattern A-B); a second specimen from Borneo has pattern A. Nevertheless both specimens are placed with type A on p. 343 of Zenneck's paper. The author (Zenneck, 1898, p. 343) concludes that apparently a connection exists between the colour pattern and geographic distribution.

Of the specimens of *P. c. brongersmai* in the Leiden Museum, one (reg. no. 5427) from Medan, N.E. Sumatra, has colour pattern B; a second Sumatran specimen (reg. no. 8457) apparently has the same pattern, but it is rather indistinct. The specimen from Port Dickson described above, agrees with Zenneck's pattern B in having pale spots (the ground colour of Zenneck) in the dorsal brown band; however, these pale spots have not fused into a pale vertebral band as in reg. no. 5427 from Sumatra. As I have examined only one specimen of *P. c. curtus,* and none of *P. c. breitensteini,* I cannot arrive at a conclusion as to the value of differences in coloration as distinctive characters of these subspecies.

I may use this opportunity to give some additions to the synonymy of the typical form published in an earlier note (Brongersma, 1947, p. 665):

Python curtus curtus Schl.

Python curtus, Werner, Zool. Jahrb., Syst., vol. 7, 1894, p. 378; Zenneck, Tübinger Zool. Arb., vol. 3, no. 1, (Zeitschr. Wiss. Zool., vol. 64), 1898, pp. 3 (part.), 46-49 (part.), 141, 142, 224 note 3 (part.), 247 note 4 (part.), 301 note 5 (part.), 324 (part.), 326 (part.), 330 (part.), 345 (part.), textfig. 9 (diagram), pl. VI figs. 167-168; Palacký, Mém. Soc. Zool. France, vol. 11, 1898, p. 119; Volz, Zool. Jahrb., Syst., vol. 20, 1904, p. 506 (part.); Barbour, Mem. Mus. Comp. Zoöl., vol. 44, no. 1, 1912, p. 191 (part.); Wall, Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc., vol. 21, 1912, p. 447 (part.); Bourret, Serpents Indochine, vol. 2, 1936, p. 20 (part.); Rensch, Geschichte des Sundabogens, 1936, p. 41 (part.).

Sibynophis geminatus (Boie)

1 specimen, January 24th, 1946, Private F. X. M. Hollewijn, 1st Bat., Regt. Shocktroops, Herp. reg. no. 8489.

Scale rows 17/17/15, ventrals 149, anal 1/1, subcaudals 109/109 + 2; 44 maxillary teeth. The anterior head shields with numerous small white, black edged spots.

Ptyas korros (Schl.)

1 specimen, presented by Major C. Rae, RASC, attd. RIASC, OC 162 Ind. Coy (GT Amph.), 1946, Herp. reg. no. 8321.

1 specimen, Seremban (21 miles N.E. of Port Dickson), presented by Lt. Rutten meergenoemd Roethof, March 1946, Herp. reg. no. 8322.

ventrals	anal	subcaudals
169	1/1	113/112 + ...
166	1/1	131/131 + 1

Both specimens have 15 scale rows on the neck, which are reduced to 11 rows in front of the vent. The reduction of the number of scale rows in the specimen collected by Major Rae is similar to that described for this species by Clark & Inger (1942, p. 169), viz.,

$$\begin{matrix} & 100 & & 102 & & 169 \\ 15 & \left[\begin{matrix} 2+3 \\ \cdots\cdots \\ 2+3 \end{matrix}\right] & 13 & \left[\begin{matrix} 3+4 \\ \cdots\cdots \\ 3+4 \end{matrix}\right] & 11 & \text{(recount system).} \\ & 98 & & 103 & & 169 \end{matrix}$$

In the Seremban specimen the reduction comes about in another way:

$$\begin{matrix} & 90 & & 100 & & 166 \\ 15 & \left[\begin{matrix} 4+5 \\ \cdots\cdots \\ 4+5 \end{matrix}\right] & 13 & \left[\begin{matrix} 3+4 \\ \cdots\cdots \\ 3+4 \end{matrix}\right] & 11 & \\ & 89 & & 99 & & 166 \end{matrix}$$

Elaphe flavolineata (Schl.)

1 specimen, Herp. reg. no. 8490.

Scale rows 21/19/17, ventrals 223, anal 1, subcaudals 110/110 + 1.

Dendrelaphis pictus (Gmel.)

