

# Snakes I've Found or Caught in Thailand

I thought I'd write up a list of Thailand snakes I've caught – just to try to keep track. Here's a list of both venomous and non-venomous snakes I've caught (through 4/2017).

## Thailand Snakes I've been lucky enough to find:

NEW SPECIES! I found a new *Oligodon* species that has not been named.

NEW SPECIES! I found another snake that I think is a new species. It is similar to a keelback, but thinner, longer. It was yellow with a white ring around the neck, about 70 cm in length around 400 meters elevation.

### Venomous Species

King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*)

Monocled Cobra (*Naja kaouthia*)

Malayan Krait / Blue Krait (*Bungarus candidus*)

Mangrove Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus purpureomaculatus*)

Wagler's Pit Viper (*Tropidolaemus wagleri*)

Malayan Pit Viper (*Calloselasma rhodostoma*)

Beautiful Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus venustus*)

Red Necked Keelback (*Rhabdophis subminiatus*)

Red Headed Krait – (*Bungarus flaviceps*)

Small Spotted Coral Snake (*Calliophis maculiceps*)

Brown Long-glanded Coral Snake (*Calliophis intestinalis*)

### **Non-Venomous Species**

Speckle-bellied Keelback (*Rhabdophis chrysargos*)

Golden Kukri Snake (*Oligodon cinereus*)

Purple Kukri Snake (*Oligodon purpurascens*)

Blood Python (*Python Brongersmai*)

Reticulated Python (*Malayopython reticulatus*)

Triangle Keelback (*Xenochrophis triangularis*)

Common Brown Keelback (*Xenochrophis flavipunctatus*)

Checkered Keelback (*Xenochrophis piscator*)

Striped Keelback (*Amphiesma stolatum*)

Big-eyed Mountain Keelback (*Pseudoxenodon macrops*)

Oriental Whip Snake (*Ahaetulla prasina*) green, yellow phases

Malayan Whip Snake (*Ahaetulla mycterizans*)

Malayan Banded Wolf Snake (*Lycodon subcinctus*)

Brown Whip Snake / Keel bellied Whip Snake (*Dryophiops rubescens*) both brown and red phases.

Butler's Wolf Snake (*Lycodon butleri*)

Common Wolf Snake (*Lycodon capucinus*)

Dusky Wolf Snake (*Lepturophis albofuscus*)

Laotian Wolf Snake (*Lycodon laoensis*)

Malayan Bridle Snake (*Dryocalamus subannulatus*)

Puff-Faced Water Snake (*Homalopsis buccata*)

Red Tailed Pipe Snake (*Cylindrophis ruffus ruffus*)

Sunbeam Snake (*Xenopeltis unicolor*)

Common Water Snake / Yellow Bellied Water Snake (*Enhydris plumbea*)

Golden Tree Snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*)

Paradise Tree Snake (*Chrysopelea paradisi*)

Blue Bronzeback Snake (*Dendrelaphis cyanochloris*)

Striped Bronzeback Snake (*Dendrelaphis caudolineatus*)

Common Bronzeback Snake (*Dendrelaphis pictus*)

Banded Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis striatus*)

Copperheaded Racer | Radiated Rat Snake (*Coelognathus radiata*)

Malayan Racer (*Coelognathus flavolineatus*)

Red-tailed Racer (*Gonyosoma oxycephalum*)

Banded Cat Snake / Mangrove Cat Snake / Black Cat Snake (*Boiga dendrophila*)

Green Cat Snake (*Boiga cyanea*)

Dog-toothed Cat Snake (*Boiga cynodon*)

Common Mock Viper (*Psammodyanstes pulverulentus*)

Ridley's Racer (*Othriophis taeniurus ridleyi*)

Indo-Chinese Rat Snake (*Ptyas korros*)

White-bellied Rat Snake (*Ptyas fusca*)

Oriental Rat Snake (*Ptyas mucosus*)

Keeled Rat Snake (*Ptyas carinatus*)

Brahminy Blind Snake (*Ramphotyphlops braminus*)

Common Bridle Snake (*Dryocalamus davisonii*)

Rainbow Water Snake (*Enhydris enhydris*)

Orange-bellied Snake (*Gongylosoma baliodeirus*)

**DORs** (Dead on Road)

I don't count these, I have seen more species in addition those above.

Fifty-eight different snake species. Well, there are 150+ more out there – so I'd better get herping.

