

# May 2015 – Gearing Up for Thailand Snake Field Trips (Herping)

It is May and the snakes are hatching all over the country. Where I live here in Southern Thailand we have some of the best herping in the country, and the world. I have to be reminded of that occasionally because I start to take it for granted sometimes.

I've been seeing hatchling and very juvenile, even neonate, *C. rhodostoma* and *C. radiata* on the roads fairly often. Those are the two I usually see as the snake herping season begins in Thailand. I've seen my usual share of rat snakes – *P. korros* primarily, and everywhere, and just one big *P. carinatus* at the top of a small mountain on top of a pile of fallen branches.

Frogs are out in full-force already. We've had one really good rain since the rainy season began back on Thai New Years (early May), and a number of smaller, spotty rains. They all help to get the frogs reproducing.

The hills are alive with the sound of *Calotes emma* scampering around the mostly dry leaves in the rainforest. I have definitely seen more this year than any year previously at this time. I'm taking that as a good sign. Flying lizards too. They seem to be everywhere I look, as abundant as house geckos on the outside of our home at night.

I spied one big tokay at head level and about one foot from my face stuck to a wall at the top of a Buddhist temple shrine on a mountain. It was kind enough to stick around while I studied its fascinating pattern. If you've never really looked intently at it – it's mesmerizing!

This year I've decided to really expand my focus to include other wildlife that I didn't pay much attention to – Tokays and other geckos, flying lizards – Draco, frogs, centipedes, scorpions, tarantulas, and bugs – insects of all kinds. Really opening it up, right? I guess I I get a bit bored mid- and late-season while just focusing on snakes. I tend to catch the same species' over and over and it does get monotonous at times. If I had some more fauna to focus on, I'd be less bored. So this will be a new beginning for me.

So, needless to state it, but I'm wildly optimistic about this 2015 Reptile and Amphibian Herping Season. I've got a couple of field trips planned now. Sisaket in the Northeast of Thailand is my next stop. I even have to make a trip out to Laos, so I'll take a look around while I'm out there and see if anything jumps out at me. Malaysia is on the calendar – Langkawi, and possibly Penang.

***I'll be in Isaan next, so, if you're in Ubon, Sisaket, Savannakhet, or Mukdahan and know where the snakes are – let me know!***