1 specimen, Herp. reg. no. 8491.

Scale rows 15/15/9, ventrals 167, anal 1/1, subcaudals 152/152 + 1; 9 supralabials (4th to 6th entering the orbit). Maxillary teeth 26, the last two abruptly enlarged, and fully one time and a half as large as the preceding teeth. The horizontal diameter of the eye equals three times the distance between the eye and the mouth, and is about equal to the distance from the eye to the posterior border of the nostril. The dark lateral band is interrupted by oblique pale blue spots.

Pseudorhabdion longiceps (Cant.)

2 specimens, from the stomach of a *Varanus* (*Indovaranus*) *bengalensis nebulosus* (Gray), Herp. reg. no. 8315.

One of these specimens was too much decomposed as to allow any scale counts to be taken; the other showed the following characters: 15 scale rows, ventrals 149, anal 1, subcaudals 15/15 + 1.

1 specimen, taken from the stomach of a *Maticora bivirgata flaviceps* (Cant.), Herp. reg. no. 8324.

Scales in 15 rows, ventrals ?, anal 1, subcaudals 19/19 + 1; 16 maxillary teeth.

Boiga dendrophila (Boie)

One of the medical officers of the 3rd Bat., Regt. Shocktroops, showed me a dried skin of this species.

Dryophis prasinus Boie

1 specimen, Sergt. Hofmans, Herp. reg. no. 8327.

Scale rows 15/15/13, ventrals 219, anal 1/1, subcaudals 188/188 + 1.

Dryophiops rubescens (Gray)

1 ♂, December 1945, presented by 2nd Bat., 14th Infantry Regt., Herp. reg. no. 8307.

1 ♂, December 1945, Herp. reg. no. 8308.

Both specimens have the scales in 15/15/11 rows, and 192 ventrals; anal 1 1, subcaudals 135/135 + 1 (no. 8307) and 134/134 + 1 (no. 8308). Supralabials 9, the 4th to 6th entering the orbit. In no. 8307 there are 3 postoculars on the left side, and 2 postoculars on the right; no. 8308 has 2 postoculars on each side. Temporals 2 + 2 + 2. Maxillary teeth 15 (no. 8308) to 16 (no. 8307). In none of these specimens did I find apical pits on the finely striated scales.

No. 8308 had swallowed a *Hemidactylus frenatus* Dum. & Bibr.

This species apparently is fairly common around Port Dickson, for in the same month I received a third specimen; this has not been preserved, as its head had been smashed.

Chrysopelea paradisi Boie

1 specimen, January 24th, 1946, Private F. X. M. Hollewijn, 1st Bat., Regt. Shocktroops, Herp. reg. no. 8320.

Scale rows 17/17/13, ventrals 231 + 2/2, anal 1, subcaudals 134/134 + 1; hypapophyses present under the posterior vertebrae of the body.

Naja naja (L.)

A black cobra was brought by a native; it had been battered so much, that it has not been preserved.

Maticora bivirgata flaviceps (Cant.)

1 specimen, received from 1st Bat., Regt. Shocktroops, Herp. reg. no. 8323.

Scale in 13 rows over the whole length of the body; ventrals 280, anal 1, subcaudals 46/46 + 1. Scale rows 1 and 2 and border of row 3 pale blue, remaining part of row 3 to row 7 black. The stomach of this specimen contained a specimen of *Pseudorhabdion longiceps* (Cant.).

Laticauda colubrina (Schn.)

2 specimens, Pulu Bagan Pinang, just off the coast S. of Port Dickson. December 1945, Herp. reg. no. 8318.

scale rows	ventrals	anal	subcaudals	black bars on body	black bars on tail
23/23/21	240 + 1/1	1/1	38/38 + 1	39	4
23/25/21	243 + 1/1	1/1	32/32 + 1	35	4

Both specimens lack the azygous prefrontal that is usually present in this species; similar specimens have been recorded from the Malayan region by Smedley & Kloss (1926) and by Smith (1926, p. 7).

The sergeants who collected these specimens observed some of these sea-snakes in the mangrove trees.

Trimeresurus wagleri (Boie)

1 specimen, presented by Mr. Lawrence of the electric works, Port Dickson, Herp. reg. no. 8310.

Scale rows 23/23/18, ventrals 150, anal 1, subcaudals 50/50 + 1, 11 scales between the supraoculars.

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