Just to make it crystal clear for those that need it. I catch the snakes and let them go in the same place I found them – in all cases except rescues where I am removing snakes from someone's property, and they must be relocated. I release snakes I catch almost always within 24 hours. I release the snakes back to another suitable habitat.

If you want to come and catch snakes in Thailand – give us an email:



We go primarily at night to herp for a couple reasons:

1. More herps.
  2. Cooler weather.
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# December 2015 Snake Note

It's the end of the herping season for 2015 – not only is the year winding down, but there is a real dearth of snakes in the usual areas. I made it a goal to herp more during the latter part of the year because usually from about November through April you can't find me in the forest at night looking for reptiles and other wildlife. I wanted to find out if I was missing out on something.

This year I went out at night a number of times during October, November and December. I, and those that came with me, found 40+ snakes during this time. I have to say that is about half or less of what can typically be found during a similar effort in the June – July time period. So it's less productive for sure, but if you're itching to get out there and find something cool to look at – it's worth going. There were a couple of “one snake nights” and probably there was even a no-snake night, but I try not to remember those.

This morning I'm sure the air temperature was down to 24°C (75°F) as I took my daughter to school on the motorbike. That was the coldest air I've felt in a year!

I've had some discussions with other friends about why the herping declines so harshly at the end and beginning of the year.

There are a number of features in play – mainly the temperature and the humidity – both of which change pretty drastically toward December. Twenty-five degrees C is not cold by any means, and snakes can surely move around in that temperature, but when the average temps are closer to 28-32, I think 25 becomes quite cool for them too. It's likely well outside their ideal range.

The humidity also plunges during these dry months without rain. Snakes prefer a certain humidity level to thrive – and

probably the low levels of the dry season make the snakes take a little break when it nose-dives.

The other factor, and this might be a bigger one than both those already mentioned, but tied to them, is there are very few frogs, lizards, skinks and other prey walking around during the dry season. There are some frogs, there is the occasional gecko or lizard, but maybe they aren't the preferred species? Maybe we see fewer kraits (snake eaters) because the smaller fossorial snakes are curled up in a ball in a hole in the dirt somewhere, riding out the dry season. Could be that too.

All these factors seem to have some effect, serving to make November through April – poor herping season in the country. Other evidence that supports this is I get far fewer requests to identify snakes at my online service. I also see far, far fewer snakes DOR (Dead On Road) or crossing the road.

Whether there are less snakes to find during the daytime, is something I cannot really comment on other than DORs and those crossing the road. I don't go looking specifically for snakes during the daylight hours, so I'm not sure whether their numbers drop so much during the dry season.

*Anybody have any idea on that?*

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## **Thailand Snake Journal – Recent Herping Trip**

Yesterday I met a lovely husband and wife herping team from Florida, in the USA, and we all went out to see what could be found at a park not too far away. Southeast Asia herping is

probably unbeatable. Thailand and Malaysia in particular have such diversity of species, not only snakes, but frogs, lizards, geckos, spiders, scorpions, centipedes... all sorts of great wildlife to target.

This is a Thailand national park – and aesthetically – quite beautiful. Day herping is always tough though. We went for a total of 3 hours – and found many lizards, two scorpions, skinks, and a couple of frogs. One snake – a *Rabdophis subminiatus*, Red-Necked Keelback that was near the water. These are such beautiful snakes... since it was a national park we didn't collect it for photos and videos but they did shoot some of it in the natural habitat.

This is my favorite time of year coming up for snakes and herping field trips. If you're interested in coming to Thailand – or anywhere in southeast Asia – for herping – you must stop in Thailand and we'll go see what we can find.

At the moment the snakes are hot during the day and there is more action at night. Sometimes the snakes can be found near water during the day – but, you're not likely to find snakes roaming around the open, dry forest for now – it's just too hot. If it rains you maybe can find snakes out – regardless what time of day or night. They'd be looking for frogs – but this is not frog season yet.

Frogs are probably the *number one* favorite food for snakes in Thailand. They are soft and fat – with some meat. Geckos too – are soft, but have little meat. Geckos are also VERY fast. Frogs are VERY slow. Easier to catch frogs for sure.

Anyway, if you are coming to Thailand and are interested in snakes, lizards, and other reptiles – a herping trip might be called for.

Contact me at:



Cheers!

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## Herping Southern Thailand

Yesterday it rained a bit, and had been raining the previous few days. That would be good for snakes, I thought. It was set to be a near-full moon night, and that wasn't so great for snakes, but I was eager to get back out to see what I could find. The last time I was out herping was 2-weeks ago. I saw a couple cool snakes, and then while trying to get photos of a *Homalopsis buccata* I fell backward into the mud and water at the edge of a stream. It was late at night, I was soaking wet, and I had a 15 km motorbike ride home. Not so fun, but definitely funny after I quit swearing at my misfortune (and the broken concrete which sent me over backwards).

I got a message from a guy from the UK about herping sometime. He said he'd be staying in Trang, and if I wanted to go out, he'd be keen. I wasn't keen at first. You know, I get about five of these requests per month from people that see ThailandSnakes.com or some of my videos online. I just don't have time to go out with everyone that writes, but more importantly, it just doesn't make sense most times.

Though sometimes I'll go out with someone that doesn't have a clue about snakes, just to be able to introduce them to snakes and teach them a little of what I know. Usually though, I like to go herping with people I can learn something from... whatever it is. It might not even be about herping. If someone from Tasmania wrote me (and he already has), and wanted to go out – I'd go in a second. Why? I want to find out about his country, the wildlife, the snakes. If a herpetologist (biologist) or other serious enthusiast with a lot of experience writes – I



will usually go out.

This guy is a 17 year old that appeared to have little experience herping in Thailand or anywhere with venomous snakes. He had a real interest, and I figured I'd go sometime after April when the snake-finding activity picked up a bit, as is usual at that time.

As it turns out he contacted me again recently and would be nearby. He sent me a link to his photos, and I was blown away. He has already, in about 6 months, found MANY Thailand snakes and even some that I've not seen here before – 2 cat snakes that I really want to find. (*nigriceps* and *jasperidae* (spelling?))

So we met up last night and the kid is quick. I've seen only two other people know southeast Asia snakes to the level of depth he does, and of course that's a subjective statement. Suffice to say, he impressed the hell out of me with what he knew. I thought he'd be asking questions like, "what do snakes eat". Instead, he's explaining to me the difference between the Malayan Bridle Snake and the juvenile Malayan krait. He is almost an encyclopedia of snake knowledge. It was awesome to spend time with him as we picked each other's brains about snake habits, appearance, and defensive behavior. We found 5 snakes too – near-full moon be damned.

He wants to make snakes his life... I have no doubt that if he sticks to it, he'll be THE snake authority in Southeast Asia. He's a sponge with facts. He knew tiny details about snakes that only someone that lived here or studied the place for years knows.

He may have even found a new species of gecko already – I saw photos. We walked around until about 1:30 AM and found the Mangrove Cat Snake (*B. dendrophila*) Puff-faced Water Snake (*H. buccata*) – three of them, and the ultimate southern Thailand find, or one of them, the Malayan Krait (*B. candidus*).

Anyway, I do hope he goes far in the field and makes a real difference. If he knows this much at 17, it's scary to think what he'll be like in a couple years of living in the region! Scary in a good way.

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## Homalopsis buccata Almost Rips My Finger Off



A bitey puff-faced watersnake (*Homalopsis buccata*).

*(Page Updated: 6 September 2016)*

OK, exaggerating a bit.

OK, a lot.

There is nothing quite like a bite from a snake, when you're

completely not expecting it. I've caught a number of these "Puff Faced Water Snakes" – *Homalopsis buccata*, and while one bit the tongs, none has ever attempted to strike at me. That changed the other night while on a herping trip with Courtney from North Carolina in the states.

I grabbed it fine the first time, and it death-rolled so fiercely I thought it was going to break it's own neck. I let it go back on the ground by the pond I'd just picked it up at.

The flashlight was shining right in his face – and I was coming up on the approach from behind, but, in hindsight – a bit too much to the side, and he could still see my hand coming. He twisted and struck backward and sideways to grab my middle finger fiercely. I did the twitch, you know, where you jerk your arm in an exaggerated fashion, twirling the snake around like a circus baton, by the mouth on your finger – putting the teeth MUCH deeper than they were originally? Yeah, I did that.

He was NOT letting go, so I asked Courtney to gently put the snake hook point through the jaw between my finger and the joint. Eventually the top opened enough, and then I snuck the bottom finger out. No re-bite, which I was thankful for.

This was a juvenile, but these snakes have powerful jaws, and 26 teeth (I counted the puncture marks on my finger). I was bleeding good, and Courtney got a few pics. Will put one up when she sends me one.

Though a snake is not "known" to bite... do not take it for granted. Practice the same techniques as always to keep from getting bitten. Twenty-six teeth in your finger is not a good feeling... more importantly, you could break some of them in your finger – harming the snake.

If you're looking for Thailand Sea Snake Info [Click Here](#).

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# June – July – Best Herping Season in Thailand?



Found often in southern Thailand – the Red Tailed Racer, *Gonyosoma oxycephalum*.

I find June and July of each year to usually be the best months for finding snakes out and about.

We get more requests for ID during those months than any others. I usually find, catch, see more snakes during those months in Thailand than any other months – but occasionally I have a good month some other time during the year that eclipses those summer months.

Lately I've not been able to get out to look. I did do a run up a local mountain the other day and heard a couple of swish sounds like they were snakes, but I didn't have time to stop and look. I saw some amazing lizards though – including the draco winged lizard on the size of a tree – a very decent size too, about as 6-7 inches long (body only), and 4 inches wide. This is before flying!

I have seen a couple of small snakes crossing the road as I flew by on the motorbike. Couple of Golden Tree Snakes... I always check them out to make sure they aren't the Paradise Tree Snakes – which are pretty rare and make great photos.

We had a Malayan Pit Viper close to the house the other day. I caught a red-tailed racer a week or so back – very small, just crossing the road. Not sure if I posted any photos here, I've been using facebook for some of them.

Had a guy come from Australia – ex herpetologist/biologist, and we saw no snakes at all I don't think. Can't remember. We did find different geckos and lizards – including a long tailed lizard – the tail was 3 times the body length (or more).

Anyway – a mini-update on what we've seen here.

If you are planning on looking for snakes – nearly anytime of the year is good except the hot months. You can still find the usual snakes during the day during the hot months – like golden tree snakes and various rat snakes... sometimes the monocled cobras... but usually the hot months and extreme rainy months are not idea for herping in Thailand.

If you are planning to visit Thailand for a herping field trip, let me know – I might be able to go with you. I know a lot of the local snakes, though admittedly virtually nothing about the frogs, spiders, and lizards.

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## **Night Herping in Southern Thailand – Video**

Every few days when I either have some free time, or just reach a point in my snake herping addiction where I MUST GO, I romp around the forest in southern Thailand and try to find cool stuff.

This was a perfect Thailand night. The air was cool and there was even a breeze. The air was not thick and wet, and I wore a long-sleeved shirt and military issue cammies, socks, and

running shoes – all things I NEVER wear in southern Thailand unless herping and trying not to be eaten by mosquitoes.

It was very dark on this night – and I think that was a reason for my success. It started out with a small snake slithering off the bank and into the water – very fast, and very small – maybe 8 inches long. In another 10 minutes i saw a 2 meter mangrove snake swimming across one of the small pools of water.

It was ALMOST within reach with my 40 inch tongs – but I just missed him twice. I grabbed slowly and didn't want him to know I was grabbing at him. He didn't pick up speed or alter his course – so I think he had no clue something was grabbing for him behind...

He went to the bank – covered with greenery, and just inched up in there and sat. I ran around the lake on the sidewalk and then very slowly crept down to spot he was. I just watched and waited for movement. Nothing. I waited 10 minutes. Nothing. I started pulling apart the vines and water plants that were hiding him. Very slowly. Nothing. I stayed for 10 minutes and pulled up everything around. Nothing. Apparently he slipped under the water and safely away. They are great underwater swimmers, and he must have known I was after him. Bummer. Still, it's a great feeling to see a 2 meter long snake swimming in the pitch black night air.

I walked further... in 5 more minutes I saw another 2 meter mangrove snake climbing a wall and ready to ease itself into the water. I waited until his head went forward, just over the water, and grabbed with the tongs – GOT HIM.

Unfortunately I couldn't film the snatch, and now I'm desperate for a GoPro video camera I can strap to my head. This DSLR stuff is for the birds while herping by myself. I asked two guys to come, and neither were interested. WTF! Irrational fears...

Anyway – you see a bit of the snake on video.

Later that night I saw about 4 nice leopard gecko looking geckos – catching 2 to show friends. They freeze when the flashlight is right on them – probably totally blind – and they are easy to grab.

I saw a couple of small owls.

I heard a heavy movement on the hill next to the water. I stopped and listened... it was HEAVY, breaking big twigs loudly. WTF? It had to see me – and yet, it was moving to me, not away.

Initially I thought – big monitor. But I heard no footsteps.

Then I guessed – big reticulated python or Burmese python. Maybe it was looking at me as a meal, or maybe didn't see me – just saw the flashlight.

There are bears in Thailand – but probably not right there where I was. There are some wild cats – but I don't think it would be stalking me.

Ok then – enjoy the video.